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**Communication models for rural-based municipalities: A case study of Matatiele local
municipality**

Moroesi Lebenya

215055576

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School of Management, IT & Governance

College of Law and Management Studies

Supervisor: Professor Betty C. Mubangizi

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DECLARATION

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ABSTRACT

The development history of South Africa (SA) is overshadowed by the apartheid era, which represented an authoritarian style of governance. This approach prevented the majority of South Africans, particularly black people, from having the right to make political, social, and economic decisions (Lieberman, 2022). People and communities were treated as passive recipients of development and had no say in their development. When the democratic government came to power in 1994, a new approach to development was born which was aligned to the principles of democratic governance. New policies, legislation, strategies, and plans were initiated to support the improvement of the livelihoods of the poor and the previously disadvantaged. The new policies encouraged participation, community empowerment, and democratic involvement of communities in the development process (Govender & Reddy, 2011). To enhance these participatory and democratic policies towards development, the South African governance structure has positioned municipalities, also known as local government, to drive social development, economic growth, and service delivery at the local level.

A municipality must acknowledge and endorse the importance of using a participatory and democratic approach to communication as a guiding tool for achieving sustainable development and realising development goals. The development goals are realised through the necessary policies, strategies, and plans. The aim of this study was to explore participatory communication processes that are used by the Matatiele Local Municipality (MLM) to communicate with citizens. The study also sought to evaluate how the identified participatory communication models influenced service delivery, especially as guided by the Integrated Development Plan (IDP). Furthermore, the study set out to assess the impact of good governance on participatory communication. In addition, the study sought to provide recommendations on what appropriate participatory communication models can be adopted as traditional modes of communication in rural communities. To realise the above objectives of the study, laws, policies, and strategies were explored under the participatory communication concept. The researcher further used empirical research models as a lens to ascertain whether existing government practices are effective in improving service delivery through good governance measures.

For the purpose of this study, the qualitative research method was adopted. The responses from the interviews revealed that participatory communication exists within the Matatiele Local Municipality but it has not spread across all the areas within the municipality's jurisdiction. Of the 19 participants interviewed, most were of the view that the Municipality consults through ward committees and/or tribal authority, and that ward councillors are also passive-active in communicating with them. Respondents reported that participatory communication is witnessed mostly during the run-up to elections, during budget, and IDP processes. However, some participants were unaware of the concept and reported a lack of communication and feedback from the municipality. Lack of good infrastructure, service delivery, and decentralisation were also factorial issues that were discovered during the study. Therefore, the study concludes on findings that little is focused on tribal authorities and the crucial role they play in democratic development of a local structure. The study recommends that the municipality educates communities participatory communication. In this regard, the role that the public plays in the governance process will be clear.

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ACRONYMS

AND – Alfred Nzo District

CAR – Capability, Accountability and Responsiveness

DFID – Department for International Development

IDP – Integrated Development Plan

LGs – Local governments

M&E – Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E).

MLM – Matatiele Local Municipality

PCA – Participatory Communication Assessment

PCM – Participatory Communication Model

PCSD – Participatory Communication Strategy Design

SA – South Africa

SD – Service Delivery

UN – United Nations

UNDP – United Nations Development Programme

UNESCO – United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 Introduction

The study critically assessed participatory communication for rural municipalities using Matatiele Local Municipality (MLM) as a case study. The guiding assumption of the study was that effective participatory communication between stakeholders in rural municipalities can contribute to rural development and improved service delivery. Effective participatory communication is, the key to enhancing sustainable development of rural communities. Community participation is fundamental as citizens can voice their concerns through municipal Integrated Development Programme (IDP) fora, consultations, council meetings and general outreach programmes. Rural citizens in MLM will be encouraged to fully participate in local government affairs which are key to rural service delivery (Govender & Reddy, 2011). It is the duty of local municipalities therefore to open clear channels of communication where accurate information is disseminated to residents timeously to allow community input on service delivery issues affecting their lives. The study adopted a good governance theory that informs community participation, ensures accountability of local municipalities, and ensures equality and responsiveness to communities on service delivery issues.

1.2 Background of the study

Prior to democracy in South Africa, citizens were passive receivers of development with no opportunity to identify their needs, act on them, and decide on their purpose. This was because basic decisions concerning development were made on their behalf (Lieberman, 2022). However, the post-apartheid era brought about changes in the governance model. Section 195 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996) outlines the new approach to good governance. This approach includes the government's accountability, responsiveness, and being transparent to the needs and development of citizens. The Constitution further demands participatory communication at local government (municipal) level. It states that the existing administration ought to be aligned with the government's goals of democratising development and ensuring the involvement of communities in the development of policies and strategies (DPLG, 2005).

Truthfulness in public administration, as well as the adoption of public policies by citizens, entirely depend on the transparency of the mass media (Lee & Kwak, 2012). In developing public policy, it is vital to establish a relationship that fosters a free flow of information between the government and the media (Van Buuren, Lewis, Peters & Voorberg, 2020). According to Van Buuren et al (2020), in the process of two-way communication, in order for the government to build support, implement it and achieve its underlying objectives, it should make sure that the citizens are aware of the development process of a policy for the public administration in practice. This process means that individuals must be involved in all stages of communication development in order to reach a collective objective (Van Buuren et al, 2020).

The study further referenced the critical theory, which evaluates the effective use of communication tools by the South African legislature for public participation purposes in public policy processes. It argued that, it is not the communication tools adopted that determine the successful participation of South Africa in the public policy processes, but the effective use of those communication tools (Hügel & Davies, 2020). According to Rasila and Mudau (2012), it has been laid clearly that the South African government uses common communication tools used by other legislatures on the globe. These tools include the publication and broadcasting of legislative proceedings, journalistic coverage, parliamentary newsletters, legislative websites, and local political institutions which reflect the challenges experienced by countries around the world.

In all, the gap identified from the reviewed literature indicated that governments around the globe do not appreciate the incoming social media as an acceptable tool for communicating public policy issues with the public, mostly because it destroys the legitimacy of classified information not intended for all members of the public (Olorunnisola, Mohammed & Moore, 2020). Some opponents view the use of social media for political engagement as an issue that is very risky to governments, especially when considering how social media plays a role in people's lives today. It is however concluded that if well managed social media can be an effective way of communicating public policy with the public because the public viewpoints are likely to be original. South Africa should embrace the use of social media in public policy formulation without discarding other traditional forms of communication tools.

Based on the above background, the researcher explored the forms of communication used by the Matatiele Local Municipality (MLM) and the importance of communication models as tools for good governance in rural development. The study took three distinct steps. First, it provided a brief review of how important participatory communication is to the development of rural municipalities. It then reviewed the importance of participatory communication models. Lastly, the study examined the specific participatory communication modes used in Matatiele. It then concluded with recommendations on identified challenges within MLM and how best to develop them for good governance and sustainable rural livelihoods. The questions of the study are highlighted below.

1.3 Research questions

- What are the perceptions of citizens and administrators on the participatory communication processes used in Matatiele Local Municipality?
- What participatory communication methods are used in Matatiele Local Municipality?

1.3.1 Sub-questions

1. Which participatory communication process does the Matatiele Local Municipality utilise to communicate with its citizens?
2. In what way are the participatory communication processes effective in contributing to sustainable rural livelihoods?
3. What impact do good governance practices have on participatory communication?
4. Which are the most appropriate participatory communication models for communicating with rural communities?

1.4 Research aims and objectives

The main aim of the study was to explore, understand, and explain the participatory communication processes in Matatiele Local Municipality and how these contribute to sustainable rural livelihoods. From the main research aim, the objectives of the study were formulated and are listed below:

1.4.1 Research objectives

1. To identify participatory communication methods used to communicate with citizens in Matatiele Local Municipality area;
2. To assess the effectiveness of identified participatory communication practices in contributing to sustainable rural livelihoods at Matatiele Local Municipality;
3. To assess the impact of good governance practices on participatory communication, and
4. To identify the most appropriate participatory communication models for communicating with rural communities.

1.5 Delimitations and limitations of the study

- 1 The study was limited to examining communication models for Matatiele Local Municipality within the jurisdiction of the Greater Alfred Nzo District. Although the study used a good governance theory, the theory's components of accountability, transparency, and responsiveness were not explored.
- 2 Observations were partial since the study was once-off due to time and cost constraints.
- 3 A limited number of Matatiele Local Municipality residents was interviewed, making the results non-representative of the population, but enough to gain some insights into the views and practices of the residents regarding public service delivery.

1.6 Problem statement

While several factors have contributed to the public service delivery phenomenon, in Matatiele the fundamental problems influencing public service delivery are broadly related to social governance issues such as demarcation of boundaries, effective or lack of effective communication and feedback, responsiveness, and scope of timing over delivery of services. Rural communities are usually excluded from participation in the design and oversight of the policies and programs that affect their lives. In assessment of the practices used by the municipality and the influence they have on rural service delivery, IDP participation emerged. Integrated Development Planning, outreaches, ward committee / ward council meetings, and *imbizos* are developmental programmes established to communicate with communities in order to improve rural livelihoods. These participatory communication practices are necessary as they promote good governance practices (Gorwa, 2019).

In evaluating the appropriate communication models and structures used to engage with communities, the results shown inadequacy, which impacts development and provision of services within the area. Similar to many rural municipalities, public service delivery in Matatiele suffers from weak capacity of public agencies. Dissatisfied residents hope to influence the final outcome of a service through some form of participation or articulation of protest/strikes. The public suffers from informational disproportionateness since the information possessed by public administrators is often limited and their capacity to express it is suppressed.

1.7 Rationale

The purpose of the study was to research, fill the information gap, and report on how social issues such as demarcation boundaries can impact the effectiveness of communication models in rural municipalities. Despite the fact that practitioners of the role of communication in development have repeatedly drawn upon good governance examples to describe why communication matters, not enough has been done in policy and practice fields to explain how communication makes a difference and contributes to the development of rural communities, hence the need for this study.

The perception is that this study might raise awareness of the general public, stakeholders in social management, students, government, and policymakers about the significance of participatory communication models within rural communities, with an understanding of identifying management strategies to combat the threat associated with ineffective communication and feedback between communities and municipalities. Furthermore, this study serves as a resource base to other scholars and researchers who are interested in carrying out further research in the field of public administration. Subsequently, if applied, the recommendations of the study could help in providing new explanations to the subject matter.

1.8 Preliminary literature review

The origins of participatory communication in development are traced to the early 1970s when people in developing countries began to question the top-down approaches that were utilised in the 1950s and 1960s. Until that period, first world countries such as the United States of America (USA) were promoting development through prioritisation of economic growth. Later, controversy rose on methods used because of the concrete experience of failed projects and policies. The continued argument contributed to the emergence of concepts such as participation, empowerment,

and liberation in the development process. This resulted in the view that public participation empowers communities to assume appropriate development activities (Molale & Fourie, 2022).

Participatory communication focuses on people's involvement in all stages of a communication development project and stands in direct contrast with practices where the emphasis is on projects implemented with outside help and in which the beneficiaries are merely passive receivers of the finished product (Molale, 2019). This new approach pointed the way to a theory of sharing of information and knowledge, trust, and commitment in development projects. Furthermore, projects are more likely to succeed in communication participatory enabling environments. Molale and Fourie (2022) state that by focusing on participatory involvement of the people, communities can determine the development of their own lives, identify their unique needs, develop solutions, empower themselves, and make changes of their choice.

The success of public participatory engagements depends on a variety of factors. Besides, discounting the effective communication tools and financial costs associated with the process itself, there is a problem of the public's willingness to participate in policy processes. There is a problem with those who are eager to participate but are unable to participate because of limits such as language barriers, geographical distance, and lack of resources (Horan, 2019). The author adds that there also those who are able to participate but are unwilling to do so because of important commitments, lack of interest in politics, seeing no personal gain, and not trusting the government to take their input into consideration. Correspondingly, it is often noticed that the concerned publics are not even informed of why their contributions are not considered.

According to Molale and Fourie (2022), it is not only communication tools that can ensure attainment of public participation in the South African legislative environment, but also the utilisation of effective communication tools, is likely to ensure the highest level of public participation in the policy formulation and decision-making processes. On this point, Olorunnisola et al (2020) argues that the current generation likes to engage and take part through modern technologies such as Twitter, Facebook and WhatsApp; however, governments sound to be far from accepting and utilising such technologies, and this makes it quite impossible for rural communities as there is poor infrastructure.

1.9 Theoretical framework

The study draws on the critical theory, which advocates the importance of communication between citizens and public institutions. The critical theory was invented in the 18th Century by the contributions of various social scientists such as Max Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno, Herbert Marcuse, Georg Lukacs, Antonio Gramsci, Jurgen Habermas, and Karl Marx. The basic assumptions of the critical theory are contradiction of tensions, dialectics, and change. The main aim of the theory is to change the political system of the state, advocating inclusion. It creates consciousness and establishes a welfare state among the individuals and work, where citizens are mostly dependent on the government. The welfare state must provide equality to every individual in society (Butcher & Gonzalez, 2020).

The concept of critical theory is strongly based on individualistic, subjectivist, and anti-bureaucratic thrust. Its relevance is mostly to public administration, where effective participatory communication is one of the pillars of public administration. For change to be recognised, participation should include the systematic analysis of social condition, which is guided by normative purpose. The critical theory is based on dialectical change. Recently, the concept of critical theory has been changed due to the process of globalisation and technological revolution. In the case of Matatiele Local Municipality, the administration can improve the quality of its communication strategy by abandoning the traditional models of communication and advocating neo-communication strategies such as social networks and live big screens (Butcher & Gonzalez, 2020).

The basic aim of the critical theory is to reduce the system of dominance and dependence and strongly establish human freedom in all the spheres, providing a better future. Therefore, changes and reforms in public administration are explained from the perspective of critical theory. Critical theory provides the objectives and normative bases of effective communication for social change, and it has both a narrow and broad meaning in philosophy and the history of the social sciences. Therefore, the aim of the critical theory is to explain and transform all the circumstances, involving all the stakeholders in decision making.

Overall, participatory communication results in more informed participants, and an increase in information leads to opinion change. Participants become more liberated. Like deliberative polls, the public participation example shows clear interactions between public and political will in bringing about good governance outcomes, increasing willingness of citizens to engage and invest time and effort in the political process, as well as the willingness of candidates to campaign on practically supported issue positions. This multi-dimensional understanding of the influence of communication brings together political and public will, leads to consideration of approaches that more openly describe the role of communication and participatory communication flows in participating in the demand and supply sides of governance (Welch & Jackson, 2007).

1.10 Research methodology

1.10.1. Research paradigm

In this study, the research paradigm used is qualitative interpretivism. It is perfectly applied in this study; it assisted the researcher with the interpretation of information received and acquired when doing observations on key participants. This method is ideal because it argues that it does not make sense to study people in laboratory settings, as people do not live in laboratories and are mostly influenced by the things that are happening around them (Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2011).

1.10.2 Research design

In this study, secondary and cross-sectional study design was followed, using the qualitative data collection method. The cross-sectional design is described as an observational study design in which the researcher measures the outcomes and exposure whilst studying participants at the same time. The employed cross-sectional design assisted the researcher to have a focused look at data from a population at one specific point in time utilizing interviews. The secondary study design entails existing literature on the study topic and it is the most reliable.

1.10.3 Scope of the study

The study was conducted in Mafube Village in Matatiele Local Municipality that is within the jurisdiction of the Alfred Nzo District as indicated in Figure 1.1. Matatiele is named after the ducks which were found there by the people who first arrived at place. The Sesotho speaking people who were there when the first white occupants arrived said Matata a ile, then in trying to echo

what the Basotho were saying, the whites said Matatiele (Matatiele Local Muicpality, 2009). The ducks were staying there because the area is a wet land.

Matatiele is largely rural. The main economic practice is farming, both stock and crop farming. The area is well known for producing crops of good quality, especially maize, sorghum and beans. The livestock they keep is of high quality too, and they are therefore also known for producing good quality beef.



Figure 1. 1: Map of the Eastern Cape showing Matatiele in the Alfred Nzo District.

Source: <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=55874316>

1.10.4 Sampling

Purposive sampling was utilised. In purposive sampling, the researcher purposely picks the participants based on the characteristics of a population. A total of 19 informants were selected from the community. The informants were between the ages of 18 and 55, and they had stayed in Matatiele for over 10 years and were permanent residents of the area. Out of the 19, 15 were from the community; 2 were the heads of the Mafube village (amakhosi/ members of the tribal authority) and the final 2 were municipal employees.

Table 1.1: Categories of respondents

Community members	15
Member of the ward Committee	1
Headman of Mafube traditional authority	1
Municipal employees	2
Total	19

The reasons for sampling, with community members, concern was with generalisation of data. To study the whole population in order to arrive at generalisation would be impractical. The other respondents were chosen for their relativity to the study and it permitted a high degree of accuracy due to limited comprehension of the focused study.

1.10.5 Data collection

Both observation schedule and interview techniques were used. Semi-structured interview questions that are closed and open-ended were administered. (See annexure F.) Furthermore, in households where English was not well spoken, the questions were translated into Sesotho or IsiXhosa. Furthermore, the choice of the study group was made from a perspective of age, how often the municipality updated its residents on new developments, and how long after doing assessments were the needs of residents addressed. The researcher sought consent to take some photos with community members when interviewing them during the course of data collection.

In order for the researcher to obtain more accurate information on the current state of the municipal communication techniques, a review of the municipal newsletter was conducted. Furthermore, articles from previously published newspapers on the related matter were examined, including the municipal website, and twitter and Facebook pages.

1.10.6 Data management and analysis

This study research made use of narrative data analysis because it was easier to report what informants conveyed. The data from informant interviews was written out into an MSWord document. Data security was then ensured through the use of the university hard drive, USB storage, and emailing collected data to the supervisor to provide her with all the recordings for keeping. The records of data collected were kept secure using password protected files and lockable drawers for hard copy information of the research such as notes.

1.11 Structure of the Dissertation

This dissertation is structured into six chapters as follows:

Chapter 1: This chapter introduces the study. It also contains the background of the study, research questions, and research objectives. The chapter also has the statement of the problem and the significance of the study.

Chapter 2: This chapter presents an examination and analysis of the relevant literature.

Chapter 3: In this chapter, the theoretical framework related to participatory communication, and the communication plan strategy developed for the Matatiele Local Municipality are presented.

Chapter 4: This chapter explains the research methodology of the study. The study shows the procedures of research design, on how a sample plan was executed, the data collection that followed, and the process of data analysis that was employed to answer the study's research questions.

Chapter 5: Chapter 5 covers data presentation, analysis and interpretation of research results. This chapter gives an account of how the collected research data was analysed and interpreted.

Chapter 6: The chapter provides the conclusion of the study and offers recommendations based on the research findings.

1.12 Summary

The orientation of the study, the presentation of the research questions, and objectives of the study have been outlined. This study assesses participatory communication for rural municipalities using Matatiele Local Municipality as a case study. The significance of this study and the synopsis of the dissertation have been outlined. The next chapter focuses on the literature review.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews existing literature relevant to this study. According to Onwuegbuzie and Frels (2016), a literature review shows that knowledge accumulates to progress, as one can build on what has been discovered before in the given discipline. First, the chapter focuses on the participatory communication model at the local level of government; the background of good governance as the guiding theory to realising participatory communication for rural communities. Secondly, the chapter reviews literature on the use of empirical research methods in achieving sustainable livelihoods for rural municipalities, lastly, identifies the gap that necessitated this study.

2.2 Participatory communication

According to Raelin (2012, p7);

Participatory communication is an approach based on dialogue, which allows the sharing of information, perceptions, and opinions among the various stakeholders and thereby facilitates their empowerment. It is not just the exchange of information and experiences: it is also the exploration and generation of new knowledge aimed at addressing situations that need to be improved. Participatory communication tends to be associated with community-driven development, but it could be used at any level of decision making (local, national, international) regardless of the diversity of groups involved.

The Local Government, Municipal Systems Act (2000) draws participatory communication from Chapter 7, Section 152 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996), which ascribes that local government as democratic and accountable to local communities. It further encourages the involvement of communities in the matters of local government by actively engaging stakeholders from the start and by seeking a broader agreement around development initiatives. Open participation increases the sense of ownership by local stakeholders, thus

enhancing sustainability. To be genuinely participatory and truly effective, communication should occur among all parties affected, ensuring all have similar opportunities to influence the outcome of the initiative. Ideally, participatory communication is recommended to be part of the whole project process.

The interactive nature of communication is increasingly seen as fundamentally two-way rather than one-way, interactive, and participatory rather than linear (Van Ruler, 2020). When participatory communication is actioned as a two-way process, one is no longer attempting to create a need for the information disseminated, but one is rather disseminating information for which there is a need. The emphasis is on information exchange rather than on the persuasion in the diffusion model. The ‘oligarchic’ view of communication implies that freedom of information is a one-way right from a higher to a lower level, from the centre to the margin, from an institution to an individual, from a communication-rich nation to a communication-poor one. Hence, there is emphasis for two-way communication to be adopted from the beginning and be applied consistently (Van Ruler, 2020).

Participatory communication stresses the importance of cultural identity of local communities and of democratisation participation at all levels. However, the community must be the centre of the process. It is at the community level that the problems of living conditions are discussed, and that interactions with other communities are elicited (Yanes, Zielinski, Diaz Cano & Kim, 2019). Participatory communication points to a strategy not merely inclusive of, but largely emanating from the traditional ‘receivers’ and extracting the suitable models of communication. Freire (1983, p. 76) refers to this as the right of all people to individually and collectively speak their word: “This is not the privilege of some few men, but the right of every (wo)man. Consequently, no one can say a true word alone – nor can he say it for another, in a prescriptive act which robs others of their words”, which in other words is expressed as freedom of communication.

Participation in decision-making processes for development is crucial for disseminating information, knowledge, trust, commitment, and the right attitude. Therefore, the International Commission for the Study of Communication Problems, chaired by the late Sean MacBride, argued that, “This calls for a new attitude for overcoming stereotyped thinking and to promote more understanding of diversity and plurality, with full respect for the dignity and equality of

people living in different conditions and acting in different ways” (MacBride, 1980, p. 254). This model stresses reciprocal collaboration throughout all levels of participation.

Inclusiveness must be balanced with consideration of stakeholders’ time, resources, interests, and knowledge. After their input has been considered, stakeholders may not need to be involved in detailed decisions beyond the scope of their interests. However, not everyone wants to or must be involved in the practical implementation. More important is that participation is made possible in the decision making regarding both the subjects treated in the messages and selection procedures. According to Sanoff (1999), one of the barriers to the decision to adopt the participation strategy is that it threatens existing hierarchies. Nevertheless, participation does not imply that there is no longer a role for development specialists, planners, and institutional leaders. It only means that the viewpoint of the local groups of the public is considered before the resources for development projects are allocated and distributed, and that suggestions for changes in the policy are taken into consideration.

2.2.1 Approaches to participatory communication

Participatory communication has two major approaches. According Van Ruler (2020) the first approach is the dialogical pedagogy of Freire (1970; 1973; 1983; 1994), and the second consists of the ideas of access, participation, and self-management articulated in the UNESCO debates of the 1970s. Notwithstanding the global acceptance of these principles of democratic communication in participatory communication projects, presently, there is wide variety of practical experiences and intentions referencing these approaches differently. These two approaches are discussed in detail below:

(i) Freire’s Dialogical Pedagogy

The Freirean argument works by a dual theoretical strategy. He insists that people other than the rule, must be treated as fully human subjects in any political process. This implies dialogical communication. Furthermore, as motivated by Sartre’s existentialism, an emphasis on individualism, the emphasis is made on theory that people/communities are not the same, and as such any communication process implemented should be compatible and consider differences of

each community. Every communication project that calls itself participatory accepts these principles of democratic communication.

On the same point, the Freirean strategy is criticised of its unrealistic manner. Marx is of belief that things can be improved much more than it is possible, that human beings have a purpose that offers a life more than the fulfilment of material needs. Also from Marx is an insistence on collective solutions than individual opportunity; Marx opposes Freire's argument, stating that the dual theoretical strategy is no solution to general situations of poverty and cultural suppression.

Even though the idealised concept is not well received by administrators, including leaders in the third world, there is widespread acceptance of Freire's notion of dialogical communication as a normative theory of participatory communication. One problem with Freire's theory of dialogical communication is that it is based on group dialogue rather than amplifying media such as radio, print, and television. Little attention is given to the language or form of communication, devoting most of his discussion to the intentions of communication actions.

(ii) Access, Participation, and Self-Management in UNESCO Discourse

The second discourse about participatory communication is the UNESCO language about access, participation, and self-management from the 1977 meeting in Belgrade. The final report of that meeting defines the terms in the following way (Figure 2.1):

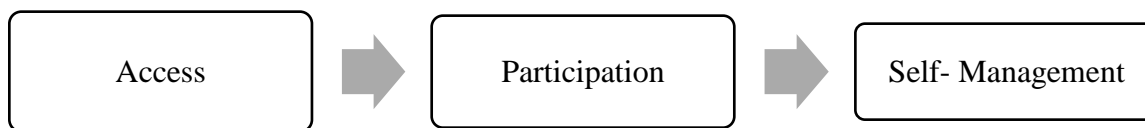


Figure 2.1: UNESCO language about access, participation, and self-management

First, 'access' refers to the use of media for public service. It may be defined in terms of the opportunities available to the public to choose various and relevant programs and to have a means of feedback to transmit its reactions and demands to production organisations. Secondly, 'participation' implies a higher level of public involvement in communication systems than mere access. It includes the involvement of the public in the production process, and in the management and planning of communication systems. Participation may be no more than representation and

consultation of the public in decision-making. That said, relevant methods of communications utilised play a huge role in the form of participation. In this case, the public is enabled to exercise the power of decision-making and is fully involved in the formulation of communication policies and plans as per the South African local government constitution. Thirdly, '*self-management*' is the most advanced form of participation. In this case, the public exercises the power of decision-making within communication enterprises and is fully involved in the formulation of communication policies and plans (Van Ruler, 2020).

Access by and participation of the community are measured by key defining factors that Berrigan comprehensibly gives summary of:

Community media, the media to which members of the community have access for information, education, and entertainment when they need access. They are media in which the community participates as planners, producers, and performers. They are the means of expression of the community rather than for the community. (Berrigan 1979: 8.)

Referring to the 1977 meeting in Belgrade, Berrigan (1979: 18) partially links access to the reception of information, education, and entertainment considered relevant by/for the community thus; "Access may be defined in terms of the opportunities available to the public to choose various and relevant programs, and to have a means of feedback to transmit its reactions and demands to production organisations".

Other ideologists limit access to mass media and see them as "the processes that permit users to provide relatively open and unedited input to the mass media" (Kunt, 2018) or as "the relation to the public and the established broadcasting institutions" (Prehn 1991, p. 259). Both the production and reception approaches of 'access' can be considered relevant for an understanding of community media.

The ideas of access and participation are important and are widely accepted as a normative theory of participatory communication, which must involve access and participation (Kunt, 2018). However, it is important to note some differences from Freire. The UNESCO discourse includes the idea of a gradual progression. Some amount of access may be allowed, but self-management

may be postponed until sometime in the future. Freire's theory allows for no such compromise. It is either the culture of the others is respected or all fall back into domination and the 'banking' mode of imposed education. The UNESCO discourse uses neutral terms like 'the public' and focuses mainly on the institution for which participatory modes of communication are self-managed by those participating, whilst Freire talks about 'the oppressed'.

2.2.2 Participatory Communication for Social Change:

Participation involves the more equitable sharing of both political and economic power, which often decreases the advantage of certain groups, and that calls for change of structure to allow for the redistribution of power. In mass communication areas, many communication experts agree that structural change should occur first in order to establish participatory communication policies. For instance, Van Ruler (2020, p96) state that:

Communication policies are basically derivatives of the political, cultural, economic conditions, and institutions under which they operate. They tend to legitimise the existing power relations in society, and therefore, they cannot be substantially changed unless there are fundamental structural changes in society that can alter these power relationships.

The development of a participatory communication model has to take place in relation to overall societal emancipation processes at local, national, and international levels. Several authors have been trying to summarise the criteria for such a communication model. Servaes and Servaes (2021) present the following (slightly adapted) summarised components as essential:

- (i) *Communication is a human need.* The satisfaction of the need for communication is just as important for society as the concern for health, nutrition, housing, education, and labour. Communication, together with all other social needs, must enable the citizens to emancipate themselves completely. The right to inform and to be informed, and the right to communicate, are thus essential human rights - both individually and collectively (Servaes & Servaes, 2021).
- (ii) *Communication is a delegated human right.* Within its own cultural, political, economic, and historical context, each society has to be able to define independently

the concrete form in which it wants to organise its social communication process. Because there are a variety of cultures, there can also arise various organisational structures. However, whatever the form in which the social communication function is embodied, priority must be given to the principles of participation and accessibility (Servaes & Servaes, 2021).

- (iii) *Communication is a facet of the societal conscientisation, emancipation, and liberation process.* In the process of social change, the social responsibility of the media is considerable. Indeed, after the period of formal education, the media are the most important educational and socialisation agents. They are capable of informing or misinforming, exposing or concealing important facts, interpreting events positively or negatively, and so on.
- (iv) *The communication task involves rights as well as responsibilities or obligations.* Since the media in fact provide a public service, they must carry it out in a framework of social and juridical responsibility that reflects social consensus of the society. In other words, there are no rights without obligations.

The freedom and right to communicate, therefore, must be approached from a threefold perspective: first, it is necessary for the public to participate effectively in the communication field; secondly, there is the design of a framework in which this can take place, and thirdly, the media must enjoy professional independence, free of economic, political, or any other pressure. As illustrated by Gaventa and Valderrama (1999), below are the basic phases of communication when implementing a societal change programme:

Phase one is the Participatory Communication Assessment (PCA), which states that issues faced in establishment of the programmes are researched and analysed through exploratory two-way communication. For these tasks to be successful, it is necessary to establish an open or common space where key stakeholders can interact freely with each other.

Phase two involves the Participatory Communication Strategy Design (PCSD). A successful strategy design begins with the definition of the objectives. In instances where strategies are

designed on broad, the White paper and the Batho Pele Principles are employed throughout the programme.

Phase three is the Implementation of Communication Activities (ICA). In this phase, an action plan is needed to guide implementation and facilitate the management and monitoring of all relevant activities.

Phase four includes Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E). Evaluation should be planned from the beginning of an initiative. Furthermore, if participation means that stakeholders are partners in the decision-making process, they must also be partners in impact evaluation.

Therefore, participatory communication sees people as the centre of development (Jacobson & Servaes, 1998). Development means lifting the spirit of a local community to take pride in its own culture, intellect, and environment. Development aims to educate and stimulate people to be active in self- and communal improvements while maintaining a natural balance. Authentic participation, though widely adopted in the literature, is not in everyone's interest. Due to their local concentration, participatory programmes are in fact not easily implemented, and they are not highly predictable or easily managed. The introduction of legislature provides principles of action that can be adopted by organisations or individuals. The following section discusses these widely.

2.3 White Paper Local Government

The White Paper on Local Government (1998) mandates active participation by citizens in three senses: as voters to maximise accountability of public administrators; as citizens who express their views through community engagements, and as organised partners who are involved in the mobilisation of resources (Republic of South Africa, 1998a). The White Paper on Local Government, which is also referred to as the constitution for local government, visualises a process where communities will be involved in governance matters such as planning, implementation, performance monitoring, and review. It states that communities should be empowered to identify their needs, set performance indicators and targets, and thus hold municipalities accountable for their performance in service delivery.

The act requires municipalities to achieve the objectives set out in the constitution, and it outlines the participatory systems that should exist in municipalities as a platform for addressing the needs

of the communities. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa advocates a strong local government system, which can provide democratic and accountable government for local communities; ensure the provision of services to communities in a sustainable manner; promote social and economic development; promote a safe and healthy living environment, and encourage the involvement of communities and community organisations in the matters of local government (Pretorius & Schurink, 2007).

When the government issued a Local Government White Paper which outlined a policy framework for local government, the aim was to set a developmental model guide that would visualise and include everyone that was discriminated during the apartheid. The Municipal Systems Act complemented these pieces of legislation by regulating key municipal organisational, planning, participatory, and service delivery systems (South Africa, 2000). The municipalities are called to develop a culture of municipal governance that works hand-in-hand with formal representatives of government within a participatory system. Municipal systems state that services may be improved by introducing more democratic public management approaches, which draw on the knowledge of public service citizens (Munzhedzi, 2021; Mubangizi 2021 & Mubangizi 2022) through partnerships among public agencies, and by means of public-community partnerships.

Government-citizen communication is a prerequisite for place development and sustainable development. The emphasis from the constitution of local government is on the responsibility of local authorities to build communication with local people, develop safe and sustainable communities, provide services and infrastructure, develop horizontal communication networks, promote community development and trust, and reduce social distances between social agents.

As important social agents, local authorities should initiate social communication and information transfer, thus creating preconditions for reaching mutual agreement between the parties, as the power of local authorities is based on communication and understanding of the needs of the parties involved, thus increasing community activity (Smalec, 2015). In the exercise of their functions, local authorities must consider the needs of citizens, have access to them, guarantee confidentiality, and provide high-quality services. The needs of stakeholders vary; hence, communication plays a crucial role in fully understanding the various needs of stakeholders and harmonising the necessary actions.

As a society develops, a citizen who was previously more characterised by the role of non-right holder will have a democratised relationship with a local government. Mutual trust and profitability make it possible to improve, transform, and adapt services provided by the municipality to meet market needs and social change. Furthermore, consciousness of the needs of citizens and clients is taken into consideration, and local government officials do not only play their traditional role but also become advisers to clients. In some respects, the official becomes a public affairs coordinator. Citizens who are satisfied with the services received will also have a good opinion of the activities of the municipality, which in turn will have a positive impact on the municipality's image (South Africa, 2000).

Communication between the municipality and the local population can be assessed through feedback and the level of satisfaction about the services received. This is because it is important for civil servants to be open and informed about the needs of citizens, to keep the procedures transparent, and to obtain customer feedback. Local government communication is aimed at maximising citizens' participation and involvement in the life of the local community, as well as promoting integration, trust, and developing individuals' responsibility for their actions; thus, education, information, and motivation are very important (Smalec, 2015; Mubangizi & Gray (2011)).

Improved integration and co-operation between stakeholders and government departments are required to avoid repetition of tasks; hence the need to establish complementary roles for all stakeholders. An integrated approach incorporates the integrated development planning (IDP) process, infrastructure development, marketing and investment plans, skills development, entrepreneurship development, and creation of an enabling environment for business development. Rural communities are highly in need of strong local government; however, there are only weak local government structures available; with lack of information, skills, funding, and capacity (Sibisi, 2009, p. 14). In order for local government to attempt to create a more enabling environment, there are a number of challenges that exist and that need to be addressed first. Some of these challenges include skewed settlement patterns, an unequal distribution of economic and social activities, financial instability, and poor capacity (Republic of South Africa, 1998a, p. 16).

Knowledge of different communication challenges can help to reduce potential conflicts. Involving citizens in decision making encourages local people to make positive changes in their parishes and regions, and increases their understanding of the decision-making process; for example, that it may be slow and may be subject to both laws and different administrative provisions. Citizen engagement enhances the possibility that the implemented projects or solutions will have wider public support and that more effective solutions will be found in mutual co-operation. Based on the knowledge of local communities and groups, practical and effective solutions are created; citizens' knowledge and skills in solving problems are supplemented; co-operation between people with different backgrounds takes place; groups of people who feel marginalised or not involved in development processes can gain more control over their lives and their own regions (Molale & Fourie, 2022).

When people from different parts of the region and localities work together, they often find much in common, create local networks, and create many different opportunities to discuss problems. Working together improves communication, understanding of the problems, and their solutions as people regularly express their anxiety/concern through communicating before the problems become too big or distorted (Bassler, Brasier & Fogle, 2008). New information can be disseminated through existing channels such as the radio, bulletin boards at local cooperatives, stores, and interpersonal networks. The internet may be used to support sustainable rural development, and well-organised users' groups can access information relevant to local needs and realities.

As communication agents, local authorities are responsible for involving stakeholders in communication, especially nowadays, when digital media offer great opportunities for interconnection and dialogue with local people. For local people, the municipality can effectively provide quality services through e-government tools that allow feedback and dialogue. Various, relatively easy-to-use platforms allow citizens to access and use information, receive services, and keep up to date on a regular basis. In view of these aspects, rural municipalities are faced with a range of challenges to provide citizens with growing demand concerning e-management and the quality of services through online tools and two-way flow of information with limited resources. However, despite the fact that ensuring good governance is a primary task for municipalities,

municipalities must constantly maintain and improve their services, infrastructure, and knowledge of local people's needs in order to build a safe and sustainable community (Kagume, 2015).

Prior to the development of local government, various requirements must be met, and the Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA) has identified several concerns to be addressed in order to set up an "ideal" development municipality. These issues include the constitutional responsibility to provide for the basic needs of local people, sustainable service delivery, promotion of social and economic development, clear responsibilities to all officials, capacity, and financial resources to carry out all functions (COGTA 2010b:51). The overall aim of COGTA is to improve co-ordination across the three spheres of government for faster and improved service delivery. The concept of "co-operative" governance is promoted through greater emphasis on working with communities (COGTA 2010a, p. 8).

Briefly, the White Paper on Local Government (1996) stresses the developmental role of local government which must play a fundamental role in representing the communities, protecting human rights, and meeting basic needs. It must focus its efforts and resources on improving the quality of life of the residents of the area, especially those who are most often marginalised or excluded. To achieve its intention, it provides the good governance approach to assist local municipalities to become more developmental.

2.4 Good governance approach

In South Africa, the Good Governance Approach is outlined in the Batho Pele White Paper (DPLG, 2005, p. 15). The Batho Pele White Paper is the national government's key policy document for transforming public service delivery and it is also applicable to municipal officials. *Batho Pele* (People First) has eight principles that guide government's approach to public service delivery, encourage participation, and promote responsive governance. The principles state that municipalities must be committed to working with citizens, groups, and communities to create sustainable human settlements, provide an acceptable quality of life, and meet the social, economic, and material needs of communities (South Africa, 1998a).

The guidelines of the paper is to allow proper structures and practices to be put in place to promote good governance and improve service delivery. Regarding this issue, Erasmus (2010, p. 98) argues

that, Good governance is about democratic, open, and accountable government.” Erasmus (2010, p. 98), further claims that good governance entails the manner in which the state “exercises authority which results in transparency, certainty, predictability, and a culture of justification of State action. For Erasmus (2010, p. 98), those under the government’s rule must understand the parameter of their rights, the responsibilities of the state organs and officials, as well as the procedures available for redress.

According to the Secretary General of the United Nations (UN), good governance means creating well-functioning and accountable institutions – political, juridical, and administrative – that citizens regard as legitimate, through which they participate in decisions that affect their lives, and by which they are empowered. Good governance also entails a respect for human rights and the rule of law generally. From these definitions, the core principles of good governance can be extracted, namely accountability, participation, legitimacy, rule of law, and respect for human rights. The European Union Commission (EU) has identified five principles of good governance, namely openness, participation, accountability, effectiveness, and coherence. There is at least agreement about the following core principles of good governance: transparency, accountability, participation, and the rule of law, effectiveness, efficiency, proportionality, consistency, and coherence (HOPE, 2005).

Despite the wide range of definitions and interpretations of good governance, the emphasis seems to be on the following basic idea; good governance refers to the realisation of the fundamental values of democracy, rule of law, human rights, and social justice by all governmental or non-governmental authorities whose legal acts or activities affect the position of citizens in the process of the formulation, creation, and implementation of binding and non-binding legal norms. In this regard, good governance strategies refer to appropriate measures and methods of policy implementation, developing skills, knowledge, competences, and capacities of officials in order to produce the outcomes required to meet the needs and demands of the people where practices involve correct rules and standards, directives and values that guide public sector officials’ performance (Hope, 2005).

Good governance is the process in which societies or organisations make their important decisions, determine who has voice, who is engaged in the process, and how accountability is rendered. It is therefore closely aligned with democracy and the central role that citizens must play in any effective governance system. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP Governance and Sustainable Human Development (1997) put forward a set of principles which are not only about the results of power but about how well power is exercised.

According to the UNDP approach, good governance exists where those in positions of power are perceived to have acquired their power lawfully, and there is appropriate voice accorded to those whose interests are affected by decisions. Furthermore, the exercise of power results in a sense of overall direction that serves as a guide to action. Moreover, with regards to performance criterion: governance should result in performance that is responsive to the interests of citizens or stakeholders. In addition, good governance demands accountability between those in positions of power and those whose interests are to be served. Accountability cannot be effective unless there is transparency and openness in the conduct of the work being done. Finally, governance should be fair, which implies conformity to the rule of law and the principle of equity.

2.4.1 Five principles of good governance

(i) Legitimacy and voice

Participation: Regarding the principle of participation, a broad range of measures need to be taken before this is achieved, including representative democracy, the right to vote and to be elected, but also deliberation with civil society and stakeholders in the establishment of laws and regulations. On the administration, it prescribes that every person be heard before any individual measure or rule adversely affecting them is taken, and, for example, transparent stakeholder consultations in administrative rule-making processes (Yanes et al, 2019).

Good governance focuses on the need for the full participation of citizens and civil society actors in governance and it is centred on the effective flow of information and dialogue between citizens, governments, and other actors. By situating communication, information dissemination and dialogue as key components of governance, a positive correlation between communication and good governance is anticipated. All men and women should have a voice in decision making, either

directly or through legitimate intermediate institutions that represent their intentions. Such broad participation is built on freedom of association and speech, as well as capacities to participate constructively.

As a component of development communication, the media play a fundamental part in good governance. As Sen (2016) outlines:

A long tradition of liberal theorists from Milton through Locke to Madison to John Stuart Mill have argued that the existence of unfettered and independent press within each nation is essential in the process of democratisation by contributing towards the rights of freedom of expression, thought and conscious, strengthening the responsiveness and accountability of governments to all citizens, and providing a pluralist platform and channel of political expression for a multiplicity of groups and interests.

Norris (2009) highlights the importance of media as tools for promoting contemporary good governance. Media act as watchdog over abuses of power, thus promoting accountability and transparency; act as a civic forum for political debate, thus facilitating informed electoral choices and encouraging participation; as an agenda-setter for policy makers, thus strengthening government responsiveness and promoting/encouraging capable governance.

In good governance, participation focuses specifically on the issue of citizen engagement in the use of public funds and effectiveness of service delivery. Poverty eradication strategies are far more likely to be effective and sustainable when evolved and implemented with the full participation of the broadest possible segments of the country, using communication that is strategically seeking the inputs of citizens so they can contribute to forming a policy. A society's wellbeing depends on ensuring that all its members feel they have a stake in it and do not feel excluded from the mainstream of the society. This requires all groups, but particularly the most vulnerable, to be availed opportunities to improve their wellbeing (Jacobson, 2016).

Consensus orientation: Good governance mediates differing interests to reach a broad consensus on what is in the best interest of the group and, where possible, on policies and procedures. The principle suggests partnership that is considered reasonable to both citizens and government, and in which different voices are heard. To make sure that everyone is consulted, partnership with representatives of communities is formed, and ward committee members are appointed. For

reaching consensus, diverse groups of organisations are encouraged to realise good governance because if a group of civil society organisations can find common ground on a particular issue and collaborate in moving forward, their larger, more unified voice can have a greater impact both on the government and on the public. In addition, collaboration among civil society organisations has benefits of empowered society.

A study was conducted in the Philippines, in which a Technical Working Group was asked to pull together all the proposed bills on children's rights and then draft a consolidated bill. The case study indicates that the consultation process in the drafting of this bill was made easier because a network of civil society organisations and government agencies already existed.

There are several actors with many view points in a given society. Good governance requires mediation of the different interests in society to reach a broad consensus in society on what is in the best interest of the whole community and how this can be achieved. It also required a broad and long-term perspective on what is needed for sustainable human development and how to achieve the goals of such development. This can only result from an understanding of the historical, cultural, and social context of a given community.

(ii) Direction

Strategic vision: Leaders and the public have a broad and long-term perspective on good governance and human development, along with a sense of what is needed for such development. There is also an understanding of the historical, cultural, and social complexities in which that perspective is grounded. To promote good governance, all parties share a joint and clearly articulated vision of their goal, and each party to the partnership sees how their organisation can contribute to the vision through distinction of roles and responsibilities of affected stakeholders.

(iii) Performance

- Responsiveness: Good governance requires institutions and processes to serve all stakeholders within a reasonable time frame. Representativeness is a key component of local democracy as it ensures that the wishes of the population are reflected in decisions taken. Citizens cannot govern directly; consequently, this has to be done through elected representatives, that is, councillors serving on the council. Responsiveness is an integral

part of representation. The council represents the local communities and is responsible to them; the local citizenry can hold it accountable for its actions or inaction. The council is accountable for the administration of policies and the activities of officials under its control and ensuring a responsive administration. The administration is responsible to the citizens through the council (Bayat & Meyer, 1994, p. 37). Fourie (2000, p. 162) argues that even when a representative has been unified to deliver a service, the council is ultimately responsible and must render an account to the local community. The council has a duty to demand regular information regarding progress and compliance; hence, a response is crucial.

Effectiveness and efficiency: Developments and institutions produce results that meet the needs while utilising available resources efficiently. In the context of good governance, the concept of efficiency covers the sustainable use of natural resources and protection of the environment.

(iv) Accountability

Accountability: Accountability includes, in the least, democratic control of the administration (for example, attribute supervisory powers to a minister), and the right to effective legal protection. For non-state actors it includes stakeholder accountability by explaining policy-decisions, evaluating the impact of new rules and decisions, and accounting for the results. Following from the above, when operationalising the concept of good governance many of the obligations are formulated as rights for the individuals. The content of good governance seems to find its basis in human rights law (Yanes et al, 2019).

Decision makers in government, the private sector, and civil society organisations are accountable to the public, as well as to institutional stakeholders. This accountability differs depending on the organisations and whether the decision is internal or external. In essence, accountability is a key requirement of good governance. Not only governmental institutions must be accountable to the public and to their institutional stakeholders, but the private sector and civil society organisations too. Who is accountable to whom, varies depending on whether decisions and actions taken are internal or external. In general, an organisation or institution is accountable to those who are affected by its decisions. Accountability cannot be enforced without transparency and the rule of law.

(v) Transparency

Transparency: The principle of transparency is built on the free flow of information. Transparency makes the following demands of the legislator: Processes, institutions, and information are directly accessible; access to documents concerning the legislative process; guidelines of national administrative authorities; clear division of responsibilities, and enough information is provided to understand and monitor them. For the administrations it includes the right of individuals to have access to their files, while respecting the legitimate interests of confidentiality, professionalism, and business secrecy. Furthermore, it requires decisions to be clear and well-reasoned, and to be made publicly. The openness of documents also applies to policy documents, annual reports, and work programs (Van Ruler, 2020).

The World Bank demonstrates how communication, defined as citizen engagement underpinned by access to high quality information can act as an important contributor to good governance, portraying this link in a circle of transparency (see Figure 2.2). In this model, information reveals the actions of policy makers, facilitates evaluation and monitoring; activism rises, and with it the level of public debate. Policy becomes more contestable and citizens are motivated by the possibility of holding the government accountable. Communication with the government becomes a two-way flow, generating further demands and more reliable information. The virtuous circle is completed as government practices become more open and responsive to citizens.

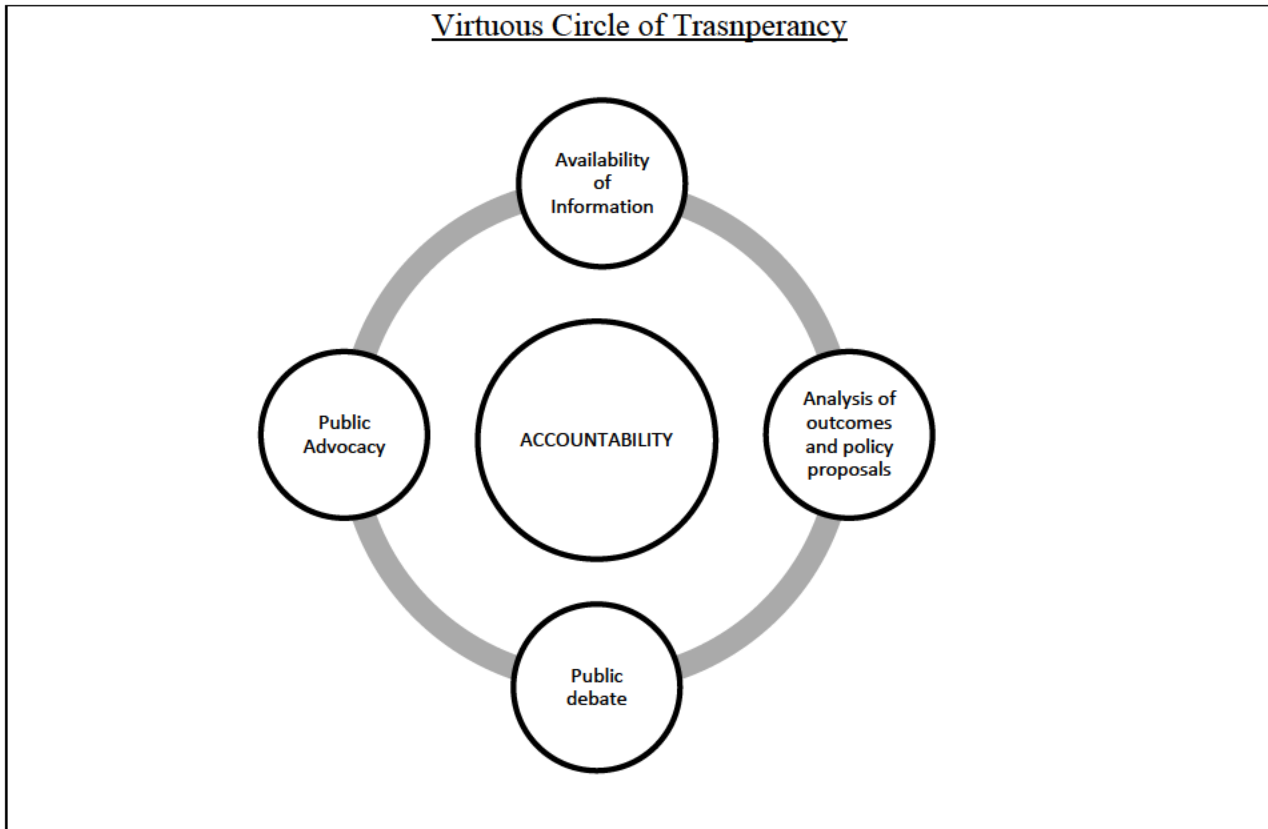


Figure 2. 1: The Virtuous Circle of Transparency: From Disclosure to Responsiveness (Jovanovic, 2015)

Therefore, with contrast to the above diagram, transparency means decisions taken and their enforcement are done in a manner that follows rules and regulations. It also means that information is freely available and directly accessible to those who will be affected by such decisions and their enforcement. Disclosure and transparency involve two-way communication, where a sufficient amount of information is provided through easy-to-understand means of communication, such as the media.

In this instance, communication is enhanced because both the sender and the receiver are active and involved in it through public debates. Disclosure is considered two-way communication because the practitioner sends a message to his/her publics and then awaits the public's response. The administrator listens to the feedback and then adjusts the message based on its appropriateness. This step makes the communication between the local institution and the public more authentic and powerful because the practitioner demonstrates that what the public says matters. Therefore, listening to the public is often key to creating a dynamic and trustworthy communication environment.

When communication is transparent and authentic, it builds trust. This helps administrators build relationships with important publics. Transparency and disclosure are also important to publics and society because they allow for a democratic society and the free flow of ideas. Finally, transparency and disclosure help to enhance the profession of public relations because they help those outside the field to better understand what public relations is, and what it is not, and the field's commitment to ethical, truthful, and symmetrical communication. An important part of symmetrical communication is the concept that publics are informed and consent to the actions that members are taking. The public should not be asked for consent to an action without all the necessary information; they also should not only be consulted but involved in action of project implementation.

Therefore, a key to good governance is transparency as it reinforces public participation and accountability. All municipal activities should be subject to public scrutiny and council meetings should be open to the public. Access to information for all stakeholders is important. Sikkakane and Reddy (2011) believe that transparency enables people who are affected by development plans to know what options they have, and thus they make informed decisions. They add that, "... transparency is a pre-requisite for successful beneficiary participation in programme design and implementation, as well as for ultimate public support of government's overall expenditure policies." Municipalities have the opportunity to set a new standard of excellence in relation to accountability and transparency, in the process helping to reverse the growing trend of citizens' disillusionment with present institutions.

Sushmita (2021), believes that members of the public who are well informed and actively participate in civic life have greater trust in municipalities. They feel more responsible, demand useful information, and accountability from their governments. Councillors who are unaccountable, irresponsible, or ineffective are voted out of office. However, in some rural areas which are populated by illiterate communities, citizen participation, transparency, and accountability are non-existent or minimal. In such cases, councillors are not committed and citizens do not even know who their ward councillors are.

2.4.2 Operationalisation of the concept of good governance

According to the above core principles of good governance, the application of the concept as well as the definition used by several organisations reflect that at least the principles of transparency, accountability, and participation must be upheld before one can speak of good governance.

Various models on governance, good governance, and service delivery such as those advanced by the Enaifoghe and Maramura (2019) indicate that there are fundamental governance principles that need to be taken into consideration. These principles, when correctly applied and implemented, make it possible for democratic governments to govern and provide services to society in a more effective and efficient manner. Essentially, these principles form the basis for good governance practices and effective service delivery in any democratic society.

2.4.3 Good governance and participatory communication

The South African parliament is regarded as a “deliberative law-making body” (Sant, 2019), and the characteristics of the South African law making process are defined to put people as the centre of policy making. Unlike other forms of participative democracy, the deliberative approach shows that democracy is not just simple set of rules, procedures and institutional designs, and political participation, but rather a process in which citizens exercise ever-deepening control over decisions. There is however an emerging trend of scholarship which asks as to whether participatory communication is an essential mechanism to achieve democracy or a mechanism to achieve something else (Sant, 2019).

Sant further argues that the deliberative theory has significantly lagged behind in terms of theory. This only shows that like other forms of participatory democracy such as liberal market and the liberal representative approaches, the deliberative approach has weaknesses that need substantial revamping. Although governments around the globe recognise the importance of participation, there are existing real challenges such as lack of understanding of the policy process, resources, reliance on volunteers, lack of access to information, poor representation of rural communities, poor relation between government and rural communities, time and policy timelines restrictions that need to be addressed.

Claridge (2004, p. 33) links the limitations of participation to only four elements, namely institutional, cultural, knowledge, and financial resources. In South Africa, however, the view is

still traditional, and participation is viewed as a fundamental element of democracy based on a deliberative approach; hence, the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996) Section 118 reads thus;

(1) A provincial government must; (a) facilitate public involvement in the legislative and other processes of the legislature and its committee; and (b) conduct its business in an open manner, and hold its sittings and those of its committees, in public, but reasonable measures may be taken- (i) to regulate public access, including access of the media to legislature and its committees; and (ii) to provide for the searching of any person and, where appropriate, the refusal of entry to, or the removal of any person; (2) A provincial legislature may not exclude the public, including the media, from a sitting of a committee unless it is reasonable and justifiable to do so in an open and democratic society.

From the above legislative provision, it becomes clear that public involvement in government affairs is allowed so that the public and relevant institutions can exercise their constitutional rights to be informed and to participate.

The purpose of public participation is to ensure that stakeholders affected by a public authority's decisions have a right to be consulted and to contribute to such decisions. The adopted participative theory as well as how the process of public participation is communicated to the participants are very important in determining the success of public participation in South Africa. Not only is communication a problem in public participation, but getting people to participate in policy decisions equally highly difficult (Akbar, Flacke, Martinez & van Maarseveen, 2021). If communication tools are not effectively used to reach the general public, the dissemination of information on public participation is somewhat not easy and continues to be a legislature problem worldwide. The public will continue arguing that their major problem in government participation mechanisms is simply the lack of information on significant activities of the government of the day.

While it is argued that communication with the public can be an effective tool for achieving participation, the path of communication is not easy to drive on. The political environment is different from other environments in the sense that it is charged with emotions, ideas, conflict, and partisanship (Akbar et al, 2021). Communication of political issues is always viewed as an

exchange of political information between the politician and the public. The effective participation tools in the form of communication are hard to find and use. Meaningful public participation takes place only if there is a continuous flow of information to the public which continuously promotes interaction between politicians and the public. This communication should be two-way and not a linear top-down process (Arwidson, 2020) between the legislature and the public.

The legislature must be cautioned about using language and tools that are friendly to the public. It is indeed the manner of the communication that would determine the seriousness at which the public should consider calls for legislative participation which can improve government responsiveness by improving citizens' understanding of their rights and building their capacity to engage in public dialogue and public affairs. It can improve government's performance by providing citizens with direct information on the performance of government and equipping them with the information required to hold government accountable. In this instance, communication can build social capital by encouraging networks and social movements around particular issues. It is therefore seen as essential to all components of the DFID framework (Capability, Accountability, and Responsiveness) and identified roles that communication plays in promotion of good governance. Communication can improve communities' ability to identify and articulate their needs and to measure government's performance. Therefore, the next section sought to determine the factors that affect participatory communication for effective municipal service delivery.

2.5 Factors that affect participation for effective service delivery in rural municipalities

According to the Strategic Plan 2020/2025 presented by COGTA, local governments (LGs) are facing challenges in meeting their mandate of providing basic services that conform to the expectations of communities. This makes LG the challenging stage of any government's developmental strategy. The three spheres of government, namely the national, provincial, and local work together, based on a strong principle of intergovernmental relations in the execution of their mandates, powers, and functions. This is because national and provincial governments are primarily responsible for initiating and formulating policy, while LGs operationalise such policies and transform them into tangible service delivery. However, the implementation of policy is often characterised by a lack of both effective feedback mechanisms and effective management in

respect of monitoring and evaluation systems, a state of affairs that tends to result in an implementation gap between the design and implementation processes (COGTA, 2020).

To strengthen its service delivery plans, the SA government introduced the Batho Pele principles to serve as the acceptable policy and legislative framework for service delivery in the public service. Batho Pele is a strategy that was established to enhance community or public participation and service delivery. South Africa is experiencing massive backlogs, a poor skills base, and persistent service protests, often characterised by the violent destruction of public property. Two major reasons for such protests appear to be the ineffective participatory communication processes that lead to exclusion of general public in planning, formulating, and implementing plans and strategies prepared by the government. The second reason is the inadequate participation of the society to be served by the integrated development plan (IDP) process. This results in dissatisfaction with services promised by municipalities, such as running water and sanitation, electricity, roads, housing, and schools, and, above all, the ineffective participatory communication processes (Naidoo & Ramphala, 2018).

According to Martin (2021), South Africa recorded more than 900 service delivery protests in six months from August 2020 to January 2021 and it seemed that even though the country was still under the pandemic and established COVID-19 regulations, almost nothing stopped them. An assessment conducted on these protests shows how lack of access to information led to the rapid spread of false information (rumours of favouritism), corruption, and mismanagement, some of which is sometimes true. On top of that, the need for services in these areas is not only greater than in other areas, but in most cases it is also out of pure desperation.

In cases like this, participation communication often works best for all concerned because then before undertaking any strike, they evaluate all the transparent information that has been communicated with them. In addition, if the models of communication established are effective enough, communities become satisfied with the level of participation at which they are involved and see value in their involvement (Naidoo & Ramphal, 2018).

Below, Figure 2.3 expresses the process which public participation for enhancing service delivery can follow

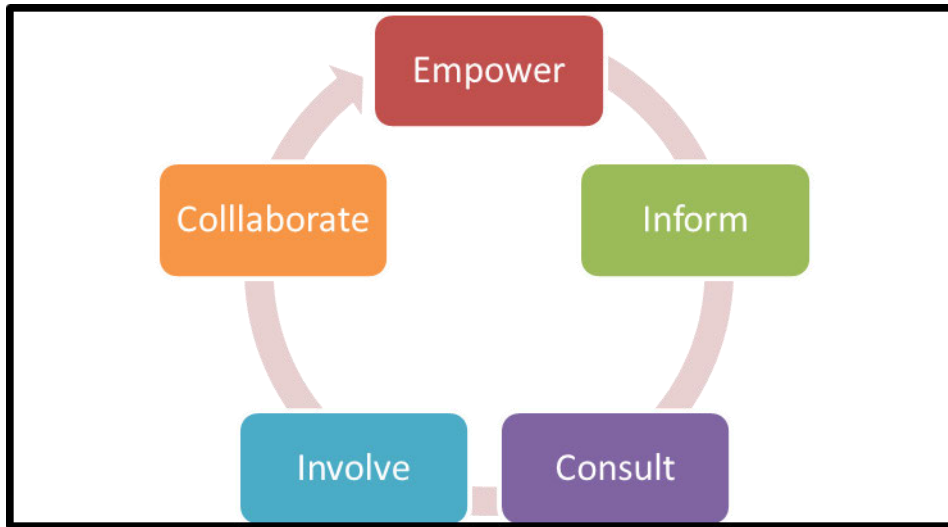


Figure 2. 2: Public Participation Process

Source: Department of Provincial and Local Government (2007)

In the above figure, *Inform* means that the community should be communicated to with well-adjusted and objective information to enable people to understand the problem, the alternatives, and the possible solutions. *Consult* involves obtaining feedback on analysis, alternatives, and decisions. *Involve* means working directly with the community throughout the process to ensure that community issues and concerns are understood and considered at an early stage. The objective of *Collaborate* is to involve the community as equal partners in each aspect of decision-making, including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solutions. *Empower* aims to place the final decision in the hands of the community in order to ensure that it easily accepts the decisions taken by the municipal council.

According to the World Bank (2012), and as indicated earlier, there are three types of community participation: passive participation, which involves only the dissemination of information to stakeholders; consultative participation, which occurs when stakeholders are consulted before a municipality makes a decision, and interactive participation, which occurs when stakeholders are involved in collaborative analysis and decision-making.

As demonstrated, it is shown that participatory communication is affected by several factors, namely accountability and transparency, effective communication, gender representation, power struggles, people centredness, social background, and healthy relationships. The buried factors are

the underlying factors (i.e., facilitating and impeding) that determine the level of municipal service delivery (Mabizela & Matsiliza, 2020).

Transparency is about being easy to understand, open, frank, and honest in all communications, transactions, and operations. Accountability is about being responsible to citizens for actions taken, and about being able to explain, clarify, and justify actions. It implies that citizens have a right to know and hold the local government accountable, and that the local government has a duty to explain and account for its actions. Accountability and transparency go hand-in-hand and involve being aware of whom local governments are accountable to, what the important pieces of information are, and how they can be communicated most effectively to the public (Mabizela & Matsiliza, 2020).

For the effectiveness of development of participation and capacity among public officials, a gap needs to be bridged through community of practice which will in return enhance effective public participation and service delivery. Facilitating inclusivity, including gender representation, is important for effective service delivery. Considering that the size of a municipal territory has a direct impact on public participation in municipal service delivery, smaller municipalities use a people-centred practice in public participation. There should also be healthy relationships among all the stakeholders for effective participation and service delivery to take place (Mabizela & Matsiliza, 2020).

In rural communities there is no proper planned platform for public participation to enhance public service delivery. The main factors that hinder the processes of service delivery are mostly internal, strategic, and operational. Accordingly, rural municipalities do not provide enough services across the entire community because of lack of financial and other limited resources, political influence, and decision making, and a lack of community involvement until there is a crisis of too many parties and stakeholders with their own interests, who get involved in the formulation and implementation of service delivery projects and programmes (Chakunda & Chakaipa, 2015).

The state of rural development is slow and the residents have accepted their standard of living. However, some services are delayed or not delivered at all because of institutional factors that threaten the delivery of services. Other factors pose a challenge of monitoring and evaluating the services delivered by the municipality. Most communities still use the old system of access to

water services and sanitation. This revealed that there is pronounced lack of evaluation to determine whether the plans and systems that are in place are still relevant or whether they need to be upgraded and maintained. Despite government's developmental plans and interventions since 1994, a large population continues to live in poverty (Chakunda & Chakaipa, 2015).

In the case of MLM, in 2018 the residents called on Parliament to urgently discuss the Bill related to the demarcation of areas (Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA), 2007). A community group, the Matatiele-Maluti Mass Action Organising Committee handed a memorandum to local authorities during a peaceful march to demand that the issue be discussed before June 30. The committee said it wanted Matatiele and its villages incorporated into KwaZulu-Natal and off the Eastern Cape (CoGTA, 2007). Later during the year, residents of Matatiele embarked on a service delivery protest that turned violent, and three state vehicles and the Public Works office with important documents were torched (Eye Witness News, 2018). It is therefore against this background that there is an apparent need for participatory communication.

Most poor people in the world live in rural communities. Poverty and social exclusion are more evident in the rural areas, while development and service delivery are better observed in urban areas with developed infrastructure and human settlement. This disparity has led to imbalance and inequality regarding the provision of basic services. The current state, especially with increase in disruptions of local government in rural areas, shows that most rural municipalities are still faced with basic service delivery backlogs (Mabizela & Matsiliza, 2020).

2.6 Integrated Development Plan (IDP)

The concept of integrated development planning was first introduced into municipal law when the Local Government Transition Act (No. 203 of 1993) was replaced with Act 97 of 1996 as a platform for previously marginalised municipalities to directly partake in service delivery planning; reform old and build new institutions, and to identify and prioritise strategic development interventions with both short- and long-term impacts. This process has provided an opportunity for municipal, provincial, and national representatives, as well as other major players, to debate and agree on long-term development strategies (over a 25-year period) and on more immediate ones (over a 5-year period) for a given municipality.

Much like post-conflict peacebuilding, the main focus in South Africa was, and still is, to increase the rate of service delivery, challenge the dualistic nature of its economy, and generate sustainable economic growth. To achieve these goals, the planning process has specifically addressed the following key issues:

- restructuring the apartheid spatial form;
- transforming local government structures to ensure that they promote human-centred development;
- establishing democratic, legitimate and transparent planning processes, and
- fostering a culture of cooperative governance and developing multi-sectoral development plans (Stats, 2018).

Several pieces of legislation and policies influence the nature of planning in South Africa, all of which focus on improving integration. The Local Government Transition Act Second Amendment Act (No. 97 of 1996) defined an IDP as “a plan aimed at the integrated development and management of the area of jurisdiction of the municipality concerned in terms of its powers and duties, and which has been compiled having regard to the general principles contained in Chapter 1 of the Development Facilitation Act, 1995 (No. 67 of 1995), and where applicable, having regard to the subject matter of a land development objective contemplated in Chapter 4 of the Act.” The Municipal Systems Act (No. 32 of 2000) replaced what was defined in the Local Government Transition Act (No. 203 of 1993) in its entirety and now specifies all aspects of the IDP.

The White Paper on Local Government (1998) pronounces that South African municipalities are faced with enormous challenges in developing sustainable settlements which meet the needs, and improve the quality of life of local communities. To meet these challenges, municipalities need IDPs to understand the various dynamics operating within their area, develop a concrete vision for the municipality, and come up with strategies for realising and financing that vision in partnership with other stakeholders.

Central to the legislature are the IDPs which have strategic planning instruments that inform all planning, budgeting, management, and decision making of local municipalities. In essence, IDPs were intended to assist municipalities in achieving their developmental mandates and to guide the activities of any institution or agency operating in the municipal area (Stats, 2018).

2.6.1 The Integrated Development Plan: Key principles

The IDP process, managed by the relevant local government structure, normally begins by defining the vision of a municipality (i.e. the desired end-state), then moves on to identifying key developmental objectives, and proposing various strategies to address these objectives. These strategies are then translated into programmes and projects, which are budgeted for, and ultimately implemented and monitored. Significantly, IDPs are not only structured to inform municipal management for development, but also planned to guide the activities of any institution or agency operating in the municipal area.

Three core principles underpin the IDP process. First, as a *consultative process*, the IDP approach stresses that appropriate fora should be established where local residents, government representatives, NGOs, civil society, and external sector specialists can come together to:

- analyse problems affecting service delivery;
- prioritise issues in order of urgency and long-term importance;
- develop a shared vision/end-state and common strategic framework;
- formulate relevant project proposals;
- compile an inventory of proposals and integrate proposals, and
- assess, align, and approve IDP plans.

Secondly, as a *strategic process*, the IDP approach aims to ensure that:

- local knowledge is combined with the knowledge of technical experts;
- service delivery delays are overcome through consensus building within given periods;
- both the underlying causes and symptoms of service delivery problems are addressed;
- most effective and efficient use of scarce resources is carried out, and
- IDPs are not planned and budgeted in isolation, but rather they are integrated from the start with other complementary sectors.

Lastly, as an *implementation-orientated process*, the IDP aims to become a tool for better and faster service delivery by ensuring that:

- concrete, technically-sound project proposals are designed;
- planning-budget links are created with feasibility in mind, and
- sufficient consensus among key stakeholders on the planned projects is reached.

It is important to mention that IDP strategies, programmes, and projects are not typically cast in stone, but are subject to continual change as conditions in either the internal or external environment fluctuate. Accordingly, IDPs are reviewed annually in line with broader national planning and budgetary process, and are evaluated every five years to understand their true impact on the ground. In this regard, while it has been acknowledged that IDPs, and the supporting inter-governmental planning system, have not been effective in meeting all their intended objectives, Dzinga (2016) suggests that they have, in some measure, enhanced inter-governmental planning and improved the capacity of some district municipalities to deliver on their developmental mandates. Therefore, “there are remarkable stories of IDP success...but the challenge is still huge” (Liebenberg & Van Huyssteen (2007, p 4)

There are indeed many issues that are limiting the impact of IDPs, and among these is that national departments have not always managed to participate in municipal integrated development planning processes in meaningful and sustainable ways. For that reason, the need for better inter-governmental interaction has become increasingly important for South Africa to realise the level of integration that it seeks.

2.6.2 Three ways to ensure integration

The IDP is a developmental approach required for all three spheres of government, and very specifically of local government. Section 152 of the Constitution states that a municipality must promote social and economic development as one of its objectives, and Section 195 requires that public administration must be development-orientated, much more than just a plan. This involves strategies, programmes, setting of goals and objectives, and action steps. It is a five-year route map that informs all municipal activities during the term of office of a municipal council, and the departure point and source document for all other plans including budgetary planning. In recent years, several studies have been commissioned in South Africa to outline better strategies to support integrated development planning. Although differing in several respects, these studies have proposed that multi-agency planning for development requires three basic components, namely structured and systematic interaction; alignment of different planning instruments, and targeted interventions. These three components are summarised below:

2.6.3 Essential ingredients for integrated planning in South Africa

(i) Structured and systematic dialogue

For the reason that the needs of the local are often inconsistent with national priorities and interests, outside actors should engage directly and regularly with local representatives in the field to deliberate issues on service delivery; develop a shared understanding on which objectives to focus on, and to determine the best strategies to reach those objectives. Local participation should happen during all phases of the planning process and not be applied exclusively for initial assessments and prioritisation of needs. Both municipal officials and external agents should have a say in, and be responsible for, the development of the area in question.

(ii) Alignment of planning instruments

The three types of inter-governmental planning instruments should be aligned to ensure unity of effort, namely planning processes, monitoring mechanisms, and budgeting cycles. Area-specific programmes should be aligned with the provincial and national ones. While local authorities should develop their own development plans, provided that these are consistent with the overall national goals and policies, they should also make inputs into national plans. Diverse monitoring and evaluation mechanisms should be aligned to jointly measure whether actions are taking place in accordance with set outcomes and resource allocations, in the right amount and at the right time, and to take corrective measures when and where necessary. Therefore, the sequences of budget cycles in different spheres of government and the implementation of local projects should be aligned with the timeframes of national development spending programmes.

(iii) Targeted interventions

Investment decisions should be informed by the concept of ‘potential’ and planners should distinguish between two types of regions, namely regions with development potential like the best areas for economic growth, job creation, poverty alleviation, and regions with limited growth.

- Regions with development potential (commonly referred to as ‘areas of impact’ in IDP parlance) should become the primary focus areas for government spending and infrastructure development over the short to medium term; ultimately, these regions should serve as pivotal sites or building blocks for longer-term development processes.

- High potential areas should also serve as basic units that drive multi-sectoral planning and budgeting between various spheres and sectors. Thus, different role players should jointly prioritise and concentrate developmental actions and resources in the context of a shared ‘area of impact’.

It should be borne in mind that South Africa has yet to fully implement the above-mentioned policy recommendations. As Gueli, Liebenberg and Van Huyssteen (2007) explain, “a lot has been accomplished but key tasks lie ahead in improving, consolidating, and sustaining the changes that have been made thus far”. That said, South Africa’s desire to create a seamless inter-governmental policy environment for development is unquestionable and noteworthy with respect to current international attempts to develop integrated peacebuilding policies.

2.6.4 IDP as a participatory communication model for developing municipalities

Integrated development planning requires that municipal planning should be developmental and should focus on the needs of the poor. According to Dzinga (2016), this is a new approach to planning that involves the entire municipality and its inhabitants in finding the best solutions to achieve sustainable long-term development, as mandated by the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996) and the Municipal Systems Act (No. 32 of 2000). The IDP guides municipalities on how to plan and facilitate local development initiatives in an integrated manner. Furthermore, it is a master plan that assists municipalities with how they will spend their capital budget for the next five years, and it allows them to set their budget priorities.

However, it should be noted that the IDP is a product of integrated development planning. Ward plans help to ensure that IDPs are more targeted and relevant to addressing the priorities of all groups, including the most vulnerable. Ward-based planning provides ward committees with a systematic planning and implementation process to perform their roles and responsibilities. For the ward committees to become more effective in influencing the policy-making process in local government, they will need to be strengthened and nurtured.

The involvement of community and stakeholder organisations is one of the main features about the IDP. Participation of affected and interested parties ensures that the IDP addresses the real issues that are experienced by the citizens of a municipality. The IDP Guide Pack II (2003, p. 26)

asserts that a public participation strategy in the IDP process needs to be approved by a council. The proposed process for public participation is as follows:

First, the IDP Steering Committee formulates a proposal for the strategy, taking into consideration the need to comply with any relevant legislation (for example, the Municipal Systems Act and IDP Regulations). Secondly, the proposal is submitted to the council for consideration and approval. Once the strategy is approved by council, the IDP Steering Committee has the responsibility to implement it. Lastly, the IDP Steering Committee presents the strategy to the first meeting of the IDP Representative Forum.

In designing a strategy for public participation in the IDP process, a municipality must take into consideration the issues of the elected council, as the ultimate decision-making forum on IDPS. It has to give members of the community an opportunity to provide input on the decisions taken by the council. To ensure public participation, the legislation requires municipalities to create appropriate conditions that will enable members of the community to participate. However, participation in the IDP process needs clear rules and procedures specifying who is to participate, who will not directly participate but are consulted, and on which issues should direct participation or consultation take place.

The way public participation is structured has to provide sufficient room for diversity within the municipal area in terms of different cultures, gender, language, and educational level, and participation costs can be kept at an acceptable level if potential participants are made aware of the fact that it is in their own interests to be involved in the planning process and it is not a task they have to be paid for.

When developing a strategy for public participation, the municipality must ensure that conducive conditions are created for proper and successful participation (IDP Guide Pack II, 2003, p. 29). Some of the issues to consider include informing communities and stakeholders about the municipality's intention to embark on the integrated development planning process; for example, through newspapers, community radio stations, ward councilors and ward committees. The use of appropriate language is important to allow all stakeholders to freely participate. In order to maximise attendance, public participation events should be held at an easily accessible venue and at convenient times.

Through its IDP committee and councillors, the municipality should use all appropriate means above and beyond to create the necessary conditions to encourage public participation. The draft planning documents must be made accessible to all community members and stakeholders to comment on; council meetings on the approval of the IDP should be open to the public, and copies of the final IDP must be available to all members of the community and stakeholders.

2.7 Participatory communication tools

The success of public participation is dependent on a variety of factors in as far as the public is to be engaged. Discounting the effective communication tools and financial costs associated with the process itself, there is also a problem of the public's willingness to participate in policy processes. There is a problem with those "willing to participate, but unable to participate" because of limitations such as language barriers, geographical distance, and lack of resources, and those "able to participate, but unwilling" because of important commitments, lack of interest in politics, seeing no personal gains, and not trusting the government to take their input into consideration (Rydin & Pennington, 2000). In addition, the concerned publics are often not even informed of why their contributions are not considered.

Many legislatures around the globe face challenges of effective communication tools to engage the public on governments' programmes of action. McLoughlin (2020) indicates that legislators in the United States (US) use simple communication tools such as one-to-one communication, telephones, emails, and letters. The United Kingdom (UK) has moved from the local meetings to a series of legally adopted Communication Strategy. All such communications and participation are tools which are called lower-level participation tools, while higher level tools involve citizens, juries, planning cells, focus groups, two-way inter action, discussions, and deliberation sessions between policy makers and the public. South Africa also does not use different methods of communication compared to the rest in the globe, as it uses public and media liaison approaches which are predominantly used to engage the public on government's programme of action. Examples are publication and broadcast of legislative proceedings, journalistic coverages, parliamentary debates, African Journal of Public Affairs newsletters, and legislative websites. These forms of communication also have their own limitations.

The National Democratic Institute (2013) notes that only communication tools that fit the circumstances of a country are likely to be effective and make significant contribution to the

manner in which the public may participate in public policy formulation and decision-making processes. Public administration and the political actors are encouraged to apply a communication model that encourages public participation in the communication process. It may seem however that not much has been achieved in the communication ecology of the society (Riege & Lindsay, 2006) in the sense that no communication tool has been completely done away with in political communication. There have been developments though with the use of digital and electronic technology to complement the print and interpersonal communication tools that have been and are still in use in communicating with the public for policy formulation and decision making.

Ultimately, it is not solely communication tools that can ensure attainment of public participation and the highest level of public participation in the policy formulation and decision-making processes in the South African legislative environment, but also the maximum utilisation of effective communication tools. Furthermore, citizens should be accorded a whole set of rights to ensure an open, participatory, and responsive government. The focal point of contact for the local citizenry is through service delivery. A municipality should identify and establish programmes to consolidate this relationship to promote active citizen participation, which includes consultation and information-sharing which will provide an informed basis for policymaking in order to address developmental challenges hence the constitutionalisation of the IDP in local municipalities (Riege & Lindsay, 2006).

2.8 Challenges identified regarding the participatory communication model

Public participation can be time-consuming and sometimes expensive. To do it effectively, organisations have to build capacity and train staff. If done poorly, public participation processes can result in, for example, loss of faith in the agency. A negative experience of the process may lead participants to have negative perceptions of the outcome, and they may be less likely to participate in future processes. A major internal challenge in public participation is inadequate financial and human resources.

Involving the public in decision-making is time-consuming and costly in terms of money and energy. Starting from the planning process, it needs a lot of time to establish a meaning process that can effectively engage people and their thoughts. Administrators already have a heavy workload, so it is challenging for them to spend more time and energy on public engagement. In addition, the arrangement of fora, workshops, or public meetings requires adequate funds, long

preparation times, and enough staff. Comparing with the benefits, the transaction cost may be even higher. Therefore, conducting a participation project with a low cost is challenging.

Some administrators who organise the public engagement process are not equipped with engagement skills, and may also have less experience in public participation and engagements. Skilled practitioners are critical to the success of participation as they can facilitate the process, maintain a good relationship with citizens, and generate better results. Although some agencies offer external service, courses, or workshops to train the administrators about public participation, they are often expensive and do not take the context into consideration. In fact, a simplified engagement process that the practitioner can easily practice is more practical and beneficial.

Participating in public meetings is usually not a priority for people when competing with work, household, or other daily obligations. Less time is available after completing daily chores, which makes the engagement more difficult. Furthermore, traditional public engagement approaches generally take a longer time with less satisfying results, leading to an even lower rate of participation. Thus, increasing the efficiency of the participation approaches without compromising the outcomes is an urgent need. Another external factor of the low participation level is that the public shows less interest in public matters. How to motivate the citizens, stimulate their interests, and obtain meaningful inputs are the questions that practitioners need to answer. To increase the participation level, multiple ways and opportunities can be provided to citizens. For example, encouraging the public to participate in public issues related to their daily life or offering rewards for participation are the possible solutions.

In the context where there is a variety of nationalities, culture, or language barriers, it is always a problem to effectively address matters. People who do not master the local language are often excluded from public meetings simply because of language. Particularly, in a rural community where vernacular language is a media language as most citizens are illiterate and unable to hold strong engagements in English, language is the main reason for excluding the illiterate as one of the marginalised groups.

According to the Urban Sector Network (2001), all other participatory structures experience challenges such as democratic practice. Democratic practice is still work in process, a step at which people do not know how to engage constructively with government and development agencies,

and are not aware that they are the backbone of development in their areas. Most rural citizens have low levels of education and cannot comprehend some of the issues and technical aspects of decisions taken, preventing them from making meaningful contributions.

While participation is voluntary, it also can be expensive and time-consuming (Buccus and Hicks 2008, p. 529) as it requires individual commitment by the citizens. It is hindered by the high levels of unemployment and poverty, that when it is actively actioned, it elicits high expectations. Inadequate capacity-building regarding organisational guidance and resourcing can also hinder meaningful participation, resulting in internal conflicts and total collapse of the participatory structures (Buccus and Hicks, 2008, p. 534). This then requires municipalities to develop strategies to enhance participation, particularly in rural communities, so that these communities could take ownership of their wards and make conscious efforts to actively participate in local governance.

2.9 Summary

The chapter has presented a literature review. It expanded on the participatory communication model for rural municipalities, the legislation and documents fundamental to local government, such as the Municipal Structures Act (Act 117 of 1997), the White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery (1997), and the White Paper on Local Government (1998), as well as the good governance model. Furthermore, the chapter discussed the importance of communication modes utilised when engaging with citizens, the importance of the involvement of citizens in decision making regarding municipal programmes such as the IDP, service delivery in local government, and community perceptions on service delivery, as well as factors affecting participatory communication at large.

To encourage participation, municipalities should ensure that communities are aware of the different ways in which they can participate in municipal affairs (Reddy and Sikhakane, 2008). Municipalities should also ensure that members of the community know what their rights and duties are. Obligated to provide the community with information about municipal governance, management, and development so that the community is able to make informed inputs into participatory processes. When providing this information, municipalities must consider the different languages which are used in the area, and the special needs of people who cannot read and write (Reddy & Sikhakane, 2008).

As outlined earlier, there are limited solutions to general situations of poverty and cultural subjugation. These ideas are deeply popular with elites, including elites in the Third World, but there is nonetheless widespread acceptance of dialogic communication as a normative theory of participatory communication. One problem with this normative of dialogical communication is that it is based on group dialogue rather than such amplifying media as radio, print, and television. Little attention is paid to the language or method of communication, devoting most of discussions to the intentions of communication actions (Reddy & Sikhakane, 2008).

The second discourse about participatory communication has however acknowledged that depending on the typical government system in power, communication of government information to the public has always been selective and making sure that particular information does not reach certain people. Social media have closed those restrictive practices in governments. In South Africa the apartheid regime communicated policy decisions to the white minority groups more than to the majority of the South African racial groups. As much as literature attests that governments around the globe do not appreciate new technologies for formal public participation, it is unfortunate as such seem to be the only available option (Reddy & Sikhakane, 2008).

Bohnen and Kallmorgen (2009) proclaim that like other countries of the globe, South Africa cannot afford to dodge the realities of applying and accepting the use of social networks to engage the public on policy issues. While it is acknowledged that social media can be used for communication, it is still possible that such communication tools cannot be used without recognising other forms of traditional communication tools. South Africa has a limitation of literacy levels, just like all other countries in Africa. The largest majority of voters in South Africa are the youth, who fortunately can communicate in the language understood by them through social media. However, because of their literacy levels, the older generation will continue to struggle not because of access to new technology but because some may not be able to communicate in the language used.

CHAPTER 3: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the theoretical framework employed for this study, with a focus on the identifiable theories, such as participatory communication and the critical framework. This is because the nature of the research questions and the approaches of the study appear suitable for the theoretical foundation of participatory communication and the critical theory, particularly for sustainable development of rural municipalities. The communication strategy employed at the MLM is also examined to measure its effectiveness and nature.

3.2 Participatory communication theoretical framework

The theory of participation has been discussed globally by researchers. Participation in community projects refers to the active involvement of local people in development initiatives intended to improve their lives. This section examines the elements of participatory communication in terms of their relationship to the case study.

3.1.1. Participation

Schenck and Louw (1995) describe the term ‘participation’ as a process in which individuals and community members express and identify their development needs and priorities through collaboration with stakeholders on development initiatives that impact their lives. For Jennings (2000:1), participatory development is the “involvement of local populations in the creation, content, and conduct of a program or policy designed to change their lives”, while Swanepoel and de Beer (1998) view participatory development as a self-sustaining process to engage community members in activities that meet their basic needs.

The above researchers note that participatory development refers to all stakeholders engaging in activities that benefit them within a community setting. Such engagement, in essence, leads to the desired change as identified by the affected citizens. The role of citizens is to create change through involvement in the development process and their involvement includes problem identification and assessment, planning, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation (Schenck & Louw, 1995). Thus, meaningful participatory development refers to the active role of beneficiaries in all stages of the development process, including identification of the problem through to monitoring

and evaluation of the project. Through their active involvement, it is anticipated that local people become empowered, capacitated through learning new skills, and can take control of their own development priorities. This ensures sustainable long-term development.

3.1.2 Elements of participatory communication:

(i) Capacity building

According to Hacker et al. (2012), capacity building is an essential element of sustainable development and refers to the improvement of skills and knowledge which enable people at community level to respond more effectively to community challenges. Increased capacity fosters and sustains positive change. It is for this reason that capacity building is a long-term investment which ensures that local citizens are able to improve their quality of life. More so, capacity building occurs at multiple levels such as individual, organisational, and community levels. Scholars argue that positive change occurs through participation at these levels when beneficiaries are actively involved in development initiatives. Capacity building occurs when local people are the instigators of their own change and other stakeholders such as the government and NGOs only have enabling and facilitating roles (Theron & Mchunu, 2016).

(ii) Empowerment

According to Theron (2017), building of capacity through participation leads to empowerment, which is one of the concentrations of the people-centred development approach. It explains that empowerment is about gaining confidence and vision for positive change and occurs through participating in the different stages of development processes. The outcome is that the local people are able to take responsibility for creating a better quality of life for themselves and rely less on outside agents in achieving their developmental concerns. In the same context it demonstrates that empowerment relates to people who gain control over their lives, take the necessary action to meet their needs, and work collectively to reach their goals for effective social and human development. It has a similar view and also argues that empowerment is a process which enables people to take command of the development process and make their own analysis and decisions about priorities that they identify at the local level. For De Beer and Swanepoel (2006), empowerment should also include the transfer of political power from the privileged as well as government to the grassroots.

This way, the “people are encouraged to manage and mobilise their local resources, with government in an enabling role”. This means that local people make their own decisions, and decision-making is a bottom-up grassroots process.

3.3. Participatory models

Participatory models are central mechanisms that provide platforms for people to unite and to engage. Scholars (Cornwall, 2002; Cornwall, 2004; Avritzer, 2002; Gaventa, 2006) note that participatory methods are spaces created by citizens and governmental institutions with the purpose of engaging and exploring ideas for development initiatives such as IDPs. Such engagement opportunities are also seen as spaces where citizens and policy makers come together to signify transformation potential (Gaventa, 2006). Cornwall (2002, 2004) differentiates between institutional and non-institutional models. Penderis (2012, p. 1) explains that institutional spaces are “sites within which state and society can interact and engage in mutually reinforcing ways to address development challenges at the local level”. These formal spaces are government-provided platforms frequently mandated by legislation to enable citizens to participate, engage, collaborate, and reach compromises in matters of governance. This means that the institutional spaces are created as enabling environments for the public to engage and be involved in their own development (Cornwall, 2004). Institutional spaces are also referred to as invited spaces which are government-created arenas, initiated to enable citizens to participate in governance decision-making and development initiatives (Cornwall, 2002, 2004).

However, the public often becomes frustrated due to being excluded. They accuse government of paying lip service to the notion of participation and assert that such platforms are frequently used for merely providing information. It is for this reason that the people create or invent their own spaces, which are referred to as non-institutional spaces. Non-institutional spaces are described as popular or organic spaces created by people with common interests. Cornwall (2002) explains that popular spaces emerge in an organic manner motivated by like-minded people who congregate for the same goal. Such spaces are described as sites of ‘radical possibility’ (Cornwall, 2002), where those who are marginalised or excluded find a voice or a place where people can defend their interests (Penderis, 2012). These spaces are initially created to challenge the authority on concerns

which are poorly addressed. This is why the people gather for the same purpose and create protest spaces in order for their voices to be heard.

3.4. Levels of participation

Citizen participation takes place in many forms and at different levels. Scholars such as Arnstein (1969), Pretty (1995) and Wilcox (1996) have deliberated on the participatory levels of intensity, which is a useful starting point for differentiating between degrees and kinds of participation. For the purpose of this research, Arnstein’s (1969) typology was used to measure participation of the MLM community in municipal governance. Her typology of citizen participation is presented as a metaphorical “ladder,” with each ascending rung representing increasing levels of citizen agency, control, and power. In addition to the eight “rungs” of participation, Arnstein includes a descriptive continuum of participatory power that moves from *nonparticipation* (no power) to *degrees of tokenism* (counterfeit power) to *degrees of citizen participation* (actual power).

The ladder of citizen participation

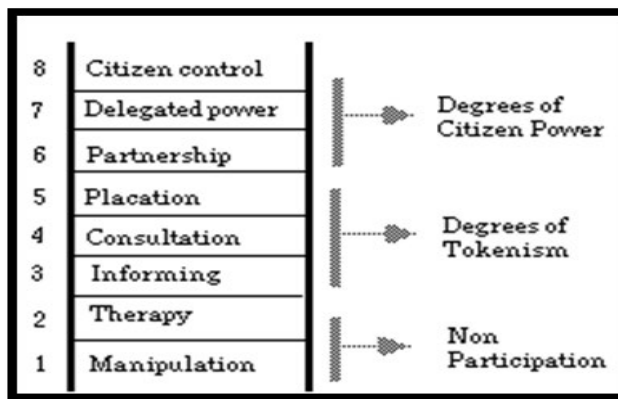


FIGURE 3.1: The ladder of participation (Arnstein, 1969)

The eight rungs of the ladder of citizen participation are:

1. Manipulation

An “illusory” form of participation, *manipulation* occurs when public institutions, officials, or administrators mislead citizens into believing they are being given power in a process that has been intentionally manufactured to deny them power. In Arnstein’s words:

In the name of citizen participation, people are placed on rubber stamp advisory committees or advisory boards for the express purpose of ‘educating’ them or engineering their support. Instead of genuine citizen participation, the bottom rung of the ladder signifies the distortion of participation into a public relations vehicle by powerholders. (Arnstein, 1969: p216 - 224).

This way, the masses are manipulated and they are denied power, but they do not know it.

2. Therapy

Participation as *therapy* occurs when public officials and administrators “assume that powerlessness is synonymous with mental illness,” and they create pseudo-participatory programmes that attempt to convince citizens that *they are the problem* when in fact it is established institutions and policies that are creating the problems for citizens. Arnstein (1969, p216 – 224) words, “What makes this form of ‘participation’ so invidious is that citizens are engaged in extensive activity, but the focus of it is on curing them of their ‘pathology’ rather than changing the racism and victimisation that create their ‘pathologies’.”

3. Informing

While Arnstein acknowledges that *informing* “citizens of their rights, responsibilities, and options can be the most important first step toward legitimate citizen participation,” she also notes that:

Too frequently the emphasis is placed on a one-way flow of information—from officials to citizens—with no channel provided for feedback and no power for negotiation...meetings can also be turned into vehicles for one-way communication by the simple device of providing superficial information, discouraging questions, or giving irrelevant answers. (Arnstein, 1969, p216 - 224).

In *informing* situations, citizens are “intimidated by futility, legalistic jargon, and prestige of the official” to accept the information provided as fact or endorse the proposals put forward by those in power.

4. Consultation

Similarly, Arnstein notes that “inviting citizens’ opinions, like informing them, can be a legitimate step toward their full participation”. However, when *consultation* processes are:

... not combined with other modes of participation, this rung of the ladder is still a sham since it offers no assurance that citizen concerns and ideas will be considered. The most frequent methods used for consulting people are attitude surveys, neighbourhood meetings, and public hearings. People are primarily perceived as statistical abstractions, and participation is measured by how many come to meetings, take brochures home, or answer a questionnaire. What citizens achieve in all this activity is that they have ‘participated in participation.’ And what powerholders achieve is the evidence that they have gone through the required motions of involving ‘those people’. (Arnstein, 1969, p216 – 224)

In result, when power holders restrict the input of citizens’ ideas solely to this level, participation remains just a window-dressing ritual.

5. Placation

Participation as *placation* occurs when citizens are granted a limited degree of influence in a process, but their participation is largely or entirely tokenistic. Arnstein (1969, p216 – 224) states

An example of placation strategy is to place a few hand-picked ‘worthy’ poor on boards of Community Action Agencies or on public bodies like the board of education, police commission, or housing authority. If they are not accountable to a constituency in the community and if the traditional power elite hold the majority of seats, the have-nots can be easily outvoted and defeated.

In placation, citizens are merely involved to demonstrate that they were involved.

6. Partnership

Participation as *partnership* occurs when public institutions, officials, or administrators allow citizens to negotiate better deals, veto decisions, share funding, or put forward requests that are at least partially fulfilled. In Arnstein’s words:

At this rung of the ladder, power is in fact redistributed through negotiation between citizens and powerholders. They agree to share planning and decision-making responsibilities through such structures as joint policy boards, planning committees, and mechanisms for resolving impasses. After the ground rules have been established through some form of give-and-take, they are not subject to unilateral change. (Arnstein, 1969, p216 – 224.)

Arnstein notes, however, that in many *partnership* situations, power is not voluntarily shared by public institutions, but rather *taken by the citizens* through actions such as protests, campaigns, or community organising.

7. Delegated power

Participation as *delegated power* occurs when public institutions, officials, or administrators give up at least some degree of control, management, decision-making authority, or funding to citizens. A citizen board or corporation that is tasked with managing a community programme, rather than merely participating in a programme managed by a city, would be an example of delegated power. According to Arnstein (1969), “At this level, the ladder has been scaled to the point where citizens hold the significant cards to assure accountability of the programme to them. To resolve differences, powerholders need to start the bargaining process rather than respond to pressure from the other end.”

8. Citizen control

Participation as *citizen control* occurs, in Arnstein’s words, when “participants or residents can govern a programme or an institution, be in full charge of policy and managerial aspects, and be able to negotiate the conditions under which ‘outsiders’ may change them”. In citizen-control situations, for example, public funding would flow directly to a community organisation, and that organisation would have full control over how that funding is allocated.

3.5 Limitations of the model

Like any model, framework, or simplifying metaphor, the Ladder of Citizen Participation can only explain so much. A standard criticism of two-dimensional models, particularly those that can be

interpreted as graduated hierarchical scales that ascend from lower to higher is that they cannot adequately represent the layered complexity or fluctuating power dynamics that are typically in play in real-world participatory situations. Another is that the tendency is to interpret lower levels as universally negative (or worse) and higher levels as universally positive (or better) when, in fact, lower levels may be positive in some circumstances and higher levels negative in others. For example, it may be perfectly appropriate to inform community members about already-made decisions in some situations (e.g., district administrative decisions about teachers' and staff's salaries), or to withhold control from citizens in other aspects, such as when they may not have the specialised skills or expertise required for a given task (e.g., managing public funds on a large project). Yet, as Arnstein notes, the model's simplicity is precisely what makes it effective as a conceptual tool: "The ladder juxtaposes powerless citizens with the powerful in order to highlight the fundamental divisions between them" (Arnstein, 1969, p216 – 224).

Arnstein describes a few other limitations of the model:

"The justification for using such simplistic abstractions," Arnstein (1969, p216 – 224) states, "is that in most cases the have-nots really do perceive the powerful as a monolithic 'system,' and powerholders actually do view the have-nots as a sea of 'those people,' with little comprehension of the class and caste differences among them." Yet in reality "neither the have-nots nor the powerholders are homogeneous blocs. Each group encompasses a host of divergent points of view, significant cleavages, competing vested interests, and splintered subgroups".

Arnstein notes that the ladder does not include an analysis of the "roadblocks" to authentic citizen participation and empowerment:

These roadblocks lie on both sides of the simplistic fence. On the powerholders' side, they include racism, paternalism, and resistance to power redistribution. On the have-nots' side, they include inadequacies of the poor community's political socioeconomic infrastructure and knowledge-base, plus difficulties of organising a representative and accountable citizens' group in the face of futility, alienation, and distrust. (Arnstein, 1969, p216 – 224)

Arnstein is also aware that in "the real world of people and programmes, there might be 150 rungs with less sharp and 'pure' distinctions among them" and that:

Some of the characteristics used to illustrate each of the eight types might be applicable to other rungs. For example, employment of the have-nots in a programme or on a planning staff could occur at any of the eight rungs and could represent either a legitimate or illegitimate characteristic of citizen participation. Depending on their motives, powerholders can hire poor people to co-opt them, placate them, or utilise the have-nots' special skills and insights. Some mayors, in private, actually boast of their strategy in hiring militant black leaders to muzzle them while destroying their credibility in the black community. (Arnstein, 1969, p216 – 224)

While *citizen control* appears at the apex of the ladder, and it offers many advantages as a model of citizen participation, Arnstein notes several potential disadvantages:

It supports separatism; it creates balkanisation of public services; it is more costly and less efficient; it enables minority group 'hustlers' to be just as opportunistic and disdainful of the have-nots as their white predecessors; it is incompatible with merit systems and professionalism; and ironically enough, it can turn out to be a new Mickey Mouse game for the have-nots by not allowing them sufficient dollar resources to succeed. (Arnstein, 1969, p216 – 224)

The other seven rungs of the ladder present similar complexities, along with a host of potential advantages and disadvantages.

3.6 Advantages of participatory communication

Participatory development is described as the involvement of people in their own development through initiating plans and taking ownership of development projects. As such, participatory development has the potential to bring real benefits to poor communities. Onyenemezu (2014) discusses these benefits, which include enabling local people to express their desires and priorities, leading to empowered local people through their active involvement. Cornwall and Brock (2005) further note that people are enabled to mobilise collectively to define and claim their rights, while Mayo and Craig (1995) assert that active involvement in decision-making processes results in empowerment of participants, where local people are enabled to learn, be self-reliant, take ownership, and to solve their own problems.

Irvin and Stansbury (2004) argue that participatory development approaches enable administrators and local government officials to have regular contact with citizens in projects and policy processes, which gives them the opportunity to learn from local residents. Mathur (1997) concur with this viewpoint, arguing that the merits of citizen participation in local government are to inform government and to provide meaningful input. Within this context, administrators and officials are able to make use of local or indigenous knowledge within project and policy decision-making. The reason is that local knowledge is seen as an enabler as it allows local people to identify needs that are natural to their environment.

Korten (1987), Van Vlaenderen (2001) and Oppong (2013) refer to indigenous knowledge as the practices, skills, and knowledge inherent within local communities and recognise the positive role that an understanding of indigenous knowledge of different contexts of local people can play in the success of development projects and policy-making. The importance of drawing on indigenous knowledge, according to Schenck and Louw (2004), is that local people understand own contexts and have learned to take charge of own lives and solve own problems through reflection on past experiences. It is for this reason that development workers must build on local knowledge systems when working with communities in decision-making processes to bring about meaningful change. Meaningful participation in development projects builds ownership and self-reliance of local people as a result of their increased knowledge and skills gained through decision-making processes and development initiatives. This means that locals are able to take ownership over their own project initiations as they are the enforcers and the implementers of these. Their involvement and increased capacity have a replication effect, which further empowers the local people by increasing their self-reliance (Van Vlaenderen, 2001).

Scholars such as Galtung et al. (1980), Preiswerk (1980) and Fonchingong and Fonjong (2003) regard self-reliance as the utilisation of resources to the communities' own benefit to achieve a specific objective, which further motivates locals to complete specific goals. Self-reliant communities are far less dependent on outside sources for motivation, resources, as well as project initiation, and in most cases, such communities are familiar with what is available and they function accordingly.

3.7 Development communication

Development communication is the heart-beat of people being actively involved in their own well-being. This is because it serves as an enabling process which makes people the leading actors in their own development. In essence, communication enables people to shift from being recipients of external development interventions to generators of their own development (Okigbo & Mou, 2017). This viewpoint is echoed by Molale and Fourie (2022) when they argue that participation in development initiatives cannot occur without communication, as it is a social action of people's social relations. It is for this reason that community communication has been identified as an important component of development, as it is an engagement mechanism between the state and society and as it is indispensable to bringing about social change and transformation. Rogers (1976) views communication development as an engaging mechanism as it has a role in conveying informative and persuasive messages from government to the public.

3.7.1 Evolution of development communication

Development communication emerged within the framework of communication and the media's contribution to development in Third World countries. According to Okigbo and Mou (2017), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and US AID (The American Aid agency) sponsored a number of projects to make full use of the media as a communication medium, for information or educational purposes, with a facilitation role in development. The promotion of communication development was first used in the Philippines by Professor Nora Quebral in the 1970s as a transmitting and communicating process to gain new knowledge related to rural environments. The evolution of development communication was rooted in the participatory approaches that emerged in the 1970s as development approaches of the 1950s and 1960s were under scrutiny for their dominant top-down approaches (Molale & Fourie, 2022). This approach gained momentum during the 1980s and 1990s and was linked to the spread of democracy and support of participatory decision-making at the local level during that period (Okigbo & Mou, 2017).

3.7.2. Development communication

The experiences of the past 50 years of development efforts have clearly demonstrated the indispensable role that communication plays. For the participatory paradigm, development has been perceived as not something that can be imported from the western tradition, but something that can be emerged out of the indigenous cultures. The participatory paradigm rejects the assumptions of the modernisation paradigm that advocates a universal model of development; it instead advocates culture-specific and people-centred holistic development approaches. In other words, development has been understood as a participatory process of social change within a given society. This participatory process needs genuine participation of the local community and the contextualisation of development works into local cultures and settings (Rogers, 1976; Searveas, 2008; Mefalopulos, 2008).

Contrary to the modernisation paradigm that considers the developing culture as a bottleneck for development and emphasizes on the economic dimension of development, this participatory approach acknowledges the role of culture for development and focuses on the human dimension of development. Thus, the participatory paradigm widens the horizon of development concepts by including the non-material notions of development such as social equality, freedom, and justice, through which the grassroots level of participation can be maintained in the development process.

Different from the top-down and one-way communication approach of the modernisation and dependency paradigms in the process of development, the participatory approaches acknowledge the dialogical and horizontal nature of communication for achieving development. This alternative paradigm presumes the indispensable role of two-way communication for empowerment of the poor and marginalised sections of the developing nations and rejects the old assumption that mere transmission of information could not be enough for achieving development (Melkote & Steeves, 2001).

The basic tenets of dialogical participatory communication such as empowerment, dialogical, problematisation, endogenous, action and reflection, acquiring skills, increasing self-confidence, control over oneself and one's environment, achieving quality of life, freedom, understanding

one's ability, and limitations are used as theoretical framework to analyse the data (Melkote & Steeves, 2001; Freire, 2005).

Theoretically, the potential of participatory communication for sustainable development has been acknowledged. Participation is a buzzword in the development discourse and is preached as the hopeful and legitimate path for sustainable development. However, when it comes to the practical level, its potential is challenged by a number of factors. This section discusses different challenges that limit the adoption of participatory communication for development. Waisbord's (2008) institutional perspective on challenges of participatory communication brings forth the bureaucratic factors that hinder the application of participatory communication. The institutional dynamics denigrate the potential of participatory communication in three ways. These three are bureaucratic requirements for messaging, making communication a subsidiary discipline, and seeking technical solutions to political problems.

Development communication refers to the use of communication strategies and public information to facilitate development and socio-economic transformation and it paves the way for people to be involved in all levels of development processes in sharing information and knowledge, trust, and commitment (Molale & Fourie, 2022). For Okigbo and Mou (2017), development communication is a combination of information and evaluation processes, as well as actions to solicit, encourage, and motivate the participation of local communities in their own well-being. Development communication has been characterised by the use of mass media that consider people as audiences to be influenced by the messages communicated and received (Mefalopulos, 2008). It is within this context that development communication is defined as a technological process to promote social change, which favours people's active and direct interaction through consultation and dialogue over the traditional one-way information dissemination through mass media (Wilkins, 2000; Mefalopulos, 2008).

Similarly, Okigbo & Mou (2017) describes development communication as two conceptual frameworks. The first one is knowledge transfer and the second one is a participatory process, in which people or the community involved are empowered. The community is empowered through communication that occurs in group meetings and workshops, which enable people to share knowledge and information. Empowerment occurs through the exchange of ideas and knowledge

which in turn builds capacity and enables people to contribute meaningfully to the development processes. This relates to the main purpose of participatory development which is to enable people to take control of their own development and well-being. It also infers that the means to be enabled and empowered are dependent on how people engage or interact with one another in the community. Most importantly, it is seen as an educational process in which communities, with the assistance of facilitators, identify their needs and become agents of their own development (Okigbo & Mou, 2017)).

Lunenburg (2010) states that communication is a process of transferring and receiving information, and it results in mutual understanding from one person to another of a particular topic. Similarly, Frantz (2018) views communication as a dynamic process of exchanging meaningful messages in which people interact to enable meaning and understanding. Communication is therefore seen as an interaction that is changeable, meaningful, and transactional to all participants involved. This emphasises that effective communication leads to participation of local communities as they engage, interact, and participate actively on issues which concern them. Communication techniques maximise participation, and through engagement, local knowledge of participants is built through working together on development projects.

Altogether, communication in participatory development has an important role to play besides actual participation. Participants further deliberate and engage in discussions and reach consensus based on their specific needs and challenges (Sarvaes, 2017). Communication at this level should result in the meaningful involvement of all stakeholders such as the community, government, and non-governmental organisations, as the exchange of ideas and information enables them to achieve one goal. More importantly, in this regard, communication is used as a tool to inform developmental decision-making processes. It is within this context that communication permits the mediation and facilitation processes between government and the community (Sarvaes & Liu, 2007). In brief, communication within development promotes social justice and democracy. The reason is that the exchange of information of all participants contributes to improving the quality of life of communities. In addition, it is a mechanism to gain knowledge to implement the development needs of the beneficiaries with the assistance of the facilitators.

3.8 Participatory communication process

Communication has several definitions. Essentially, it is understood as a sender passing a message to the recipient through any medium. Effective communication, as argued by Rasila and Mudau (2014), is imperative for development in areas such as remote rural municipalities. It is characterised by community participation in which community members are empowered with information and are part of the identification of their needs, intervention plans, implementation, and evaluation and monitoring in an environment conducive for them to take issues of their own development into their own hands by becoming active participants and owners of the whole process.

The participatory communication model includes different kinds of concepts. It stresses the importance of relevance, democratisation, and participation at all levels. It points to a strategy, not merely inclusive of, but largely proceeding from the traditional receivers. In the case of Matatiele Local Municipality, the citizens would expect to be consulted and made part of each and every development decision taken. The citizens would expect transparency from municipal authorities and full involvement in identification of their needs and in implementation of the development plan.

3.9 Participatory communication channels

Participatory communication has three main features. First, it is *people-centred*. This entails that for social and development change to be achieved, civilians should be put at the forefront and their voices must be prioritised (Thomas, 2013). Secondly, there is *communication flow*, which is two-way communication between the local government and the citizens in the communication process (Christens, 2019). Lastly, there is *empowerment*. The principle of empowerment allows communities to be involved in identifying their development needs, in seeking solutions, and making decisions on how to address them (Christens, 2019).

Participatory communication tools focus on people's involvement in all stages of a communication development project and stand in direct contrast with practices where the emphasis is on projects implemented with outside help and in which the beneficiaries are merely passive receivers of the finished product (Molale, 2019). This new approach pointed the way to a theory of sharing of information and knowledge, trust, commitment in development projects, and that projects are more likely to succeed in communication participatory enabling environments. Molale and Fourie

(2022) state that by focusing on participatory involvement of the people, communities can determine the development of their own lives, on identifying their unique needs, developing solutions, empowering themselves, and making changes of their own choice.

The MLM (2016) clusters its communication action plan 2016/2021 into two functions of governance - development and compact accountability relationships. In-between these entry points are necessary milestones for a governance system to work well. Figure 3.2 below shows a diagram linking the internal and external sides of governance. The researcher has designed the figure to show a clear elaboration of the link between the sides.

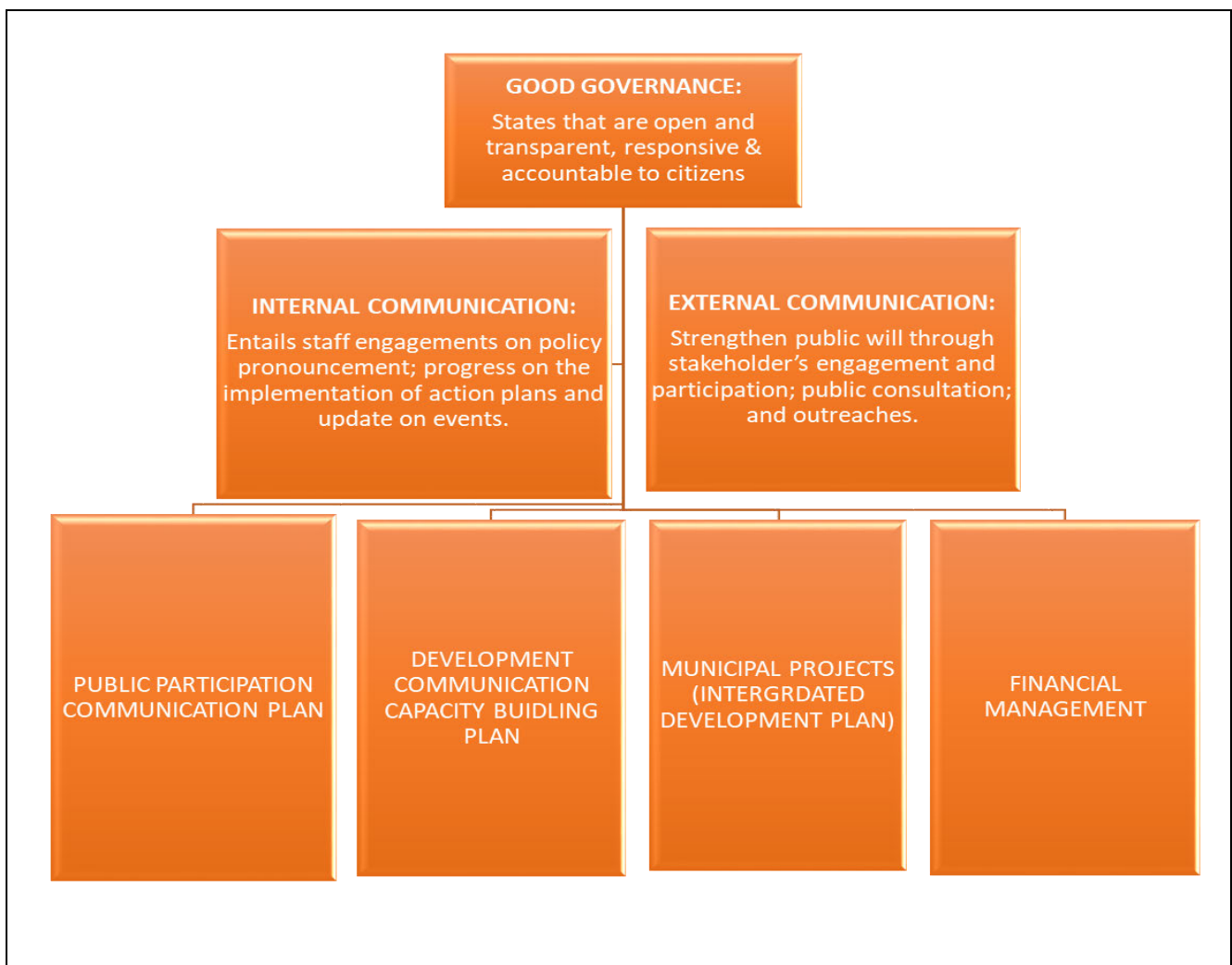


Figure 3. 1: Communication Strategy 2016/2021 for MLM and Alfred Nzo District (Lebenya, 2022).

The above diagram is constructed and designed from the Communication Strategy 2016/2021 of the MLM and Alfred Nzo District. When illustrating the diagram above, the public sector

management is referred to as the central government management and it includes internal and external communications.

3.9.1 Internal communication:

Initially, internal communication aimed at informing staff, and stakeholder engagement was thus assumed. Everyone working under the municipality is a communicator and the role of an emissary is to be a positive representative. Internally, according to the MLM Communication Strategy, the municipality sets strategic goals and a clear vision of what the municipality wants to achieve when communicating with external audiences. A clear goal which helps establish expectations and clarify how personnel can assist in achieving organisational goals is set. For example, the question of who is, who should in any case talk to the media on institutional issues without being delegated by the municipal manager, are made clear. This is where the mayor should speak or pronounce policy relations matters; the speaker should speak on council matters; other political principals must be delighted by the mayor. The Municipal Manager and Head of Communications speak on daily municipal activities and supply content and notes to everyone within through either emails, phone calls, or letters (MLM Communication Strategy, 2016).

To strengthen communication internally, open dialogue and communications are encouraged; departments are encouraged to have meetings allowing for a free flow of ideas and conversations that could serve to create solutions to problems. Filtered meetings have also been shown to increase employee engagement by making them feel included and as part of the decision-making process, which then leads to higher satisfaction (MLM Communication Strategy, 2016).

In addition, multiple communication systems and platforms are often utilised, especially with the recent uptick in remote work. As a result, information overload is likely to become an added challenge, particularly because important communications can get lost within the variety of platforms employees must navigate. To mitigate this, municipalities set to streamline communications in a variety of ways, including reducing the number of communication tools to just one or two common and easy-to-use platforms, and making sure everyone knows what platform will be used.

The public relies on local governments to communicate important information about their community. For this communication to be successful, governments need to get it right within their

organisation first. Every person within the organisation shares a role in building strong internal communications. To ensure that everyone understands goals and vision, streamlining communication platforms and developing best practice strategies serve to strengthen both the municipality and community at large (MLM Communication Strategy, 2016).

3.9.2 External communication

External communication strengthens public will through stakeholder engagement and participation, public consultation, and outreaches. The function allows for the stakeholders to be kept informed and to maintain good working relations. The local communities need to be acquainted with the municipal programme of action plan. Furthermore, the external communication of governance is focused on building public will through participatory and deliberative approaches. A term used to describe both political and civic participation is enabled and encouraged by democratic engagement.

Public participation can take many forms, including encouraging leaders to hold open meetings, writing petitions or letters, and allowing for mobilisation in decision-making. For example, the IDP encourages municipalities to present budgets and policies before citizens every time before the implementation stage in order for citizens to fully identify their needs and rank them according to their importance (The Communication Initiative, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, and the World Bank, 2007). In the Matatiele Local Municipality 2017-2022 Adopted IDP Strategy, Mafube Villlage identified its development needs as water and electricity during the wards needs assessment.

Therefore, as Welby (2019) states, when citizens are more informed, the increase in information leads to opinion change and citizens become more liberated. Effective participatory communication tools show clear interactions between public will and political will in bringing about good governance outcomes; for the reason that it took the willingness of citizens to engage and invest time and effort into the political process; showing the willingness of candidates to campaign on practically supported issue positions. This multi-dimensional understanding of the influence of communication brings together political and public will to consideration of approaches that more openly describe the role of communication and participatory communication flows in municipalities.

3.10 Critical theory

The Critical theory has a narrowed and a broadened meaning in philosophy and in the history of the social sciences. “Critical Theory” in the narrow sense designates several generations of German philosophers and social theorists in the Western European - Marxist tradition known as the Frankfurt School. According to these theorists, a “critical” theory may be distinguished from a “traditional” theory according to a specific practical purpose; a theory is critical to the extent that it seeks human “emancipation from slavery”, acts as a “liberating ... influence”, and works “to create a world which satisfies the needs and powers of” human beings (Horkheimer 1972b, 1992: 246). These theories aim to explain and transform all the circumstances that enslave human beings; in broader sense, many “critical theories” have been developed. The theories have developed in connection with the many social movements that identify factors of the domination of human beings in modern societies.

However, the critical theory provides the descriptive and normative bases for social inquiry aimed at decreasing domination and increasing freedom in all their forms. The basic assumptions of the critical theory are contradiction of tensions, dialectic, and change. The main aim of the theory is to change the political system of the state, advocating for inclusion. It creates consciousness among the individuals and establishes a welfare state where citizens are mostly dependent on the government. The welfare state must provide equality to every individual in society (Box, 2015).

Critical theorists have long sought to distinguish their aims, methods, theories, and forms of explanation from standard understandings in both the natural and the social sciences. They do not just seek to provide the means to achieve some independent goal, but rather (as in Horkheimer’s famous definition mentioned above) seek “human emancipation” in circumstances of domination and oppression. This normative task cannot be accomplished without the interaction of philosophy and social science through interdisciplinary empirical social research (Horkheimer, 1993).

The theory that follows from Horkheimer’s definition is that a critical theory is adequate only if it simultaneously meets three criteria: it must be explanatory, practical, and normative. Thus, it must explain what is wrong with current social reality, identify the actors to change it, and provide both clear norms for criticism and achievable practical goals for social transformation. Any truly critical theory of society, as Horkheimer further defined it in his writings as Director of the Frankfurt

School's Institute for Social Research, "has for its object [human beings] as producers of their own historical form of life" (Horkheimer, 1972b, 1992, p. 244).

In light of the practical goal of identifying and overcoming all the circumstances that limit human freedom, the explanatory goal could be furthered only through interdisciplinary research that includes psychological, cultural, and social dimensions, as well as institutional forms of domination. Given the emphasis among the first generation of Critical Theory on human beings as the self-creating producers of their own history, a unique practical aim of social inquiry suggests itself to transform contemporary capitalism into a consensual form of social life. For Horkheimer a capitalist society could be transformed only by becoming more democratic, to make it such that all conditions of social life that are controllable by human beings depend on real consensus in a rational society (Horkheimer 1972b, 1992: 250). In its form of critical social inquiry, the normative orientation of Critical Theory is towards the transformation of capitalism into a "real democracy" in which such control could be exercised (Horkheimer, 1972b, 1992, p. 250). The focus on democracy as the location for cooperative, practical, and transformative activity is explained by different scholars in attempt to determine the origin and limit of democracy.

Like many other such theories, the theory of communicative action offers its own distinctive definition of rationality. In good pragmatist fashion, Habermas' definition is epistemic, practical, and intersubjective. For Habermas, rationality consists not so much in the possession of knowledge, and primarily concern is put on the consistency and content of one's beliefs; for instance, "how speaking and acting subjects acquire and use knowledge" (Habermas, 1984: 11). Such a broad definition suggests that the theory could be developed through explicating the general and formal conditions of validity in knowing and reaching understanding through language, and this task falls primarily on "formal pragmatics." As one among many different "reconstructive sciences," such a reconstruction of speech is inherently normative, in the sense that it is one of the disciplines that reconstructs a common domain: "the know-how of subjects who are capable of speech and action, who are attributed the capacity to produce valid utterances, and who consider themselves capable of distinguishing (at least intuitively) between valid and invalid expressions" (Habermas 1990: 31).

Communication is certainly an important aspect of a domination-free society. Under public administration, it is however also a form of interaction, in which ideology is, with the help of the

mass media, made available to the dominated groups. The Critical theory is a critique of the political economy; it analyses how resources and information are distributed with public sectors. Analysing the media and communication in modern society from a political-economic perspective means to connect these phenomena to an analysis of power structures, ideologies, concentration tendencies, space and time, the interaction of exploitation and domination, historical social struggle, and the moral quest for a good society (Box, 2015).

Such an approach can be applied to normative features of democratic practices. Rather than only providing a set of explicit principles of justification and institutional decision rules, *democracy* is also a particular structure of free and open communication. *Ideology* restricts or limits such processes of communication and undermines the conditions of success within them. As distorted communication, ideology affects both the social conditions in which democratic discussion takes place and the processes of communication that go on within them. The theory of ideology, therefore, analyses the ways in which linguistic-symbolic meanings are used to encode, produce, and reproduce relations of power and domination, even within institutional spheres of communication and interaction governed by norms that make democratic ideals explicit in normative procedures and constraints. As a reconstruction of the potentially correct insights behind Marx's exaggerated rejection of liberalism, the theory of distorted communication is therefore especially suited to the ways in which meanings are used to reproduce power even under explicit rules of equality and freedom.

Democratic norms of freedom can be made explicit in various rights, including civil rights of participation and free expression. Such norms are often violated explicitly in exercises of power for various ends, such as wealth, security, or cultural survival. Besides these explicit rights, such coercion also violates the communicative freedom expressed in ignoring the need to pass decisions through the taking of yes/no attitudes by participants in communication. Habermas calls such speech that is not dependent on these conditions of communicative rationality "distorted communication". For example, powerful economic groups have historically been able to attain their agency goals without explicitly excluding topics from democratic discussion but by implied threats and other non-deliberative means (Przworski and Wallerstein, 1988; Bohman, 1997). Threats of declining investments block redistributive schemes, so that credible threats circumvent

the need to convince others of the reasons for such policies or to put some issue under democratic control.

Similarly, biases in agenda setting within organisations and institutions limit the scope of deliberation and restrict political communication by defining those topics that can successfully become the subject of public agreement (Bohman, 1990). In this way, it is easy to see how such a reconstructive approach connects directly to social scientific analyses of the consistency of democratic norms with actual political behaviour. As partial communication, this theory of ideology opens up the possibility of a different relation of theoretical and practical knowledge than Habermas has suggested so far.

Habermas' (1996) approach uses formal pragmatics philosophically to reflect upon norms and practices that are already explicit in justifications in various sorts of argumentation or second-order communication. Such reflection has genuine practical significance in yielding explicit rules governing discursive communication (such as rules of argumentation), which in turn can be used for the purpose of designing and reforming deliberative and discursive institutions (Habermas, 1996). It is easily overlooked that such rules are only part of the story; they make explicit and institutionalised norms that are already operative in correct language use. Such implicit norms of well-formed and communicatively successful notes are not identical with the explicit rules of argumentation.

3.10.1 Critics, Observers, and Participants: Two Forms of Critical Theory

The philosophical problem that emerges in critical social inquiry is to identify precisely those features of its theories, methods, and norms that are sufficient to underwrite social criticism. A closer examination of paradigmatic works across the whole tradition from Marx's *Capital* (1871) to the Frankfurt School's *Studies in Authority and the Family* (1939) and Habermas's *Theory of Communicative Action* (1982) reveals neither some distinctive form of explanation nor a special methodology that provides the necessary and sufficient conditions for such inquiry. Rather, at best such works employ a variety of methods and styles of explanation which are often interdisciplinary in their mode of research. What then gives them their common orientation and makes them all works of critical social science?

There are two common, general answers to the question of what defines these distinctive features of critical social inquiry: one practical and the other theoretical. The latter claims that critical social inquiry ought to employ a distinctive theory that unifies such diverse approaches and explanations. On this view, Critical Theory constitutes a comprehensive social theory that will unify the social sciences and underwrite the superiority of the critic. The first generation of Frankfurt School Critical Theory sought such a theory in vain before dropping claims to social science as central to their programme in the late 1940s (Wiggershaus, 1994). By contrast, according to the practical approach, theories are distinguished by the form of politics in which they can be embedded, and the method of verification that this politics entails. However, to claim that critical social science is best unified practically and politically rather than theoretically or epistemically is not to reduce it simply to democratic politics. It becomes rather the mode of inquiry that participants may adopt in their social relations to others. The latter approach has been developed by Habermas and is now favoured by critical theorists.

Before turning to such a practical interpretation of critical social inquiry, it is first necessary to consider why the theoretical approach was favoured for so long and by so many critical theorists. First, it has been long held that only a comprehensive social theory could unify critical social science and thus underwrite a “scientific” basis for criticism that goes beyond the limits of lay knowledge. Secondly, not only must the epistemic basis of criticism be independent of agents’ practical knowledge, but it might also be claimed that the correctness of any explanation is independent of its desirable or undesirable political effects on a specific audience. So conceived, social criticism is then a two-stage affair: first, inquirers independently discover the best explanation using the available comprehensive theory; then, secondly, they persuasively communicate its critical consequences to participants who may have false beliefs about their practices.

Starting with Marx’s historical materialism, large-scale macrosociological and historical theories have long been held to be the most appropriate explanatory basis for critical social science. However, one problem is that comprehensiveness does not ensure explanatory power. Indeed, there are many such large-scale theories, each with its own distinctive and exemplary social phenomena that guides an attempt at unification. A second problem is that a close examination of standard critical explanations, such as the theory of ideology, shows that they typically appeal to

a variety of different social theories (Bohman, 1999b). Habermas's actual employment of critical explanations bears this out. His criticism of modern societies turns on the explanation of the relationship between two very different theoretical terms, namely a micro-theory of rationality based on communicative coordination, and a macro-theory of the systemic integration of modern societies in such mechanisms as the market (Habermas, 1987).

Not only does the idea of a comprehensive theory presuppose that there is one preferred mode of critical explanation, but it also presupposes that there is one preferred goal of social criticism, a socialist society that fulfills the norm of human emancipation. Only with such a goal in the background does the two-step process of employing historical materialism to establish an epistemically and normatively independent stance make sense. The validity of social criticism does not merely depend on it being accepted or rejected by those to whom it is addressed. Pluralistic inquiry suggests a different norm of correctness, that criticism must be verified by those participating in the practice and that this demand for practical verification is part of the process of inquiry itself (Murphy and Fleming, 2010).

Despite his ambivalence between theoretical and practical pluralism, Habermas has given good reasons to accept the practical and pluralist approach. Just as in the analysis of modes of inquiry tied to distinct knowledge-constitutive interests, Habermas accepts that each of the various theories and methods has "a relative legitimacy". The author goes so far as to argue that the logic of social explanation is pluralistic and elides the "apparatus of general theories". In the absence of any such general theories, the most fruitful approach to social scientific knowledge is to bring all the various methods and theories into relation to each other: "Whereas the natural and the cultural or hermeneutic sciences are capable of living in mutually indifferent, albeit more hostile than peaceful coexistence, the social sciences must bear the tension of divergent approaches under one roof ..." (Habermas, 1988, p. 3).

In *The Theory of Communicative Action*, Habermas casts critical social theory in a similar pluralistic, yet unifying way. In discussing various accounts of societal modernisation, for example, Habermas argues that the main existing theories have their own "particular legitimacy" as developed lines of empirical research, and that Critical Theory takes on the task of critically unifying the various theories and their heterogeneous methods and presuppositions. "Critical Theory does not relate to established lines of research as a competitor; rather, starting from its

concept of the rise of modern societies, it attempts to explain the specific limitations and relative rights of those approaches” (Habermas, 1987, p. 375).

This tension between unity and plurality leads to two different directions, one practical and the other theoretical. What might be called the “Kantian” approach proceeds case by case, seeing the way in which these theories run up against their limits in trying to extend beyond the core phenomena of their domain of validity (Bohman, 1991). This approach is not theoretical in orientation, but more akin to “social science with a practical intent” (Habermas, 1971).

The “Kantian” answer is given sharpest formulation by Weber in his philosophy of social science. While recognising the hybrid nature of social science as causal and interpretive, Weber sought explanations of particular phenomena that united both dimensions. For example, in *Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, Weber brought the macro-analysis of institutional structures together with the micro-analysis of economic rationality and religious belief (Weber, 1958). According to this contrasting approach, “the relative rights and specific limitations” of each theory and method are recognised by assigning them to their own particular (and hence limited) empirical domain rather than establishing these judgments of scope and domain through a more comprehensive theory that encompasses all others.

The second approach may be termed “Hegelian”. Here, theorists seek to unify social scientific knowledge in broad comprehensive theories that produce a general history of modern societies. However, general theories provide “general interpretive frameworks” on which it is possible to construct “critical histories of the present” (McCarthy in Hoy and McCarthy, 1994, p. 229–230). Even this account of a comprehensive theory hardly eliminates competing histories that bring together different theories and methods. Rather than aiming at a single best history, “Hegelian” theories are seen as practical proposals whose critical purchase is seen in offering a comprehensive interpretation of the present situation. They do not rely on the criteria of a theory of rationality often appealed to in the Kantian approach, but still seem to justify particular moral claims, such as claims concerning justice and injustice.

Habermas wants to straddle the divide between the Kantian and the Hegelian approaches in his social theory of modernity. Why not see Habermas’s theory of rationality as providing both a theoretical and practical basis for Critical Theory? Certainly, this is how Habermas sees the

purpose of such a theory. (See Habermas, 1984, chapter 1). Yet, even if this theory of rationality has to be understood in this way, it would still have to avoid what Rorty calls “the ambiguity of rationality,” between its statuses as “a cognitive faculty and a moral virtue” (Rorty, 1996, p. 74). For this reason, Rorty keeps them distinct. “The epistemological notion of rationality concerns our relation to something nonhuman, whereas the moral notion concerns our relations to our fellow human beings” (Rorty, 1996, p. 74). In a way similar to recent arguments in Putnam, Habermas now more strongly distinguishes between claims to truth and the context of justification in which they are made, even as he also wants to reject moral realism.

The problem for the practical conception of critical social inquiry is then to escape the horns of a dilemma; it should be neither purely epistemic and thus overly cognitivist, nor purely moralistic. Neither provides sufficient critical purchase. In the case of the observer, there is too much distance, that it is so hard to see how the theory can motivate criticism; in the case of the pure participant’s perspective, there is too little distance to motivate or justify any criticism at all. It is also the same general theoretical and methodological dilemma that characterises the debates between naturalist and anti-naturalist approaches. While the former views rationality as explanans to explain away such phenomena as norms, the latter argues that normative terms are less reducible and thus appear in both explanans and explanandum. The best practical account here reconciles Rorty’s ambiguity by putting the epistemological component in the social world, in our various cognitive perspectives towards the critical theory including the normative perspectives of others. The ambiguity is then the practical problem of adopting different points of views, something that reflective participants in self-critical practices must already be able to do by virtue of their competence.

3.10.2 Relevance of the theory

The concept critical theory is strongly based on individualistic, subjectivist, and anti-bureaucratic thrust (Box, 2015). The relevance of critical theory is mostly to the public administration; effective participatory communication is one of the pillars of public administration. For change to be recognised, it should include the systematic analysis of social condition which is guided by normative purpose. The critical theory is based on dialectical change. Recently, the concept of critical theory has been changed due to the process of globalisation, and technological revolution. In the case of Matatiele Local Municipality, the administration can improve the quality of its communication strategy by abandoning the traditional models of communication and advocating

for neo communication strategies such as social networks and live big screens (Zanetti, 1997). This will thus establish the importance of people in the organisation. Critical theory helps for acting to create social change. Change is a law of nature; it brings new processes in the political and social system and, it therefore comes through revolution. The critical theory allows for change in systems and the structure of political processes. Change establishes democratic form of government and gives equality to individuals changing laws and order of the state (Denhardt, 1981).

Overall, the basic aim of the critical theory is to reduce the system of dominance and dependence and strongly establish human freedom in all the spheres providing a better future. Therefore, changes and reforms in public administration are explained from the perspective of critical theory. Critical theory provides the objectives and normative bases of effective communication for social change; it has a narrow and broad meaning in philosophy and the history of the social sciences. Therefore, the aim of the critical theory is to explain and transform all the circumstances involving all the stakeholders in decision making (Rasila & Mudau, 2014).

The relation between the Critical Theory and the communication channel strategy adopted by the Matatiele Local Municipality would be to close the identified communication gap. However, the study findings indicated that there is need for exploring all the traditional models to gather its potential and to understand the relevancy of each model as to how rural municipalities can relate it to their approach. This will allow these participatory models of communication to be more effective and relevant for development of rural municipalities through efficient public participation in matters of governance (Matatiele Local Municipality, 2016).

Participatory learning ties directly with critical theory. Like in participatory learning and research, critical theory “breaks down the difference between subject and object, of researcher and focus of research” (Brookfield, 2005, p. 26). Furthermore, critical theories are “aimed at challenging and destabilising established knowledge with the goal of raising consciousness of social conditions and promoting emancipatory values such as equity, social welfare, justice, mutuality, and political liberty” (Thomas, 2009, p. 54), just like the theory of participatory learning. One of the goals of critical theory is to access “previously silenced knowledge about social reality”, and the theory emphasises the “contextualised understanding of social phenomena” (Thomas, 2009, p. 54).

The theory suggests that participants have a right to take part in designing the study and to maintain a degree of control over the way the study is to be used, and to derive some benefit from the study. Critical theory also holds that privileging dominant or conventional forms of inquiry over non-dominant inquiry or traditional ways of knowing poses an ethical issue.

To address these profound and potentially paralysing ethical issues in research, critical theory emphasises critical reflection and reflexive practice on the part of the researcher to make explicit values, beliefs, and prejudices that, if left suppressed, could undermine the authenticity of the work. This reflexive practice is also helpful in explicating power dynamics within research. An allegiance to critical theory indicates a recognition that knowledge and power are inextricably tied, where relations of power filter the ways in which knowledge is created and meanings are made. This recognition contributes to the design of this study, and together with participatory learning theory, contribute to the themes of social justice upon which this study is based.

3.11 Summary

This chapter outlined the aim in creating effective participatory communication, which might bridge the communication gap between the structures of government and community members. Participatory communication might also encourage sustainable public participation.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

This chapter explains different means and methods utilised in carrying out the study. As such, this chapter discusses the research context, sampling methods, methods of data collection, data analysis, as well as ethical considerations of this study.

4.2 Research paradigm

According to Creswell (2018), there is a number of research paradigms in research, namely positivism, pragmatism, critical paradigm, and subjectivism. In this study, a qualitative interpretivism research paradigm was used. According to Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis & Bezuidenhout (2014, p. 173), the qualitative research method involves “the use of non-numeric data to describe and generate an understanding of a given phenomenon”. However, the interpretivism research philosophy states that people are fundamentally different from objects. This philosophy perfectly applied to this study; it assisted the researcher with the interpretation of the information acquired when doing observation of key participants. This method is ideal because it argues that it does not make sense to study people in laboratory settings, as people do not live in laboratories and they are mostly influenced by the things that are happening around them (Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2011).

The importance of this research paradigm is that it assisted the researcher in gaining an empathetic, in-depth understanding of communication models for rural-based municipalities. It also assisted with outlining what happens if the communication process between citizens and municipalities is not effective enough.

4.3 Research design

Research design is the planning of approaches and methods used in collecting and investigating measures of the factors determined in the study. There are three primary types of research: exploratory, descriptive, and causal. They each serve a specific purpose in research and they can be used in certain ways. In this study, a secondary and cross-sectional study design was showed using the qualitative data collection method.

According to Wang and Cheng (2020) the cross-sectional design is described as an observational study design in which the researcher measures the outcomes and exposure whilst studying

participants at the same time. It has three distinguishing characteristics, namely no time measurement; a dependence on existing variances rather than change ensuing interventions, and groups are selected based on existing differences rather than random allocation. A secondary study design entails existing literature on the study topic and is most reliable.

The researcher employed a cross-sectional design because it assisted the researcher to have a focused look at data from a population at one specific point in time. With the sample size being purposive, the design method assisted in that there be no manipulation of variables, ensuring every respondent is understood by using interviewing method, allowing one to look at numerous characteristics at once. The design assisted with providing information about what was happening in the study location.

These designs are time saving and affordable; they enabled the researcher to collect information needed from the stakeholders and the studies that were previously conducted. They helped the researcher to understand the nature of public service delivery in rural communities, as well as the factors that may impact the effectiveness of these services (Babbie, 2011). The cross-sectional design was then evident when the researcher visited the rural areas of Matatiele to interview some of the respondents and did some observation on IDP roadshows or development outreaches as held by the municipality.

4.4 Study site

The study was conducted in the Mafube rural area of Matatiele Local Municipality (MLM). MLM is predominately rural in nature and it specialises in farming and trading as its primary economic services. It serves as the core commercial centre for Matatiele Municipality and beyond. The settlement example is described by scattered rural regions encompassed by subsistence farmlands. The R56 route is a noteworthy arterial and route running through the municipality in an east-west bearing, linking Matatiele with Kokstad towards the east, and Mount Fletcher towards the west. It links the district with KwaZulu-Natal and parts of the Eastern Cape found south of Matatiele Municipality.

Matatiele is a wet land that was named after the ducks which were found there by the Basotho people who were first to live in that place. In deciding on the place of focus for this study, it made

good sense to focus on a deeply rural area that is less urbanised, and that has tribal authority. Matatiele (see Figure 2.2) has a population of approximately 203 843 people (Census, 2011) and 10 rural areas. Similar to many other rural municipalities in South Africa, the small town witnessed a tremendous paradox of population increase (under 18) and decrease (18 plus) towing to a sudden increase in teenage pregnancy, and more people migrating to better-urbanised areas for employment and education. The phenomenal increase in the population over the years in the area led to high demand for public goods and services and added to more people dependent on the government. Figure 4.1 below depicts a map of Matatiele.



Figure 1.1: Matatiele Ward 8 (24401008) (Wazimaps, 2016)

Source: <https://wazimap.co.za/profiles/ward-24401008-matatiele-ward-8-24401008/>

4.4.1 Justification for the study area:

The study was conducted in the Mafube area because of its distinctiveness. The area is surrounded by township yet its nature is rural. Unlike its surrounding areas i.e. Maluti and Nchodu areas, the village has recorded less disruption even though it is also faced with socio-economic issues like other areas. However, the authorities of the area strongly believe in discussing issues through

community gatherings in an effort to minimise disruptions. The area is better known as Mafube Mission, it is characterised by dwellings, Catholic schools, churches, and other facilities operated with a religious belief for the purpose of providing peaceful and charitable services. To better explore communication models for rural municipalities, for MLM in particular, Mafube Mission became a fitting case study because the researcher was able to reference their existing communication models and comprehend the method of addressing developmental issues the community face.

4.4.2 Population statistics of the Mafube area:

According to MLM IDP research and analysis of ward (2018), ward 08 is surrounded by three wards, viz, wards 03, 04, 06 and 25. There is a total population of 6 675. The gender split within ward 08 is made up of 54% females and 46% males. The average household size in ward 08 is 4. The most spoken language is IsiXosa, followed by Sesotho. The ward is situated along two routes that join Matatiele and Lesotho. Thatch grass is available in all the villages and it creates job opportunities for the people in the ward. Sand mining and crushed stone serve as a base for block manufacturing activity done in this ward. Farming appears as the most prominent strength of the economic growth in the ward. Available thatch grass also provides the ward with an opportunity to produce many crafted products. Educational facilities, ranging from pre-school to secondary school level.

The status quo of the Mafube rural area is that the village within the ward shows to have access to water taps and boreholes, water is provided by the district Municipality. The whole ward reflects that they use ventilated pit toilets, the villages use electricity for lighting and heating, it is however also noted that that in each village there are still households not electrified, these include new houses. There are no health care facilities located within the ward. Villages within this ward rely on health care centers located in other wards and nearby villages. T12 and T13 are provincial roads, linking the ward with other wards, these roads are not in good condition; This then makes it difficult to access many villages as they are not in close proximity to these provincial roads. MLM constructed access roads to most of the villages within this ward. The slow growth of the economy in this ward makes it difficult for the youth to access employment opportunities (MLM IDP research and analysis of inward, 2018).

4.5 Data sampling

There are two main categories of sampling, namely probability sampling and non-probability sampling. Each is divided into sub-types. In this study purposive sampling was utilised. Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling method that is applied based on the characteristics of a population from which the researcher purposely picks the participants (Rosenthal & Rosnow, 1991). The use of this sampling method assisted in gathering the information that determined whether the identified factors on communication do have an impact on service delivery or not (Neuman, 2007). The respondents assisted in obtaining answers to the study questions or problem and to obtaining a clear description of the study's objectives. The municipal employees were selected from the communications and IDP units as the study primarily focused on the two modes. Therefore, the criterion followed was based on identifying the respondents who have knowledge of the Communication Strategy 2016/2021 and who had participated in the development of the IDP outreaches.

The participants from Mafube, specifically community members and *amakhosi* (chiefs) were selected because of the vast knowledge they had about their community. Amakhosi assisted the researcher as they play a representative role for the community. The ward committee members also participated because they hold double entries of information as they were both municipal employees and community political heads.

The reasons for sampling, was that the researcher considered the demographics of the study area, therefore a good rapport between the researcher and respondents was primarily important, especially in helping the respondent to understand the questions. Manageable sample permitted the researcher to establish adequate connection with the respondents. Also, when selecting sampling for community members, concern was with the generalisation of data. To study the whole population in order to arrive at generalisation would be impractical. The other respondents were chosen for their relativity to the study and it permitted high degree of accuracy due to limited comprehension of the focused study.

4.5.1 Target population

The study was conducted in Mafube Village Ward 8 and Matatiele Local Municipality within the jurisdiction of Alfred Nzo District Municipality. Most people in the village are between 18 and 64 years of age, followed by those under 18 and then those over 65; 55% are female and 45% male (Census, 2011). The targeted population was rural community members who had potential to act on the problem identified and who had also been affected by the issues covered in the research problem of the study. Purposive sampling was utilised; the researcher purposely picked the participants based on the characteristics of a population. A total 19 informants were selected from the community. The informants were between the ages of 18 and 55. They were also supposed to have stayed in Matatiele for over 10 years and be permanent residents of the area. Out of 19 respondents, 15 were community members; 2 were heads of the Mafube village (amakhosi/ members of the tribal authority) and ward committee, and the final 2 were the municipal employees who head the Communications and IDP directorates within the municipal structure.

To avoid biasness the selection of the community members was random taking to account their characteristics, this is also of reason why the researcher conducted the interviews at local meetings and standard IDP outreaches. To acquire data from people well informed to avoid generalisation and excessive off topic information.

4.6 Data collection

There are four major data collection techniques in qualitative studies. These include observation, questionnaire, interview, and focus group. Each of these research instruments works differently from the other. In this research, both observation and interview techniques were used. Conducting interviews helped the researcher to build a deeper understanding of the respondents answer and study them at the same time hence the cross-sectional design. In addition, conducting observations helped the researcher to make direct contact, studying different characteristics and assisted with collecting honest data. Observations were also time saving and allowed the researcher to make better comparisons of theory and practice. The techniques assisted the researcher in understanding and obtaining a better description of communication models for rural-based municipalities. The interview technique helped in identifying how people are affected by strategies used to disseminate information in their communities (Merriam, 1998).

The study employed structured interviews to keep the interview focused on the researched phenomenon while obtaining an in-depth and extensive understanding of the issues by means of their textual interpretation. According to Jamshed (2014), this conventional method provides reliable and comparable qualitative data. Semi-structured interviews are often preceded by observation, informal, and unstructured interviewing in order to allow the researchers to develop a keen understanding of the topic of interest necessary for developing relevant and meaningful semi-structured questions.

Semi-structured interview questions (see Annexure F) that are both closed and open-ended were administered to heads of households situated in the selected rural communities. In households where English was not well spoken, the questions were translated into Sesotho or IsiXhosa. Furthermore, the choice of the study group was made from a perspective of age, how often the municipality updated its residents on new developments, and after how long the needs of residents were addressed. The researcher sought consent to take some photos with community members when interviewing them during the course of data collection. To ensure confidentiality, anonymity, and privacy while capturing the community member, because the research was conducted during the COVID-19 level 3 national lockdown, the participants were asked to keep their masks on. The photos were only taken for the purpose of studying the respondents, same as the consent forms the participants signed and recordings, they are kept away in safety to ensure no breach of the Protection of Personal Information Act.

An observational schedule assisted the researcher to study the place and ways participants function before municipal stakeholders engage with them; thus, an appropriate approach to key participants was utilised. Doing an observation assisted the researcher with the interpretation of information received from key participants. The observational schedule entailed the following:

- How is the information presented to the citizens by the municipal administrators?
- What evident tools show the result of the research problem?
- Identify methods of communication adopted – the focus was on how they were employed in the meetings/outreaches.
- Assess the role played by stakeholders – what communication models are mostly utilised by the municipality and which communities respond effectively?

An observation report was compiled using notes, a map, and photos taken during the observation sessions. Prior to democracy, citizens were passive receivers of development with no opportunity to identify their needs, act on them, and decide on their purpose. This is because basic decisions concerning development were made on their behalf (Lieberman, 2022). However, the post-apartheid era brought about changes in the governance model. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (South Africa, 1996) Section 195 outlines the new approach to good governance. This approach includes the government's accountability, responsiveness, and transparency to the needs and the development of citizens. In addition, that participatory communication is being practiced at the local government (municipal) level.

The case study is based on ongoing disruptions; for instance, on 8 May 2019, residents of Maapoleng village in ward 15 boycotted the poll in protest against poor service delivery. Residents exclaimed that the communication received from the municipality was only when the municipality went to the area to present the budget during the financial year's IDP roadshow. The second example would be that of when the residents of Matatiele Local Municipality embarked on a service delivery protest. Both disruptions were the results of ineffective feedback and a lack of communication between citizens and the municipality. This is despite the approach stating that the existing administration must be in line with democratising development and ensuring that communities actively participate in their own development, policies, and strategies. The unit of analysis emerged from the research question directly; therefore, individual analysis distinguished units of activities initiated by different subjects that were revealed in the data.

Observations conducted during the IDP/Budget Community Outreach for the 2021/2022 - 2023/2024 financial years were at Nchodu Community Hall on 08 April 2021. Pictures were taken and discussions were noted down by the researcher. The agenda of the meeting is attached as Annexure E.

For the researcher to obtain more accurate information on the current state of the municipal communication techniques, a review of the municipal newsletter was conducted. Furthermore, articles from previously published newspapers on the related matter were examined, including the municipal website, Twitter, and Facebook pages.

Secondary data, including relevant literature, official documents from Matatiele Local Municipality and Alfred Nzo District Municipality that inform participatory communication, good governance, and rural service delivery, was used. The researcher used peer-reviewed journal articles and books because they are more reliable and show no biases (Du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2014). Newspaper reports on the subject were also utilised, and they contained current information on the status of the communities being researched.

The researcher gave out a written research information leaflet (see Annexure B) as well as consent forms to the participants to guarantee that they comprehended the undertakings of research and content. All participants were required to sign the consent form before the onset of the interviews. A recording device was utilised to record interviews. Interviews with two public authorities were done together at one of their workplaces, as this was deemed time-saving and cost-efficient. Appointments were made by the researcher before the interviews; all interviews were coordinated by the researcher in a type of dialogue form. Each interview did not take more than 90 minutes.

Because the research was conducted during the COVID-19 level 3 national lockdown, the researcher exercised the regulations protocol measures. Social distancing was realised during the interview sessions, and hand sanitisers were also made available to everyone, mainly because respondents were requested to sign consent forms. The data collection process took place after the university issued the ethical clearance letter, which was valid from April 2021 to May 2021. (See Annexure D.)

Time and financial resources made comprehensive data collection possible. The researcher lives in Maluti, which is around 30 kilometres away from the municipal offices and Mafube village. This means that it takes sufficient time and money to travel to and from, collecting data. However, the limitations of the study were mostly on research ethics considerations and adherence by the researcher. These had an impact on the number of respondents who were consulted and interviewed in various categories of respondents. It should be noted that community members were interviewed depending on their availability at that point in time as no prior appointments were made with them. Unlike public officials, ordinary members of the community do not have public offices where one can reach them and make prior appointments for interviews. Therefore, the

researcher visited Mafube village and conducted interviews with ordinary members of the community based on their availability and willingness to participate.

The study used Mafube village as a case study and a unit of analysis to collect data necessary to provide an in-depth insight to explore, understand, and explain the participatory communication processes in MLM and how these contributed to sustainable livelihoods. Data was collected through face-to-face interviews. Data collection instruments (interview schedule) was purposefully designed prior to the commencement of information-gathering. In addition, the observation method was also used to give the researcher an opportunity to see for herself as to how the IDP outreach programmes and general meetings were conducted in response to service delivery and practical constitution of the developed communication plan. The interview instrument or set of questions was constructed to enable respondents to answer and provide information on their perspectives about participatory communication with the municipality, specific to good governance and service delivery issues as they experience them on a daily basis. Questions were constructed from the research objectives. (See annexure F.)

The questions contained in the data collection instrument dealt with the ‘what’, ‘why’ and ‘how’ questions. In this regard, the researcher has been able to get respondents’ view and opinion on the above-mentioned subject. According to Brink, Van Der Walt and Van Rensburg (2009, p. 141), “when planning the process of data collection, the researcher is guided by five important questions. They are; what, how, who, where and when”. In essence, these five questions provide an opportunity for researchers to design scientific data collection instruments and collect reliable information.

4.7 Data management and analysis

In a qualitative study, there are two mostly used data analysis techniques. Firstly is interviews of informants, observations, and surveys (Keithley, 1996). In addition, it is the content data analysis frequently used to analyse information gathered. This study made use of narrative data analysis because it was easier to report what informants conveyed. A written MSWord document containing the data from informant interviews was created. Thematic analyses were used to analyse qualitative data obtained from interviews completed by the researcher. The data was

explored in detail for common themes and then categorised into units of meaning. Immediately after collection, the data was manually analysed.

The residents' responses were analysed and a summary of the responses from open-ended questions was compiled. An observation report was compiled using the notes and photos taken during the observations. The steps within the analysis process involved the organising of the data, reducing the volume of data by summarising it, categorising transcribed data from interviews and field notes into codes, interpreting the data, drawing up conclusions, and compiling the final research report (Ryan & Bernard, 2000). For the management of data collected, the notes will be shredded after the final dissertation is examined, and soft copy data will be formatted to protect participants' confidentiality and kept safely in the supervisor's office for a period of 5 years as stipulated by the university.

4.8 Ethical considerations

The researcher sought permission from the gatekeepers, namely the Matatiele Local Municipality and the community heads (chiefs). The confidentiality and anonymity of research subjects were ensured. The confidentiality of records was maintained by anonymising data – by removing any personal identifiers to responses on the transcripts. Furthermore, references were appended for other people's work. Prior to continuing with the study, the researcher applied for ethical clearance (EC) from the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) to ensure that the study has been cleared on all ethical concerns and that all institutional regulations are adhered to. A permission letter allowing the researcher to go ahead with the research is included as part of appendices.

4.8.1 Informed consent

Respect for human dignity includes the right to self-determination and to full disclosure (Polit and Beck, 2012, p. 154). The information letter explaining the focus of the study was provided to the participants before the commencement of the study, and the participants signed a consent form (see Annexure C). Participation in this study was voluntary and participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the study even if they had previously given their consent. No form of enforcement was used on those individuals who refused to participate in the study.

4.9 Student's reflexivity in research

The study was conducted during the world pandemic COVID19, the South African government had implemented the lockdown regulation to help compose the virus from spreading. Everyone was in an anxious position. A lot changed since then, very limited people were willing to engage with a stranger from outside town due to precautionary measures against contracting this virus. The student was most faced with a challenge when she had to collect data, because then, the country was still under lockdown regulations, level 3.

The student learned that during the pandemic, the citizens were promised a lot of intervention measures but none were met, hence the reluctant feeling to participate o the study, especially because the study is investigating a public institution. To overcome this challenge there had to be a lot of intervention from the gatekeepers, also with recognition to rather conduct the data collection process when there is a gathering facilitated in the area to avoid conducting door-to-door interviews, also due to safety measures since everyone's sentinel was up.

4.10 Summary

This chapter explained the research methods used to collect data on the subject matter of this study. The main part of the chapter highlighted how the data was collected through observational schedule and interviews. The chapter also reviewed how ethical concerns were addressed in the study. The next chapter presents the findings of the study.

CHAPTER 5: DATA PRESENTATION AND RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present empirical evidence on issues discussed in previous chapters. This study focused on participatory communication from the perspectives of respondents in the Matatiele Local Municipality (MLM). Issues discussed in chapters 2 and 3 are further contextualised through empirical evidence gathered from the selected sample. In this regard, the researcher interviewed municipal employees, the tribal authority/amakhosi, ward committee members, and ordinary community members. The respondents' opinions, together with data collected on impact of good governance and participatory communication towards service delivery in MLM and Mafube, are analysed and interpreted in this chapter.

Through review of literature, particularly on participatory communication and good governance models, together with observation and information obtained from interviews, the researcher was able to gather evidence of the effectiveness of participatory communication and constitution of the municipal action plan constructed for the year 2016/2021 (Communication Channels Strategy 2016/2021 for MLM and Alfred Nzo District, 2016). Furthermore, the chapter dealt with the analysis and interpretation of data collected on public participation, accountability, transparency, decentralisation, and efficiency and effectiveness of services delivered. The data collected from respondents suggested that the municipality needed to work more on its communication and feedback modes to disseminate more information on improving sustainable livelihoods of its communities. Therefore, the data collected through face-to-face interviews and observations has been analysed, interpreted and discussed to provide an understanding, and used to explain the rural municipality’s participatory communication strategy.

5.2 Data analysis and interpretation

For the purpose of this research, and to achieve the objective of this study, the data collection process lasted three weeks. Face-to-face interviews were conducted with selected respondents as discussed in Chapter 4 above. Below is a summary of the categories of respondents:

Table 5.1: Categories of respondents

Community members	15
Member of the ward Committee	1
Headman of Mafube traditional authority	1
Municipal employees.	2
Total	19

The researcher decided on the sample size following the guide of Fitzpatrick (2005), who indicates that a small sample size can detect large effect sizes. It is important in evaluations of the quality and trustworthiness of information produced. In this case, the purposive sampling supported the depth of case-oriented analysis fundamental to the mode of inquiry and the number selected by the capacity to provide rich-textured information relevant to the phenomenon researched. Structured interviews were conducted with identified respondents from the municipality and unstructured interviews were conducted with community members in various constituencies.

The additional reasons for sampling: with community members, concern was with a generalisation of data. To study the whole population in order to arrive at a generalisation would be impractical. The other respondents were chosen for their relativity to the study and it permitted a high degree of accuracy due to limited comprehension of the focused study.

5.2.1 Participatory communication in IDP outreach programmes

The interview questions aimed at gathering the information to answer the questions constructed based on the research objectives. In this case, structured and semi-structured interview questions were asked to respondents to hear their perspectives, experiences, and opinions based on ways IDP outreaches are conducted and the manner in which participatory communication is encouraged.

To assess the impact of IDP outreaches, about 80% of the respondents stated that the IDP outreaches are held for the communities to encourage democratic communication and good governance. Respondents indicated that the IDP assisted them to be aware of what the municipality was planning for them, and for them to also submit the needs of their community. About 20% indicated they were not aware of their rights to participate in the IDP process.

5.2.2 Participatory communication channels/modes

Answering the question on how information is communicated to the community members by the municipality, the most prevalent responses were community gatherings (*imbizo*), followed by ward meetings presented by ward committees. Public participation platforms such as the IDP were only mentioned by 30% of the respondents. The researcher also observed that the traditional communication channels typically used were ward meetings and community gatherings such as ceremonies and imbizo convened by amakhosi.

The above results reveal that people in the study area rely more on word-of-mouth than any other form of traditional communication when it comes to communication with the municipality. The respondents said if they needed to relay information to the municipality, they trusted either the ward committee or amakhosi to do it on their behalf. The headman interviewed also revealed that community members, although supportive of the idea of participation, expressed feelings of being tired of “being used” by the municipality, without any real power. The headman said; “When it’s time for the elections, you will see them here everywhere in the community promising us good roads and good service deliver, after the elections they disappear until they need us for something

again.” They claimed that municipal officials were using them for self-interests and were withholding important information because they wanted to be the only ones benefiting. As a result, community members’ experience of participatory participation was almost only limited to public gatherings (*izimbizo*).

5.2.3 Credibility of participatory communication modes

To the questions asked about the lack of participatory communication meetings, lack of participation during the IDP outreaches, and state of communication between the community and municipality, the participants indicated lack of knowledge and limited feedback from the municipality. Some of the remarks made were that they either received information late or did not at all. The one party to mostly rely on when there are these kinds of engagements are ward committees, who are often undermined during the IDP. One stated that ward committees were not treated well like other government structures were.

The respondents said the municipality does not come back to provide them with feedback when all that was requested and presented to them is delayed or not executed. They just see from lack of progress on the changes proposed or promised. Participants also indicated that often new developments or projects just erupted from their community without the community members knowing who is doing what, except maybe from word of mouth.

Respondents were asked about their levels of participatory participation in service delivery, which they indicated to be moderate. This illustrates that the respondents agree that participatory communication has a huge role in enhancing service delivery. The White Paper on Local Government (1998, p. 158) confirms that municipalities should adopt an integrated approach to planning and ensuring the provision of municipal services. These results demonstrate that participatory communication and the practice of good governance in MLM are moderate, but citizens are willing to participate in the process of service delivery planning and developments within the community to enhance their livelihoods.

5.3 Interpretations from the structured and semi-structured interviews

5.3.1 Participatory communication and good governance practices from the perspective of municipal employees

Employees from the IDP unit and the communication unit were interviewed. The IDP process is meant to arrive at decisions on issues concerning municipal management and act as a guiding tool. In terms of involving and giving feedback to communities on development programmes and service delivery, IDP plays a huge part. Participatory communications also play a huge part in the success of these development outreaches as it is the only way the community gets informed. Although the municipality has its own communication modes, not all individuals are reached because of either demographics or infrastructure status.

Matatiele Local Municipality develops its communications strategy for the five-year period and aligns it with the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) and the term of office for its Council. As required by the legislation for each local government institution to have a credible communication strategy in place, the municipality does consultation sessions with its internal and external stakeholders with the purpose of understanding what may be effective for them in terms of communication objectives. The five-year communication strategy gets reviewed on an annual basis in order to assess performance and progress on the set objectives, establish its effectiveness for the past year, check external perceptions of potential target audiences (the general public and municipal stakeholders), and deal with all weaknesses identified over the previous year so that the same are not repeated (Communication Channels Strategy 2016/2021 for MLM and Alfred Nzo District, 2016).

The head of communications development stated that through its adopted five-year communication strategy and its communication action plan, the municipality considered the following:

- That the institution is clear on the principles supporting its main strategy. Some may be self-evident, like producing honest, concise, credible, and cost-effective communication.
- Developing some simple messages and model on how these might work in different contexts such as press release, report, newspaper article, website, etc.
- The institution is clear about its target audiences and user groups, and prioritises them according to their importance, influence, and objectives.
- Thinking about both the actual and preferred channels the target audiences might use and plan whether to use the right ones for maximum impact or not.

- Keeping the communication programme simple and include key deadlines, milestones, and review points.
- It is further highlighted that communication should expand access to information that would enable citizens to participate in municipal programmes and in bettering their lives.

“Platforms are provided for citizens to raise their complaints and concerns through ward stakeholders’ fora. Communication is the cornerstone of all government work and the foundation of all areas of effectiveness, in ensuring that the public is kept abreast of developments in their respective areas. Matatiele Local Municipality has the responsibility to ensure that they communicate regularly and more consistently and set the agenda to avoid unnecessary service delivery protests which are mostly caused by unformed citizens”.

Overall, the strategy serves as a guiding document for all communication activities within the municipality.

5.3.2 Communication models utilised

As prescribed by legislation, developmental local government seeks to forge a partnership between government and the citizenry for effective service delivery. Communication models therefore become central to the work of local government, which is the sphere of government closest to the people. The Matatiele Local Municipality is using the following models and communication media to communicate with its citizens:

- **Face to face interactions/sessions:** These are conducted on a quarterly basis by the Communications and Public Participation Units through offices of the mayor and speaker, with the aim to share government information, public education, and promoting public participation. Example: the municipality has introduced a programme called “Talk to your Councillor” programme in which each councillor meets with their constituency to table what is called “State of the Ward Address”. These platforms allow members of the public an opportunity to interact directly with their leaders and get some of their concerns attended to immediately.
- **IDP Community Outreach/Roadshow Programme:** As required by law that each municipality gets comments and inputs from its citizens before the adoption of the IDP

document and Budget, Matatiele Local Municipality conducts these types of roadshows twice per financial year, with objectives to present the service delivery backlogs and progress per ward, present the current projects for that particular financial year, and confirm infrastructure ward needs priorities. This legislated programme gives each community member the power to make their voices heard and encourages public participation.

- **Community Radio:** Matatiele Local Municipality has a strong partnership with two community radio stations available within its jurisdiction (The Voice of Matat community radio and the Alfred Nzo community radio station). Through this media partnership, the municipality is able to communicate with its citizens twice a week and whenever need arises. Radio slots are procured for municipal-dedicated message drivers (the mayor, municipal manager, head of communications, and the speaker of Council). The airtime procured is used to communicate municipal programmes, create awareness, educate public, and share information among other critical uses. Research conducted by the municipality's communications and media relations unit has indicated that Matatiele citizens (elderly and youths) listen to community radios and take part in developmental and entertainment shows – these are shows that the municipality targets to convey their messages.
- **Local Newspapers:** The municipality takes advantage of numerous community newspapers at its disposal and communicates its messages and programmes through these platforms. The municipality publishes advertorials in two local newspapers rotationally on a monthly basis. In addition to what is being communicated through this platform is vacancies, annual reports, municipal budget, and public notices.
- **Social Media:** Research shows that 70% of Matatiele population is young people and they are very active in the social media space. The municipality has an active Facebook page with thirteen thousand six hundred and eighty-seven (13,687) followers and allows page administration officials to see how many people were reached per post or update. This means that every job opportunity notice that gets posted on this platform reaches its targeted audience. The platform is also enormously used to communicate every municipal programme/event.
- **Posters/pamphlets (information sheets):** These types of communication models are used to communicate simplified written messages with three languages that are mostly spoken in Matatiele (IsiXhosa, Sesotho, and English). They get distributed through post office boxes, in

retail shops, taxi/bus ranks, ward councillors/committees' offices, tribal authorities' offices, and local churches.

- **Loud hailing:** Considering that Matatiele is mostly rural, the municipality still goes big on traditional ways of communicating with citizens, loud hailing being one of them. This became more effective during the lockdown when contact gatherings were prohibited. This mode of communication has since proven to be more effective as it is done in all villages of Matatiele Local Municipality wards.

Considering the number of community protests that the municipality continues to experience in every election year, the municipality is lacking in terms of communicating with its citizens. This could mean that ward structures are non-functional or that communities are not satisfied with the level of services they are receiving from their municipality or government as a whole. A communication environmental scan conducted by the municipal Communications and Public Participation units proves that generally people perceive government and the municipality as not delivering basic services that are due to them and that government is corrupt. In an effort to try and respond to these public perceptions, the municipality has taken steps to strengthen its public education and public consultation programmes for all its twenty-six wards.

The participant said:

When you use participatory communication practices such as meetings to engage with people, only about 30% of attendees participates. As from my observation the low result of participants is because most people situated in rural areas are not educated and empowered enough to possess confidence to raise a point in front of dozens of people in attendance.

In response to a question on demographic factors, one respondent stated that the municipality was aware and used different communication methods that are appropriate for its citizens based on its demographics. One other technique was the issue of people with matric who could read and people who could not read at all. According to a community survey conducted in 2016, only 25 459 people had completed their matric in Matatiele. A participant said:

As mentioned on communication modes that the municipality is using to communicate with its citizens, there are measures in place to ensure that participatory communication is

effective and does serve a purpose. These are done through community outreach meetings where attendance registers get signed and measured by number of people attended. The municipality also conduct public education engagements by form of community dialogue to educate citizens about the importance of taking part in government programmes and does give feedback on matters raised in such platforms. Most of the feedback the municipality receives, is from Facebook. This way we know impact has been done and that citizens are becoming active in matters that affect their daily livelihoods.

In effort to try and respond to these public perceptions, the municipality has taken steps to strengthen its public education and public consultation programmes for all its twenty-six wards.

5.3.3 Participatory communication and good governance practices from the perspective of the ward committee

In a democratic society, public participation plays a huge role allowing citizens to get involved in how their communities can be administrated. The Local government Municipal Structure Act of 1998 requires municipalities to develop action plans on how communities can be included and have a say in management of the municipality. The municipality develops primary structures such as ward committees to provide a link between ward councillors, the municipality, and the respective community. The aim of ward committees is to allow members of the community to influence municipal planning which will best address their needs and allow for quicker service delivery (Cogta, 2020).

In Mafube, when there is an IDP outreach programme engagement, the Ward committee members supposedly communicate the information through the following methods:

- i. The message is passed to the chief;
- ii. The message is passed to school principal;
- iii. The principal informs the learners;
- iv. The learners let their parents know of this information;
- v. In addition, posters about the municipal's outreach activities are displayed at local *spaza* shops.

There is no communication strategy that gives guidance on how the ward committees are provided with information and equally on how the ward committees should disseminate the information to the community. This affects the effectiveness of the ward committee in communicating with the community. As a result, some community members exclaim to only find out about these meetings a night before or when the meeting has already taken place.

5.3.4 Participatory communication and good governance practices from the perspective of the community members

Participatory communication at municipal level only takes the form of informing and consulting with communities. How communities are informed and consulted is important because this shows the effectiveness of democracy. Thornhill and Cloete (2014) state that the Municipal Systems Act requires municipalities to engage communities in the affairs of the municipalities, of which they are integral parts, particularly in planning, service delivery, and performance management. Respondents were asked how the participatory communication processes from the models of communication influence service delivery or development within the area. The feedback was that although they had imbizos and ward meetings, meetings made it difficult for each individual to voice their suggestion; therefore, focus groups were suggested as another mode of communication that can encourage participatory communication.

Some respondents, particularly the employees of the municipality, were of the belief that IDP processes enhance development. They stated that it assisted in making the public aware of different development programmes. A proportion of respondents reported that IDP created a public platform while some indicated that it had no influence at all. The findings of this study indicate that most respondents were of the view that IDP formulation processes enhance development success.

Community participation should be informed by the continuum of participation, as this adds value. These results indicate that people see participatory communication models to be influential to service delivery, that if the municipality could develop participatory communication models suitable for each community, then more people might even take part in outreaches. This is supported by Cele (2015) who highlights that participation could be used as a strategy to curb service delivery protests. This would also help to ensure sustainable and effective delivery of services. The White paper agrees with these results that different kinds of participatory communication can allow for different degrees of influence (Arnstein, 1969).

5.3.5 Participatory communication and good governance practices from the perspective of the member of the amakhosi

When there are governmental functions performed in their areas of jurisdiction, traditional leaders are ought to be consulted before the introduction or coming into effect of any law, or any development project. Furthermore, the local government is required to elect representatives acting on behalf of their electors and in a particular geographical area, and these are councillors. Councillors ensure identification of priorities and resource allocation are priorities as per the requirement of the IDP of the municipality. They ensure policy development so as to shape and guide service delivery, and they monitor and review projects, and serve as community leaders. They are strategic in matters of local government. Van der Waldt et al. (2007, p. 5) suggest that, in playing their role, municipal councils have a duty to use their resources in the best interest of the communities; democratic and accountable in the way they govern; encourage communities to be involved in the affairs of local government, and provide services to the community and make sure that the environment is safe and healthy.

Therefore to achieve all that, the White Paper on good governance (1998, p. 15) also calls for traditional leaders to have representation on local councils to give advice on the needs and aspirations of the people for whom they are responsible. This allowed participation of traditional leaders in council meetings on matters relating to the needs and interests of their communities. Some of the development roles of traditional leaders require them to make recommendations on land allocations and the settling of disputes; lobby governments and other agencies for development in their areas; facilitate the involvement of communities in development; and make recommendations on commercial activities.

The primary role of traditional leaders is a concern for the problems and issues faced by the communities. Traditional leaders provide a mechanism through which conflicts about local issues can be resolved.

According to the study results, traditional leaders exclaimed that the municipality does not present them with a platform to provide significant municipal services, their control over the dispersion of tribal authority / communal land, secures their political and economic influence within their areas of jurisdiction. Public participation / participatory communication is an essential part of sustainable

service delivery. As a result, without the understanding of both traditional leaders and municipal councils, this notion cannot be possibly realised. Traditional authorities have remained a significant social, cultural and political force, and they exercise power, particularly in rural areas.

5.3.6 Participatory communication in the perspective of non-governmental organisations (NGOs)

NGOs are key stakeholders and partners in local government, as laid out in the IDPs of different municipalities. Local government is the main provider of services and support to communities. However, in recent years this role has been supplemented and supported by NGOs. NGOs are a part of municipal key stakeholder list, more so as per the IDPs for all municipalities in SA. NGOs partner with municipalities to implement their developmental goals. To promote participatory democracy, NGOs become one of the most useful stakeholders. One of the most important tasks of the IDP officials is to create participatory spaces, and Ghosh (2009, p. 484) argues that NGOs can provide a space for participator communication to take place.

In addition, NGOs and local government need to be deliberate in planning for participation and creating the space for it to happen. According to Theron and Mchunu (2016, p. 41-44), it should be obvious that planning itself should be a participatory social learning process, the second development building block. Apart from making sure that the community participates, NGOs can also build the capacity of local government to ensure that they can fulfil their developmental roles in always making sure that when the community does participate and partner with local government it is in a true and authentic way, rather than mere window dressing or ticking of compliance boxes.

NGOs play an important role in strengthening the State in its development goals by forming a Public Participation Planning Partnership (P4) Model with the local government. The P4 functions to strengthen, empower and capacitate local government to fulfil their developmental role. The NGOs also co-produce and partner directly with the community, but with a goal to empower them to be able to partner with local government, thus becoming active citizens. Partnership with the State gives grassroots beneficiaries a voice and a choice to influence service delivery. NGOs can mobilise grassroots communities through advocacy to claim service delivery resources from the State.

According to Theron and Mchunu (2016), the main reason for the failure of local government in South Africa is the lack of capacity, especially among technical staff and managers who are not equipped to handle or run their departments. NGOs then play a role in building the capacity of the community, but also that of the local municipality.

5.4 Interpretations from the observations

Observations (see schedule in Annexure F2) done during the IDP/Budget Community Outreach for 2021/2022 - 2023/2024 was at Nchodu Community Hall on 08 April 2021, where members of that ward commented on the budget as follows:

- The community complained about the budget that municipal leaders continued to present to them without any progress on the ground;
- Access roads are in bad condition and that makes it difficult for them to travel to town and back;
- Poor South African mobile phone network for some villages and they are forced to connect to Lesotho one which is more expensive;
- They further requested the municipality and the department of social development to assist them with programmes for elderly people and unemployed youth.

Additional to the interviews, the researcher attended a community meeting on 12 May 2020 which was held at the community hall with the National Department of Health (NDoH) with assistance from the ward committee. Senior citizens of the community gathered for the briefing of COVID-19 Pandemic vaccination distribution; as the briefing unfolded, community members started a discussion on social problems affecting their respective communities. During their discussions, it was noted that community social issues are directly linked to governance and service delivery, and subsequently social and economic development of Mafube. Community members used the opportunity to raise their concern on water load-shedding, especially during the pandemic. A senior traditional leader was part of the discussion and explained to the community members that they stuck to the programme as presented by the NDoH. Although the situation was quickly disposed of, the issues raised showed frustrations from the members of the community with regards to service delivery in their area.

During the observations, the researcher found the environment to be complying with COVID19 regulations, as social distancing was observed. Community members and municipal officials had their masks on. At the entry of the venue and prominently around the venue, dispensers of alcohol-based hand sanitisers were displayed, and when the meeting attendance register was rotated around, there was an official sanitising the people.

The municipality organised microphones to avoid moving around and to also ensure everyone at the meeting understood clearly all that was presented and reported. Participation was encouraged, as community members were given an opportunity to pass comments and ask questions at the end of the briefing. While feedback on questions asked was less articulated, the officials promised to conduct a follow up meeting on matters that arose.

While the meeting encouraged everyone, especially youth to attend, it was observed that during these outreaches only a small number attended. Some respondents indicated that because of the high youth unemployment rate, most youths did not see the need to participate in any meeting called by the municipality because they gained nothing. Thus, more elders than the youth attended the outreach meetings as they believed that the municipality would listen to their request and deliver services.

Overall, respondents indicated that the municipality was trying its best to work and involve them in development processes of the community. Respondents' views suggested that good governance practices and effective service delivery are, to a larger extent, dependent on resolute efforts and active participation of stakeholders. Information gathered from the case study indicated that significant change is needed to promote good governance in public service in order to enhance service delivery at constituency levels. Respondents noted that public institutions should apply good governance practices and preserve governance models and principles. They added that their participation in outreaches was very important for the sustainability of their well-being, and in this regard, service delivery could be better provided.

5.5 Summary

Data analysis and interpretation of the results were in the focus of this chapter. The conclusions drawn based on the findings, and the suggested recommendations are dealt with in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSIONS OF THE FINDINGS/ RESULTS

6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the summary, interpretation and discussion of the findings of the study, showing how each research objective of the study was achieved. Furthermore, the chapter presents the conclusions drawn from the study and related recommendations.

6.2 Findings and discussions

6.2.1 Objective 1: Identifying the participatory communication processes employed by the MLM to communicate with its citizens

The municipality employs the traditional methods of communication such as loud hailing where a municipal vehicle goes around the community announcing meetings and important engagements to develop a culture of community participation within local communities so that they participate in the affairs of government, particularly in the local sphere of governance. Word of mouth, where information is relayed, creates a formal information dissemination channel for the MLM to communities and community organisations.

Local governments are implementing a process of gradual approach to the needs of the citizens and learning new ways of communication. For example, the MLM introduced Facebook as an additional communication tool to the municipal website and posters to provide information and educate citizens about services, policies, rights, entitlements and obligations; activate virtual services or channels for managing customer satisfaction or quality control; open new spaces for participation and community consultation as well as information dissemination.

When there is a matter of opportunity presented for a particular community, councillors and ward committees are put at a forefront as the communication agents to their respective wards. They relay information down to tribal authorities through written letters or stakeholder meetings. These structures are used to put in place oversight mechanisms to ensure that the outcomes are achieved and the relationship between the municipality and wards is sound in communication. This assists in improving administrative transparency, simplification and organisational development.

In addition, a five-year communication strategy was mentioned by respondents. According to one of the respondents, the strategy is implemented to measure the effectiveness of communication dispersed and to establish whether the targeted population responds positively or negatively. The strategy is reviewed annually to measure progress on objectives set and work on weaknesses identified.

The MLM Communication Strategy is contracted from the national strategy established by the government, with the aim to continuously inform ordinary citizens of government work and empower them to take active part in it. According to the national strategy, the local government must co-ordinate the formulation of the main and all-encompassing communication strategies fit for individual communities. In communicating, special efforts must be taken to seek, evaluate, and where practicable, employ all available measures or tools to get the message across. The national strategy further advises that when implementing major development programmes like the IDP, a multimedia approach must be adopted for effective message diffusion and sufficient reach across municipal districts.

The study established that the local municipality conducts its IDP/Budget Outreach roadshows to ensure that participatory communication takes place between the citizens and the municipality. One participant from the MLM confirmed that the municipality conducted public education engagements in the form of community dialogue to educate citizens about the importance of taking part in government programmes. During such dialogues, the municipality gives feedback on matters raised in such platforms. In this way some participants confirmed that they become active in matters that affect their daily livelihoods.

In MLM the communication structures have been established to enable interaction (mediated or otherwise) between internal and external stakeholders. Because the government does not function in a vacuum and for maximum communication impact, especially in terms of service delivery, credibility, and reach - role-players such as Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), tribal authorities, Small, Medium, and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs), and other important figures are involved in communication engagement plans as per communication structures.

As further stated in the MLM Communication Strategy (2016), the approach to government communication takes its cue from the constitutional imperative of freedom of information and the objectives of building a truly democratic state. The open flow of information, accountability, and media freedom are all important principles of thriving and effective participatory communication within a democratic state. Thus, government needs to maintain regular interaction with the public. Participatory communication enables all South Africans to become active and conscious participants in development by giving them an opportunity to become informed about their needs and to ensure that the government is responsive to those needs.

Overall, contracted from the findings, the municipality works to strengthen its working relations with face-to-face media engagements and to popularise service delivery initiatives and its progress and impact to communities in a quarterly basis. To encourage public participation and communicating government programmes, EXCO members and senior managers communicate through Portfolio Head Radio Programmes bi-annually. The established public participatory communication plan comprises quarterly community face-to-face engagements on basic service delivery. To develop a clear communication action plan, the communication strategy is reviewed annually to promote well informed communities and provide platforms for interactions through quarterly IDP outreaches.

The strategy implemented has to correspond with the communication action plan carried out. The action plan requires government communicators to have a strong knowledge of government policies and strategies and of progress on implementation. This includes an objective analysis and understanding of research, media reports and commentary around transparency, accountability, responsiveness, participatory processes, efficiency, and inclusiveness in service delivery. This will shape people's attitudes and perceptions regarding government's commitment and capacity to advance their wellbeing. It is important also to understand that the environment is not stagnant; therefore, the action plan on participatory communication should be flexible according to demographics and individuality.

Although stated in the above paragraph that the implementation plan, including the communication processes, should be flexible, according to the findings of this study the municipality used a

uniform strategy throughout its jurisdiction, and this was mostly challenged during the COVID-19 pandemic. The municipality had to wait for the pandemic regulations to be lifted for it to resume with the outreaches and have interactions with its communities.

6.2.2 The second objective of the study was to assess the effectiveness of participatory communication practices in contributing to sustainable rural livelihoods at Matatiele Local Municipality.

In assessing the practices used by the municipality and the influence these have on rural service delivery to enhance the livelihoods of the citizens, IDP participation emerged. To communicate with communities so that rural livelihoods can be improved, participatory communication practices such as general meetings, imbizo, IDP outreaches, and ward committee/ward council meetings are necessary as they promote good governance practices. The majority of respondents involved in the study indicated that they were not aware of their right to attend and participate in IDP outreaches to build towards their livelihoods and be part of the service delivery processes.

Subsequently, communication plays a crucial role in sustainable livelihood. When there is lack of internal communication within an organisation, it would be hard to implement the changes with respect to making the organisation more sustainable. Moreover, external communication with the customers, work partners and the community is a must for sustainability strategies, otherwise the organisation may face disputes from the general public, leading to strikes related to lack of service delivery and development. To create the legitimacy of sustainable livelihood, communication plays a huge role in ensuring consensus between the local government and its citizens. Secondly, sustainability is a highly complex issue that requires overcoming in societal communication. Normally, issues about sustainability are characterised by high levels of complexity and uncertainty; thus, communication plays a key role in delivering information across all parties ensuring participation.

While participatory communication aims to support the active involvement of people in a development process, models employed for communication are the most vital. Communication models employed to communicate with participants provide an analytical structure for a broad and systematic understanding of the wide range of impacts that development projects could have on

people's lives. In contrast, participatory communication is seen as a core factor in the facilitation of sustainable livelihoods. Participatory communication is believed to enhance the participation of local people in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of service provision, leading to changes in people's knowledge, skills, and behaviours. These changes facilitate the better use of communication models towards achieving livelihood impacts such as human, social, economic, physical and natural impacts.

One of respondents that works at the municipality provided that traditional models used to communicate with citizens do not necessarily reach everyone as intended. There is a limitation as most of the population is easily left out due to demographics of each village. The participant further suggested that small focus groups could make a difference. While focus groups are not time- and cost-effective, most people could be reached and empowered through focus groups participation. More youth could be hands-on and better informed about projects happening within their area.

As per the results of the study, the majority of Mafube citizens interviewed were of the view that the IDP is about development projects such as piping of water, construction of roads, and provision of electricity per household. Participants believed that IDP is the platform where the municipality engages with them about development projects to implement within the area. When respondents were asked as to how often do the municipality communicates or engages. The majority of the respondents answers would consist of about 3 out of 5 answered "two times a year". These meetings are about the IDP. Respondents also mentioned to have other meetings within the area, but to which the municipality never sent representation.

The study established that IDP outreaches play a huge role in state of service delivery within local municipalities. According to Cash and Swatuk (2010), IDP is one of the tools that promote an integrated and participatory approach in which all sectors and affected individuals must be consulted right in the implementation process. This endorses the strategic and participatory process of formulating a comprehensive plan through which service delivery becomes effective. During the conduct of study, it was established that the implementation process of IDP includes a number of steps.

In the first step of the IDP implementation process, municipalities are expected to carry out a situational analysis of the current context in their area of jurisdiction. The second step of the implementation process emphasises the formulation of strategies which involve development of a common vision and objectives in the short-, mid-, and long-term period among multiple stakeholders (Dlamini & Reddy, 2018). Continuing, Dlamini and Reddy further submit that the third step involves development of operational strategy and emphasis on the designing of project proposals by setting up objectives, targets, and indicators. The fourth step includes the screening, adjusting, consolidating, and approval of project proposals, thus ensuring an integrated process between preparation, implementation, and delivery. The fifth step focuses on the decision and endorsement of the IDP projects. The last step of the implementation of the IDP process involves the assessment of whether the IDP is compliant with the requirements of the legal framework (Dlamini & Reddy, 2018).

Municipal officials and IDP representative forum members need to properly conceptualise and understand the implementation process of IDP in order to improve and speed up service delivery at the local level, which means participatory communication practices are realised at the bottom-up level. Since the IDP formulation process and service delivery has impact in getting people participating through its process, the study requested respondents to rate the relationship between municipal participatory communication practices and service delivery development within the area. The result was 'medium' by the majority of respondents, and minority rated 'low'. These findings show that there is a null response from the municipality regarding the rate of participation and service delivery in the area.

Assessing the impact that participatory communication practices have on service delivery, it was established that a high number of participants interviewed responded to the knowledge of what participatory communication is and they indicated that they were informed of their right to participate in the service delivery process through the IDP. However, it was found that not all citizens are aware of their rights to participate in the IDP process for service delivery strategic plan formulation. The study established that there are participations on IDP outreaches and formulation.

The results show that the citizens do not understand the importance of their role in these outreaches and that it is far more important than the community gatherings which are mostly focused on each community within a ward. When exploring and analysing the results, it was indicated that forms of communication are not effective enough to get citizens to be active participants in development of their area and provision of services meant to enhance their livelihoods. Community members indicated that their initial reasons for not taking part in the outreaches was lack of feedback on projects proposed and lack of communication from the municipality, hence, emergence of strikes and the exclusion from IDP processes experienced.

Sustainable livelihoods approaches are based on evolving thinking about poverty reduction, and IDP processes inclusion could lead to greater development of the way the poor live their lives, and pin focus on the importance of structural and institutional issues. In particular, participatory approaches to development have highlighted great diversity in the goals to which people aspire, and in the livelihood strategies they adopt to achieve them. Poverty analysis has highlighted the importance of assets, including social capital, in determining well-being. Sustained and inclusive economic growth can drive progress, create decent jobs for all and improve living standards. Once we meet the basic need for life-giving food, individuals can focus on building up earning potential. Having an ongoing source of income benefits the individual on a holistic level. It adds meaning and satisfaction to his or her existence. The compound effect of building many livelihoods boosts the greater practical community.

As the compilation of the study proceeds, the researcher discovered that IDP roadshows are the key platform used by the municipality to enhance sustainable livelihoods and service delivery in the MLM. When assessing service delivery in relation to sustainable livelihoods, respondents expressed that Mafube has bad road infrastructure, that when there is rain, only big cars can transport people to town. They indicated that most services did not reach the area because of the bad road infrastructure.

The situation above is leading to a radical decline in local economic development within the area. It is made worse by slow service delivery that compromises sustainable development in totality. Participants indicated that it was therefore not easy to improve one's livelihood if service delivery is not adequate.

The effectiveness of the municipal communication strategy is also measured through the responses received from IDP. As guided by the constitution, during these outreaches, citizens are given an opportunity to comment and provide inputs before adoption of the IDP document and budget. The intentions are to present the service delivery backlogs and progress per ward, present the current projects for that particular financial year, and to confirm ward infrastructure needs priorities. According to municipal officials who participated in the study, IDP has been useful in formulating strategic development plans in accordance with the needs of the people in order to fast track the process of service delivery in rural communities. This legislated programme gives each community member the power to make their voices heard and also to encourage public participation.

Since the MLM does not have a tool to monitor and evaluate the process of public participation when determining the level of participation in IDP formulation, the municipal officials faced difficulties on how to determine the rate of participation. The study has shown that municipal officials endorsed participatory communication as this is where most feedback is acquired. When responding to a follow up question asked during the open-ended interview on 'how the participation of citizens was measured, municipal officials associated participation with people's ordinary attendance at outreaches.

The findings about participation being only allied to attendance are contrary to what scholars explain as participation. According to Swanepoel and de Beer (2006), public participation involves the right to be part of decision-making mechanisms affecting citizens' development. Swanepoel and de Beer pointed out that public participation is not only being physically present or about local practical knowledge, but also about citizens' democratic rights to be there and make decisions regarding the developments and service delivery because it involves their future.

Before scheduling IDP roadshows, the study discovered that the level of citizen participation in IDP still needs to be implemented through constant lobbying of the IDP, involvement of interest groups, and encouragement to the youth. Furthermore, the study established that community members were less confident about their role in IDP and service delivery improvement in general.

Masuku (2017) states that local government institutions such as municipalities are perceived as political institutions because the management, political, and administrative leaderships are 85 per cent politically appointed, and the needs of the people are not the priority. Through a communication strategy, the study discovered that there are partnerships with municipality key role players to ensure that communication channels are sustainable for people to be informed. The study discovered that MLM has implemented engagement of traditional leadership/*amkhosi* as one of the strategies used to ensure rural ward participation in the process of IDP formulation and ward development projects. Thus, there is more need to build partnership with community organisations to promote unity and people involvement.

When evaluating the responses given by participants, the majority of the participants agreed that although there are challenges, community participation in the formulation of IDP in MLM was effective enough. The responses varied according to the experiences and positions of the participants; although one participant indicated that it was not fair to agree since they could not measure their own performance.

One participant pointed out that there was effective community participation, implying that the communication modes used must also be effective, and paralleling this to the increasing number of people attending roadshows for budget and IDP. This implies that people want to be part of the movement in the city, since they continue to attend. A respondent stated that the communication modes were effective, because number of public participants continues to increase despite the pandemic”. One of the Municipal officials said, “Although the level of citizen participation in IDP still needs to be improved through constant lobbying, publication of our IDP, and reaching to the redress on interest groups such as women and youth, the municipality achieves its target number annually.

The IDP meetings allow for citizens to raise the issues they are facing as a community. This is where one participant stated that during the outreaches, people raise issues of service delivery based on positive matters and they contributed by commenting on the lack of service delivery, such as water, electricity, and roads. This suggests that people wish to see change in their communities, hence the willingness to participate in their development.

6.2.3 Third objective: an assessment of the impact of good governance practices on participatory communication

Good governance practices and effectiveness of community organisations depend on the existence of pillars of good governance like participation, accountability, transparency, predictability and rule of law. Every public sector entity or public service spends public money; how this money is spent and the quality of services it provides are critically important for citizens, users, and taxpayers. Therefore, there is need for governance of public services to be of a high standard. Good governance leads to good management, good performance, and good investment of public money, good public behaviour and good outcomes. The governors of public services are the people responsible for governance, the leadership, direction, evaluation and monitoring of the organisations they serve. Their responsibility is to ensure that they address the goals and objectives of these organisations and that they work in the public interest with the public.

The good governance practice is taken from the six principles that are common to all public service organisations and are intended to help all those with an interest in public governance. This standard practice encourages public services to review their own effectiveness, provides guidance on implementation and provides a common framework for assessing good governance practice.

As indicated in the literature, good governance in the public sector is those principles that encourage better decision making and the efficient use of resources and that strengthen accountability for the stewardship of those resources. Therefore, effective governance is characterised by robust scrutiny, which provides important pressures for improving public sector performance, gaining transparency and tackling corruption. Effective governance can improve management, leading to more effective implementation of the chosen interventions, better service delivery, improved participation and operation, and, ultimately, development of livelihoods.

Effective participation of members in their organisations ensures vigilance, which is essential to create a sense of responsibility among the board and personnel. As part of the MLM Communication Plan, the stakeholder engagement plan is the communication action that must be undertaken to assess and implement good governance, communications of government plans and progress on the implementation of the municipal programme of action through which informed and participative communities are responsive and transparent about government's programme of action. On the impact of good governance on participatory communication, basic focus should be

on the implementation and planning of the municipal communication strategy. The World Bank (2011) demonstrates how communication (defined as citizen engagement underpinned by access to high quality information) can act as an important contributor to good governance. This study established that efficient and effective service delivery is a product of good governance models, approaches, and practices. Effective public service is shaped by good governance principles such as accountability, transparency, and openness of public institutions. Development strategies such as IDP formulation play a vital role in ensuring that the benefits trickle down to intended beneficiaries.

In order to increase government legitimacy, the approaches and models of governance and service delivery employed must aim at promoting good governance. This means decentralisation of decision making. Citizens are included in development projects and budget process plans to allow prioritisation of development projects per citizens' decisions.

Governance practices such as stakeholder engagements and service delivery from the perspective of administrative officials were captured as the responses which indicated that good governance practices should be put in place whenever implementing a project and assisting in rehabilitating service delivery processes. Good governance principles are more enforceable in a society that respects the constitution and all democratic values attached to it. Therefore, this description of the concept of 'governance' implies being cautious and aware of the obligation executed by the Municipal Systems Act on responsibilities related to service delivery.

Administrative officials indicated that they worked in collaboration with constituency councillors, ward committees, and amakhosi, governance structures to ensure effective delivery of services to communities were put in place. The engagements facilitated by these structures set on a regular basis, such as when communities were faced with development and social constraints or when an important message conveyed was to be passed. It was mentioned that the provision of clean water, electricity, sanitation, health, and education form part of the basic and essential services needed by every person in the community. To promote good governance, the above-mentioned services are provided in consultation with affected communities. Similarly, respondents indicated that proper co-ordination with municipality and departments contributes to inclusive service delivery.

In this regard, respondents claimed that communities are encouraged to participate, not only in the implementation of the government programmes, but also during planning and decision-making regarding issues that affect society through IDP roadshows. In their view, involving rural people means decisions that affect rural people are taken together hand in hand.

According to respondents, it is important to “establish different committees in the communities and hold meetings on regular basis to discuss social and economic development issues that have an impact on the livelihoods of the people”. Administrative officials indicated that one of their responsibilities is to advise constituency councillors and community members on administrative matters regarding the delivery of services. However, the majority of the administrative officials indicated that there were numerous challenges facing MLM; the challenges that affect governance and service delivery directly are budget constraints, lack of staff and proper training, and institutional bureaucratic procedures, which sometimes delay service delivery.

Respondents explained the above-mentioned in the following way: Service delivery within MLM as a whole requires active participation of the people at both local and community levels. Such active participation is only feasible if public officials are properly trained and possess knowledge of the issues that should be addressed to improve the people’s living standards. Financial resources, such as sufficient budget, enable administrative officials to reach communities in all corners of the districts in order to deliver the necessary services. Institutions and communities for public participation are established using available financial resources. Similarly, it requires human capacity in terms of quantity and quality to plan and implement government programmes. Therefore, service delivery is not only a question of community involvement; it is also a matter of financial and human resources, and effective participatory communication and feedback.

Furthermore, it was indicated that lack of transport or proper road infrastructure hinders effective service delivery. During the fieldwork, the researcher also managed to interview the representative member of the local chiefdom, and he explained good governance to be practices and effective service delivery are promoted through holding of community meetings and sharing development-related information with town residents. Another respondent answered with it consisting of proper planning, prudent utilisation of public resources and commitment by both local authorities and

residents are central to effective delivery of services. It was also indicated that “the existence of governance and service delivery structures at community levels such as community development committees, community representatives, community-based organisations, and civil society organisations are essential components of social and economic development”. Moreover, it was explained that the above-mentioned structures can operate properly if they are capacitated to deal with socio-economic aspects at local authority level.

Service delivery from the perspective of ordinary community members during the open-ended interview session: Community members were asked to describe how often basic services are provided to them, and whether they are involved in planning, designing, and implementation of government programmes aimed at addressing their difficulties. Respondents indicated that proper consultation could afford community members an input on what should be prioritised in terms of service provision. One respondent mentioned a concern on toilet facilities at their local schools whereas the other indicated the issue of road infrastructure. Explaining that there are of those communities where important people like Mayors and Ministers hardly ever come to visit, we always hear about other communities having such honorary visits but not us.”

In addition to face-to-face interviews in Mafube area, the researcher conducted observations. During observations on the IDP/Budget Community Outreach for 2021/2022 - 2023/2024 that was held at Nchodu Community Hall on the 08 April 2021, the community complained about the budget that municipal leaders continued to present to them, without much progress on the ground. The initial issue was that there was lack of road communication networks. In respondents’ view, “The absence of proper gravel roads impacts negatively on the development of the community.” People find it difficult to access the town, especially during rainy season. The root issue was a lack of good government practices.

Regarding the ward administration office, some respondents stated that there was a shortage of staff to assist community members when they needed assistance regarding governmental and development issues. An example was given about small business funds that were issued by the government to the informal sector and spaza shops during the COVID-19 pandemic; respondents indicated that they had no one to assist them with compliance and application forms. Lack of

electricity as a service delivery issue was also cited as the challenge that government should address in order to improve the living standards of the people. Furthermore, respondents indicated that there were no business opportunities in MLM, and if there were, people from outside were given the first priority. This results in high unemployment rate and emigration of young people to urban areas. One respondent said, “Lack of information related to economic development in rural areas and access to finance have contributed to high unemployment.” Overall, the majority of the respondents stated that although basic services were needed in society, “It takes a long time for government and line ministries to deliver those services.”

Notwithstanding the challenges mentioned above, respondents indicated that notable progress has been achieved in terms of infrastructure development since democracy in 1994. Respondents provided examples of government schools and local clinics that were built, and water infrastructure that was developed and distributed to many households within the community. Respondents acknowledged that the municipality was doing its best to assist everyone. They also praised the exceptional work ethic of the municipality, as it had a good functioning administration and little corruption compared to other municipalities within the district.

During face-to-face interviews and observation, participants raised social issues of unemployment, hunger, alcohol abuse, crime, poor infrastructure, and electricity connection as other challenges within the municipality, albeit not being governance issues. Participants stated that poor governance practices and service delivery to the people in the MLM were caused by these social factors. For example, if good governance practices are not put in place and applied, services may not be delivered to people. Such a situation can lead to social problems. Both public officials and community members agreed that social problems were not beneficial to social and economic development of the municipality. Respondents indicated that social issues have a direct impact on the manner and the extent to which governance practices are exercised and services are delivered.

Information gathered from the MLM case study indicated that significant change is needed to promote good governance in public service to enhance service delivery at different ward levels prioritising their needs differently per ward. Respondents noted that public institutions should apply good governance practices and preserve governance models and principles. In this regard,

service delivery would be improved. Consequently, this can promote socio-economic improvement of the people including the previously marginalised.

6.2.4 Objective four: to identify the most appropriate participatory communication models that can be used to communicate with rural communities

In identifying appropriate participatory communication models that can be used to communicate with rural communities, the MLM Communication Plan was referenced and evaluated in terms of respondents' perspectives.

A respondent said, "Developmental local government as prescribed by legislation seeks to forge a partnership between government and the citizenry for effective service delivery. Communication models that are used to communicate with rural communities have respectively become central to the work of local government which is the sphere of government closest to the people." The following models and communication modes constructed from the municipal communications policy were used to communicate with citizens in rural communities in MLM:

Face-to-face interactions: The municipality still believes in traditional ways of strengthening its communication with the Matatiele community. These kinds of engagements are conducted on a quarterly basis by the Communications and Public Participation units through offices of the mayor and speaker, with the aim to share government information, public education, and encouraging public participation. For instance, assisted by the Eastern Cape Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA), the municipality established ward rapid response teams, as part of enhancing participatory communication and closing the communication gap between the government and its citizens. This model further allows the messenger to meet and engage with rural communities, allowing a physical presence which builds trust in those attending the session.

Face-to-face interactions also allow for a better exchange of information. The world is increasingly moving to digital platforms but there are communities that are left out in the process, including the illiterate and those with no access to the digital platform, hence face-to-face engagements in rural areas of MLM, specifically Mafube, remains suitable. Face-to-face interaction is also easier to

convince people and is effective as feedback are more instant. Direct communication and mutual exchange of views with the public is the most effective form of communication.

IDP outreaches allowing inputs from its citizens before the adoption of the IDP document and Budget, with objectives to present the service delivery challenges and progress per ward, and confirm ward infrastructure ward needs priorities. Here community members have the power to make their voices heard and encourage public participation.

The model is viewed as more developmental than others as the law dictates that development must be a bottom-up rather than top-down approach. This helps people to identify areas of development and find an amicable solution on the priorities they urgently need. In terms of Section 29 (i) and (ii) of the Local Government, Municipal Systems Act (Act 32 of 2000), the municipality or government must create space for community participation in every development being introduced. In the process, all stakeholders play a critical role as they are thoroughly consulted. In working out campaigns and programmes, there should be deliberate efforts for deep understanding of the communication environment.

Ward committee meetings: These are conducted bi-monthly with the purpose to update community members about progress made and challenges that are being encountered in the process of delivering services to them. Members of the public are given an opportunity to participate and contribute in such meetings.

The purpose of a ward committee is to assist the democratically elected representative of a ward. The ward councillor spreads important information to the community, encourages participation in the community, and is supposed to enhance effective public participation. Eikenberry (2009) asserts that effective public participation can assist municipalities to eliminate major challenges that hinder service delivery to the citizens, including corrupt practices, power struggles, and gender misrepresentation. The ward committee must make the municipal council aware of the needs and concerns of the community, and keep the community informed of developments in the municipal council. Even though the ward committee members can make recommendations to the municipal council, they do not have power to make decisions.

Ward committee members are people within a community who know sectors of the community well, and who are thus able to assist the ward councillor with certain issues of governance. It is important to note that ward committee meetings do not replace public meetings of the ward, where all stakeholders are represented. The ward committee works with the ward councillor to ensure that the public participation process in a particular ward represents the full diversity of interests of that ward. Ward committees are meant to encourage participation by the community. As already alluded to, their job is to make the municipal council aware of the needs and concerns of residents, and to keep people informed of the activities of the municipal council. The committees spread information about what the community wants from the municipal council and what the council is doing. Through participatory communication and the ward committees that represent communities, citizens can influence the policy decision-making and the resources that affect them.

Community Radio: The municipality built a partnership with radio stations to communicate with its citizens whenever need arises. Through the investigation conducted by the municipality's communications and media relations unit an indication showed that the elderly listen to community radios and while majority of youth take part in developmental and entertainment shows mostly, nevertheless, these two channels shows that the municipality targets to convey their messages.

According to the 2011 census, about 61.1% households have a radio in working order in the Eastern Cape Province and 76% of people frequently prefer to get information about government activities from the TV and radio. According to the interim radio data overview by the Broadcast Research Council of South Africa of Jan-June-2021, it was indicated that, overall, 77% of Matatiele population listen to the community radio, 29% via cell phones, 12% via televisions, and 1% via a computer and close to four hours is spent listening to the radio at home. Reasons for listening to the radio include talk shows and information about current affairs. Community radio helps to ensure the people's right to information and community participation by allowing expression of the voices and thoughts of grassroots people in the development process. It reflects the culture, ideology and thoughts, and norms and values of a particular community.

Tribal Authority meetings: Through the office of the speaker and the Public Participation Unit, the municipality has good working relations with traditional leaders in rural wards. The municipality

takes advantage of weekly tribal authority meetings to communicate with its rural communities. In this way, messages get conveyed to the targeted audience. Further to these traditional ways of communication, the municipality also uses posters that are written in a language that is mostly spoken by communities of that particular area and various modes of transport are used to transport citizens to meetings.

Posters/pamphlets (information sheets): These types of communication models are used to communicate simplified written messages with three languages that are mostly spoken in Matatiele (IsiXhosa, Sesotho, and English). They get distributed through post office boxes, in retail shops, taxi/bus ranks, ward councillors/committees' offices, tribal authorities' offices, and local churches.

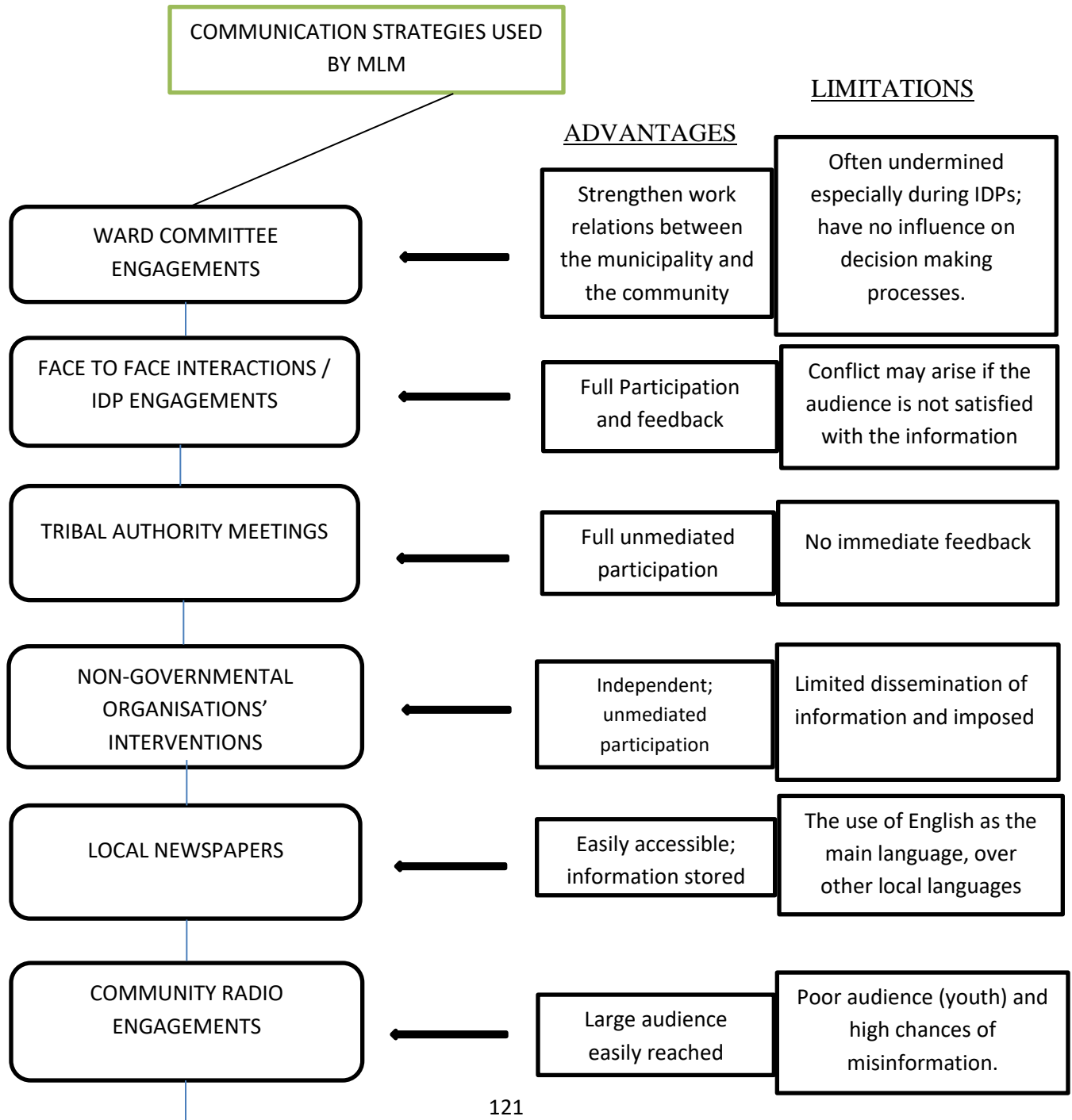
Most of South African institutions/government/municipalities and entities, including Matatiele Local Municipality, are now using this form of communication and it is proving to be effective since it is brief, dominated by pictures which validate the message being communicated. Readers do not have time to read a well packed message, but they browse through; hence, this form is being used with animations and attractive designs or infographics.

Loud hailing: Considering that Matatiele is mostly rural, the municipality invests in traditional ways of communicating with its citizens, loud hailing being one of them. This became more effective during the lockdown when contact gatherings were prohibited. This mode of communication has since proven to be more effective as it is done in all villages of Matatiele Local Municipality wards.

Loud hailing is one of the traditional forms of communicating, especially in rural areas. An increase or rebirth of this form was seen in RSA during the COVID-19 lockdown regulations where it was very difficult to communicate with rural communities as some did not have access to the national mainstream media. Newspapers could not be printed or delivered as movement was restricted; therefore, a certain demographic was left unattended or with no information. The re-introduction of this model closed the gap as officials managed to record government messages in a simplified language of that area and mobilised resources to ensure that loud hailing takes place and communities are kept informed of any developments.

Local Newspapers: This mode is equal to the local community radio, and it is also important as most local newspapers address local issues as opposed to those on the national agenda. Local newspapers allow the people to become aware of the issues which affect them the most. They also publish breaking stories that will not be covered on the national media; therefore, communities tend to read them the most and they are free of charge.

The models discussed are summarised in the diagram below:



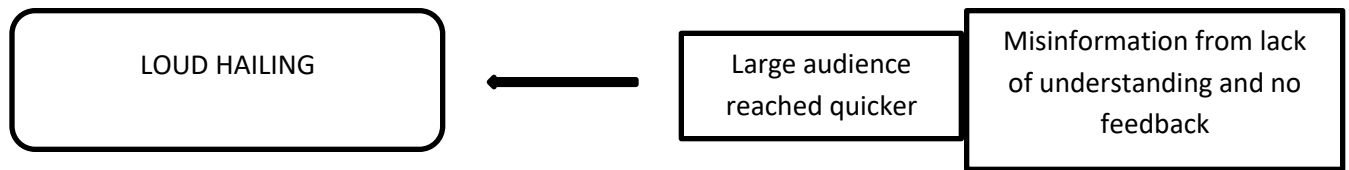


Figure 6.1 Summary of communication models employed by MLM

Subsequent to the above diagram and objective four to identifying the most appropriate participatory communication model the MLM can employ when communicating with its rural municipality, the conclusion was made on the use of face-to-face interactions and tribal authority meetings/ *imbizo*. These two modes mostly relate to the Mafube area because of its demographic nature. As stated by Molale (2019), no approach fits universally, but each should be applied appropriately according to circumstances and desired objectives. MLM is characterised by rural areas, and for participatory communication to be effective, the modes used to communicate with communities must be responsive and related to each community.

The two identified modes represent two-way communication processes that involve consultation with the recipients of information and providing them with answers to their requests. Face-to-face interaction is often seen during the IDP engagements allowing the local municipality to present its budget and plans, as well as to listen to the ideas and experiences of communities, especially about programmes and services aimed at improving their lives. Similarly, *imbizo* has been identified as a trusted platform for unmediated communication between government officials (ward committees), tribal authority (amakhosi), and the public (community members) to advance participatory implementation of government programmes to create a platform where community development concerns are noted before being relayed to upper municipal administration.

Access to spaces of communication is important; the dialog is important, and models encourage such participation. The face-to-face interaction allows participants to be present and engaged in the meetings. Miscommunication is one of the major causes of disruptions; instead, officials can clearly explain the entire purpose of a meeting or project, get feedback and answer all questions in one face-to-face meeting. This ensures everyone is well-informed, allowing meeting participants to hear all instructions, feedback, questions, and answers at the same time. It also improves relations between the stakeholders.

6.2.5 Methods for endorsing participatory communication processes in service delivery: building towards sustainable livelihoods

(a) Partnership with municipal stakeholders and key role players

One participant, in her introduction, emphasised that a communication strategy is used in the municipality to ensure that it also contributes to promoting citizen participation for service delivery. She said, “The municipality has the communication strategy which addresses the approach that it used to promote service delivery through public participation, and the municipality has a war room with different professionals who ensure that community development exists in the wards, all the sectors are involved. The municipality has 34 wards and there are 10 wards committees in each ward hence there are 340 wards committees.” This suggests that different departments work towards the goal of promoting service delivery in all the spheres. The municipality ensures that communication channels are established to reach out to the local communities. This is supported by Nzimakwe (2010); Mubangizi (2021) and Mubangizi (2022), who agree that public participation is an all-encompassing label used to describe various mechanisms that individuals or groups may use to communicate their views on a public issue.

One participant indicated that the municipality used other strategies to communicate with local communities based on public participation. For instance, he mentioned that, “Although there is a framework, but to make it operational dedicated public participation unity goes out, we use tools such as: Social media, Ward councillors, Internal Publications, Clustering of wards, and Traditional Authorities (Leadership).” This shows that partnerships with different key role players and stakeholder ensures that all people are represented in the process of public participation, as the local municipality also exists to ensure the economic development of local communities through business initiatives. More than one participant mentioned that the role of the traditional leadership is also recognised in terms of enhancing participation. One respondent said, “Engagement with traditional leadership assists to gather the community.” This is a common way to gather people in the rural wards like Mafube, where traditional leadership is still regarded as a source of leadership and wisdom in the communities.

(b) The use of roadshows

The majority of the participants indicated that roadshows are the most prevalent mechanism the municipality uses to enhance service delivery through participatory communication. However, some participants indicated that roadshows do not happen always, and other ways to enhance public participation are therefore still required. Methods that promote participatory communication are IDP roadshows, ward committees in terms of the Municipal Structures Act because they are easy to use, local newspapers, radio slots, and other printed media such as brochures and newsletters. One participant pointed out that roadshows also help to educate people about their rights to participate in the process of public participation. These rights correspond with the study findings that indicate that one of the reasons for not participating in the process of IDP formulation is lack of knowledge about citizens' rights. Both quantitative and qualitative results concur that people still need to be educated about their rights to participate in the local government sphere. Another participant stated that, "Public participation is meaningful, the municipality is willing to educate people on the role of public participation across all the spheres of government, through collecting information to satisfy the needs of the people, we have a number of activities to enhance service delivery through collecting people's needs through IDP roadshows and budget process."

(c) The system of ward committees

Ward committees are known for their inclusive nature to enhance public participation at a fundamental level. During the study, participants agreed that ward committees are functional and operational in MLM. The municipality consists of 26 wards and in each ward there are 10 ward committees. Thus, ward committees appear to be the most common communication structure. One participant pointed out that: "The wards committees participate by providing the municipality with feedback on government and ward operations, be it any programme or development related to service delivery."

According to Mayekiso et al. (2013, p. 189), ward-based planning provides ward committees with a systematic planning and implementation process to perform their roles and responsibilities. In other words, ward plans provide an overall direction for the development of specific areas within municipal boundaries. The municipality has institutionalised the system of ward committees to

ensure that the municipality complies with democratic principles of public participation as stipulated in the constitution and the Municipal Structure Act. This was indicated by one participant who stated that, “Ward committees’ system and the IDP should be institutionalised, they must be improved by ensuring the understanding of the people, by allowing academics to do research and give feedback to the people, and explaining to them about the value of participation.”

Mayekiso et al. (2013, p. 199) further point out that for the ward committees to become more effective in influencing the policy-making process in local government, they need to be strengthened and nurtured. Entirely, the process of participatory communication with the MLM does not only focus on municipal service delivery. According to the participants, this has become an approach that includes provincial and national government programmes, through which the municipality enhances the process of public participation in all the spheres. It is evident that roadshows also help in ensuring that all community-based activities involve people, be it the national or provincial government. One participant said, “Ward committees represent different sectors; the role of ward committees – present to the municipality through the help of district and provincial government; ward committees understand the process of public participation.” The results indicate that the ward committee system does not only provide a platform for public participation; rather, it gives the municipality an opportunity to consult with the people on service delivery matters.

Another respondent stated:

When local people have problems related to each service delivery such as water or electricity, ward committees appropriate their response to needs. The ward committee’s work with community-based organisations such as schools, clinics, and NGO’s to ensure that they partner with the municipality in enhancing service delivery and social services; different issues and problems are brought forward.

In addition, it ensures that the local people give feedback to the municipality on the services they receive, unlike during the old dispensation where development was based on one-way communication. This relates to the basis of the Citizens Act, that public participation in decision making is fundamental to enable people claim their democratic rights.

In South Africa, this right is enshrined in the Constitution, which states in Section 19, that every citizen is free to make political choices and to participate in political processes. Although Mathekga and Buccs (2006) believe that in South Africa ward committees exist to guarantee public participation, this outcome has not materialised in some places. Masuku (2018) argues that people in South Africa have developed a ‘wait and see’ attitude, where the government gives development programmes to people without their input. In the study area, the situation is different based on the responses of the participants; ward committees are used to consult the communities on the available service delivery matters. Underpinned in the theory of ladder of participation, the precincts of Arnstein’s framework emphasise on involving communities in government affairs, allowing the public to control or have power in governance by involving them in decision making and responding to their (community) needs.

6.3 Summary

Discussions of findings/ results were in the focus of this chapter. The conclusions drawn based on the findings, and the suggested recommendations are dealt with in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Introduction

The chapter presents the conclusions drawn from the study and related recommendations.

Conclusions of the study

The main finding of the study is in line with existing legislatures, and a summary is provided below. As the study unfolded, it was discovered that within the legislation, little is focused on tribal authorities and the crucial role they play in democratic development of a local structure. Because of failing to be specific on the role of traditional leaders in the local sphere of government, the Constitution relegates the institution of traditional leadership to a level far inferior to that of elected councillors, a constitutional provision detested by many traditional leaders who argue that the Constitution accords far more power and prestige to municipal councils whose functions have been clearly spelt out. Therefore, the argument continues that the Constitution lacks equality by discriminating against traditional leaders whose functions are considered too backward and

primitive for recognition and elevation to the same Constitutional level as those of municipal councillors.

Traditional leaders continue to play very important roles in achieving communal harmony and specifically in the development of communities and the larger society, and any debate about their status, rights and obligations faces the challenge not of whether they should continue to exist or not, but of how the constitutional values and theory relating to their existence can be given effect if their role is not recognisable. The critical theory states that any approach to social ideas and of which focuses on reflective assessment, critique of society and culture challenges to power structure, therefore, tools of trade and prioritisation assist in ensuring that the institution of traditional leadership is restored to where it belongs.

In the final analysis, and because of the social dimension, two important consequences have emerged, each with challenges. In the first place, there emerges an expectation that in the national sphere, traditional leaders should be limited to cultural, ceremonial or (frequently undefined) ‘advisory roles, but at communal level they should share with local government officials real power over issues like land, tax revenue, resources, responsibility for dispensing justice, and influence over community activities and decisions’. These social consequences have both turned out to be very contentious. The other resulting social consequence is what many authors characterise as the division of society into two extreme positions or schools of thought, namely ‘the traditionalists’ and ‘the modernists’.

Overly, the purpose of critical participatory action research is ‘to change social practices, including research itself, to make them more rational and reasonable, more productive and sustainable and more just and inclusive’. The process of participating in communicative action occurs within a communicative space. This is a place where participants are free to be open and honest, and respect each other’s ideas and perspectives. From a critical participatory action research perspective, this requires a space where conversations are conducted respectfully, and usually this is evident in tribal authority and face-to-face meetings, and this this creates an open attempt among participants to reach unforced consensus and appreciate difference.

Safety is created within communicative spaces where participants engender a sense of cohesion with shared decision making. This cohesion itself ensures there is validity and legitimacy in the

attainment of unforced consensus. Validity and legitimacy are essential in critical participatory action research and can only be achieved through communicative action where participants are free to decide what is comprehensible to them, what they believe is the truth, what they believe to be sincerely stated and what seems to be morally right and appropriate at a given point in time (Kemmis et al., 2013, p 36).

The following themes developed within the study are unpacked:

(a) The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa - a guiding legislation

This theme was developed to ascertain the regulatory framework that is used in local municipalities to enhance service delivery. Participants confirmed that the municipality uses the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) to create conditions for democratic participation. It was indicated that the Constitution provides all citizens with the right to participate freely in the process of service delivery and to vote for whatever development they want in their own communities. One of the respondents indicated that from the developmental issues raised during outreaches, because of limited budget, the institution has to prioritise needs, and the constitution is employed as the umbrella framework to provide guidance. This contention is endorsed by the Constitution (1996), which states that one of the objectives of local government is to encourage the involvement of communities and community organisations in matters of local government (clause 152(1) (e)). It is obligatory for the local sphere of government to promote an environment that is conducive enough for communities to participate in the affairs of the municipalities.

It was pointed out by one of the respondents from the municipality when asked on the importance of IDP formulation that, “We are guided by the constitution to run public participation based on democratic principles to enhance public participation. The municipality is guided by the constitution of Republic of South Africa in order to align itself with the democratic citizen participation section.”

(b) The Integrated Development Plan - the vision

In MLM, the IDP emerged as the most prevalent regulatory framework that the participants acknowledged to be useful in enhancing service delivery. According to Swanepoel and de Beer (2006), municipalities must be clear on the view of what participation really means; they cannot

mobilise people for token or limited participation. It is important that IDP does not involve people only in certain conditions yet they have to participate in the decision-making process. The municipality's IDP must ensure that the local people's input is used based on development. During the study, participants were confident and very clear that the IDP was the main regulatory framework that drives the process of public participation in service delivery matters. One respondent stated, "The IDP provides a platform for our citizens to make inputs in terms of their needs; it creates empowerment for people and about development of their own municipalities." The IDP seemed to be giving them more of a platform to discuss the issues of service delivery and ensuring that services are provided without interruptions.

Mayekiso (2013) states that IDP is a master plan that assists municipalities in how they will spend their capital budget for the next five years, and it allows them to set their budget priorities. The participants were further asked if the regulatory framework is implemented; they agreed that the regulatory framework that is used to promote service delivery was working, and it had benefited the municipality in ensuring public participation. The results show that IDP participation helps in terms of improving current projects and the pace of service delivery in the wards. This was expressed by one participant who said, "It does improve in my experience; issues raised by the public inform the municipality on the needs approach that influences strategy of the municipality. Projects ongoing in the wards are driven by the community concerns through the public participation mechanism."

Sewell and Coppock (1997) submit that through IDP formulation processes, public hearings may be held in various areas to allow a greater number of community members to participate and voice their views. The timing and venues for the hearings are important, as they affect the degree of public influence, which include the IDP processes. The collected information is used to meet the needs of local community based on budget provision and through the process of public participation identification of needs of a particular cluster. People participate through giving their views, areas of concern, and the municipality plan according to the needs of the people.

(c) Municipal Systems Act - the guiding framework

Participants unanimously agreed that another regulatory framework used to enhance service delivery is the Municipal Systems Act. The role of the Act is to define the legal nature of municipalities, as part of a system of co-operative government. It also clarifies the rights and duties of the municipal council, local communities, and the municipal administration. One of the participants indicated that, “We are compelled to IDP process engaging with the citizen of MLM to develop a background of IDP process plan, this plan talks about public participation. It is the first phase of analysis. We are required to engage with the public.” This suggests that the municipality adheres to participatory democracy regulations.

Section 5 of the Municipal Systems Act provides for the rights of members of a local community. It states that members of the community have the right to contribute to the decision-making processes of the municipality. This includes the consultation of community members on the development of municipal needs and priorities, as well as the drafting of an Integrated Development Plan. Section 5 of the Municipal Systems Act calls for community members to be informed of the decisions of the Municipal Council, which may affect their rights, property, and reasonable expectations. In Chapter 4 of the Act, the prescription is that municipalities should develop a culture of municipal governance that augments formal representative government with a system of participatory governance.

(d) Effective participatory communication model

The majority of the participants agreed that there is effective community participation in the formulation of the IDP in MLM. The responses vary according to the experiences of the participants, although one participant indicated that it was not fair to agree since they could not measure their own performance, however the municipality had won awards in terms of IDP formulation. One respondent said, “The municipality had a number of IDP awards provincially and nationally for the past four years, this implies that there is effective community participation in the municipality.” Another participant pointed out that there is effective community participation because there is a remarkable increase in the number of people attending roadshows for budget and IDP processes yearly. This implies that people want to be part of the movement in the city, since they continue to attend. Another respondent stated that, “It is effective because yearly, the number of public participants grows. If not, people would not be attending.”

One participant stated that during the roadshows, people raised issues of service delivery based on positive matters and they contributed by commenting on the lack of service delivery matters, such as water, electricity, and roads. This suggests that people wish to see change in their communities. A response from one respondent was positive, “We get feedback from people based on the service delivery and it brings encouragement to the municipality official side; I have never seen a municipality that has maximum participation like MLM.” Similar findings by Ngami (2014) revealed that public participation is a process, not an event; it consists of a series of activities and actions by a sponsoring agency, over the full lifespan of a project, to both inform the public and to obtain input from them. This suggests that both community members and municipal officials hold similar views about community participation. One official maintained that even though community participation is effective in MLM, there is room for improvement, especially in ensuring that all stakeholders and interest groups are involved.

(e) Impact of participatory communication on service delivery and sustainable livelihoods:

The results on the influence of participatory communication on service delivery showed that the municipality receives positive contribution from the local communities; this implies that there is an institutionalised participatory democracy. The results indicated that only a minority of respondents claimed that public participation had no influence on service delivery, while almost the entire group claimed that it influenced service delivery and enhanced sustainable livelihoods. One respondent said, “Public participation influences service delivery to greater extent because it is the juncture where people give feedback on their views of the service they get, as the municipality we get the feel of the people, opportunity to know what they are concerned about, and take corrective actions for short comings.” Waldt (2014) describes citizen participation as the cornerstone of local democracy, adding that, increasingly, citizens demand more information on how public goods are managed, and they want to know how their tax money is spent. They expect better services, want to participate in the developmental processes, and in making decisions on issues that affect them.

The above suggests that participatory communication and the level of participation benefit both parties. Another respondent stated, “Previous people’s development was imposed but in this new

democracy, people are consulted. In my experience, centralised governance during apartheid was not focusing on the unique need of local communities, but through public participation the government has decentralised service delivery according to the needs of people rather than imposing to them; through public participation government is controlled by the people.” This simply shows that participatory communication in MLM is built on democratic principles. The majority of the participants indicated that most of the service delivery concerns were adopted to ensure that budgeting is compatible with the needs of the people in the local communities.

The study clearly depicts the image of how impactful and important participatory communication is. Methods of endorsing participatory communication processes in service delivery building towards sustainable livelihood were unpacked. However, the studied municipality did not reach full potential in implementing the participatory communication processes; their articulation indicates a potential to continue developing participation in the formulation of the IDP. The MLM regards communities and stakeholders as the key participants in the IDP process. The involvement of communities in decision-making processes and the association of participatory communication in democracy are the key themes that emerged under the conceptualisation of IDP processes implemented by municipalities in this study. Ward Committees were used in this study as structures for effective participatory communication actors at local community level in the IDP process. Municipal departments under the IDP were the main structures for participatory communication in the IDP process. While the IDP unit provided space for different stakeholders to participate in the IDP process, these structures fell short of their intended design. Instead of providing space for debate and negotiation, they were mainly used as space for information purposes.

Through the unfolding of the study, municipalities established various mechanisms for communities to participate in the IDP process. While some of these mechanisms enhanced public participation and democratic governance by promoting opportunities for communities to hold the government accountable, communities at large lacked power to influence decisions in the IDP process, merely because of lack of rights and knowledge about the process. Only a few communication methods created conditions that would encourage participation by marginalised or rural-based citizens. As a result, the participation of such groups in the IDP process was limited.

Through observation, the researcher discovered that IDP roadshows are the key platform used by the municipality to enhance sustainable livelihoods and service delivery in MLM. This is where the community assets and resources are mapped down and incorporated to contribute to development of MLM.

The effectiveness of the municipal communication strategy is also measured through the responses received from the IDP. As guided by the constitution during these outreaches, citizens are given an opportunity to comment and provide inputs before any adoption of the IDP document and Budget. The intentions are to present the service delivery backlogs and progress per ward, present the current projects for that particular financial year, and to confirm infrastructure ward needs priorities. According to municipal officials who participated in the study, the IDP has been useful in formulating strategic development plans in accordance with the needs of the people to fast track the process of service delivery in rural communities.

The researcher also noted that the findings were not all pessimistic. Even though there were many challenges identified by this study, there were benefits that emerged because of participatory communication in the IDP process. These benefits include access to government; the ability to hold government accountable on promises made, and some level of influence by stakeholders in some municipalities. One important benefit for communities was having a say in decisions that affect them despite the fact that their inputs did not always yield results. The nature of participation used in the IDP process in this study showed low levels of public involvement and the public's lack of power to influence decisions. The conclusion that can be drawn is that public participation is an ongoing exercise in MLM.

The results of this study clearly indicate that the participatory approach and the role of effective communication are important key tools to development and enhancing sustainable livelihoods of rural communities through service delivery. Although the communication channels in participatory communication may be influenced by the many ideological and some theoretical approaches that have been identified in the development communication field and in the study, communication channels should be in line with the basic principles of the participatory approach and must be sensitive to the needs of the communities. In interpreting the data obtained from the

interviews, observation, and documentary sources, all of the above were considered. It would seem MLM still has a long way in participatory communication and that can be dawned from the service delivery strikes that have broken down within the term the study was conducted.

During the 2021 elections, one of the rural communities, Lekhalong, which is within the jurisdiction of MLM in ward 4, withheld their right to vote because of the poor service provision they have received from the municipality over the years. The community passed grievances at neglect from the municipality and poor road infrastructure.

Another instance is that although citizens are willing to participate in the municipal IDP processes of MLM, their desire to influence the outcome and participate in the process is derailed by poor communication channels, which often leads to violent service delivery protests. For instance, in 2018, the residents of MLM embarked on a service delivery protest due to ineffective feedback and communication between residents and the municipality. The residents called on Parliament to urgently discuss proposed demarcations of the area. A community group, the Matatiele-Maluti Mass Action Organising Committee, handed a memorandum to local authorities and request for the issue to be discussed before 30 June 2018 (SA News, 2017). This led to widespread protests and mass destruction of resources and infrastructure, and especially deep fractures and mistrust which have generally affected the municipality. Appropriate communication channels could increase engagement between the citizens and the government administration, improve citizen participation, communication, and data gathering such as surveys; increase trust and confidence. It was against this background that there was need for this study to be realised.

The above instance openly demonstrates that the process of participatory communication is an on-going exercise within the municipal governance system, and it continues from the time the developmental projects are identified, through their implementation, up to the time when the implementation has been completed, and is being evaluated. It emphasises the importance of agents and stakeholders as key role players throughout.

6.4 Recommendations of the study

It is recommended that the municipality educates and conceptualizes participatory communication this regard, the role that the public plays in the governance process will be clear. This will

contribute to finding appropriate methods for involving and promoting public participation. Organisational structures and communicatory methods to facilitate participatory communication in the IDP process will be easily identifiable and more effective.

Municipal departments of communication in the IDP process: Municipalities must find ways of mitigating the challenges that are inherent in Ward Committees as structures of participation at local community level. This might involve complementing Ward Committees with other existing structures, as these seem to be more accommodative of the realities of communities.

A suggestion for a revised role nature of Ward Committees as community inputs would be viable because through these structures, there tend to be undermined in the IDP process. And for the municipality to counter more remuneratory investment, as their roles will be more developed. To counter the challenges and the critiques against the municipal authorial nature of decision making, the municipality must find ways of accommodating marginalised groups that are less organised, rather than working with only “recognised structures” in the IDP process. These marginalised groups must be capacitated to ensure that they participate meaningfully in the structures of participation. Partnerships with NGOs and other community structures must be explored to a greater extent by the municipality. Empowerment for marginalised groups can also work to counter the bias towards business interests in the IDP formulation. While it may be difficult to change the influence of political parties in the IDP processes, traditional leaders and councillors need capacity building to clarify their role of representing communities in the participatory communication processes of local government.

Mechanisms and processes of public participation and the IDP process to be more accommodative: Municipalities must establish participation mechanisms that are obliging of all kinds of people in their areas. These mechanisms must consider the realities and disparities that exist amongst the people of South Africa. This includes communication methods. In particular, special measures must be taken to accommodate marginalised groups of society such as women, people with disabilities, and people in remote areas. This involves measures such as providing simplified information, accommodative languages (especially written), and better road infrastructure.

The commitment by rural municipalities towards participatory communication must be seen in the nature and quality of participation by citizens. This requires change of attitude by municipal officials; away from partial participation and minimum effort types of participation towards higher levels of participation, where results will be yielded. This will ensure that citizens are engaged in policy-making, not just to meet the legal requirements, but to ensure that they have a real say in decisions that affect their lives. However, acknowledging the reality of the complexity of policy-making and conducive participation, it should not be acceptable to involve communities only when they identify their problems, while excluding them in areas that seek priorities and solutions to their problems. The Municipal Council must show more commitment towards participation, by showing respect for community inputs to encourage and to redeem the image of participatory communication in the IDP process.

The findings of the study also suggest that the municipal communication models do not necessarily reach everyone or at least the majority as intended. That respondents indicated that they were not aware that it is within their rights to participate and give feedback during IDP meetings. From observational findings, it was concluded that the municipal personnel like ward committee members, are not capacitated as to how to go about performing their duties, hence a gap between the municipality and communities. There are no proper measures utilised to engage with the participants, and since there is no tool to monitor and evaluate the process of programme formulation, rate participation cannot be determined as to whether it is sufficient and effective.

The concentrated focus on how each community can be resourced to contribute to sustaining livelihoods of communities, considering the poverty analysis and highlighting the importance of assets, including social capital, in determining well-being. Sustained and inclusive economic growth can drive progress, create decent jobs for all, and improve living standards.

Moreover, the study suggests that there should be a co-development by the community and the municipality of a comprehensive strategy to enhance service provision with participatory communication as a facilitating factor. The facilitation of effective service delivery is caused by the magnitude of public participation, good governance practices, effective communication, and gender representation. A comprehensive strategy needs to be designed to enhance the factors

associated with the facilitation factor and to suppress power struggles. Such a strategy must be the result of collaboration between the municipality and the various community groups involved in service delivery issues. The drawing up of the annual municipal budget could serve as a good example of collaborative planning. In the light of the point above, the annual budget should be a collaborative planning issue between the municipality and the various stakeholder public groups, through which it is subjected to open participatory communication and where all involved can give their honest opinion about the money allocated to the various services

6.5 Recommendations for further research

An area that needs further research is how government can make use of existing social networks that exist in communities and how these can be used to strengthen general participation only during IDP outreaches but within any developmental projects implemented. For this purpose, the notion of “mediating institutions” suggested by Lando (1999, p. 112), which seeks to mediate between the “private world of individuals and the large structures of modern society” is one of the angles that may be used to explore this. The important part about such structures is that they allow ordinary people to participate in policy processes through their common interaction in society, such as serving poor people through their churches and participating in policy processes through the same structures.

More research can be done on participatory communication mechanism as they differ from place to place, and keep in note the demographics of the area as channels for participatory communication, to explore whether or not these can be used for other local development processes that contribute towards an effective service delivery, rather than merely participating in the IDP process.

Specific research suggestions that emerged from this empirical research include the following:

More items relating to knowledge and social background need to be included. The more specific reasons the respondents differed statistically significantly from one another in some of the latent factors involved needs to be further investigated. This could possibly be done by using a quantitative paradigm in which the number of people involved in the study is prioritised more than the information generated. An investigation could be undertaken into what strategies are available

to counteract the political power struggles that accompany participatory communication models, especially in context of service delivery.

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ANNEXURES

ANNEXURE A: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH



UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL
School of Management, I.T. & Governance
College of Law and Management Studies
August 22, 2019

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

Research students undertake projects that invariably involve the collection of empirical data from organisations. In this way students are given the opportunity to investigate and report on the practical issues facing organisations in real life settings. Typically, this project necessitate data gathering by paper-based questionnaires or interviews.

Miss Moroesi Lebenya (215055576) has chosen to do a research project entitled: Communication Models in Rural Based Municipalities: A Case Study of Matatieie Local Municipality

Supervisor name: Prof. BC Mubangizi Supervisor Contact Details: Mubangizib@ukm.ac.za /031 260 3557.

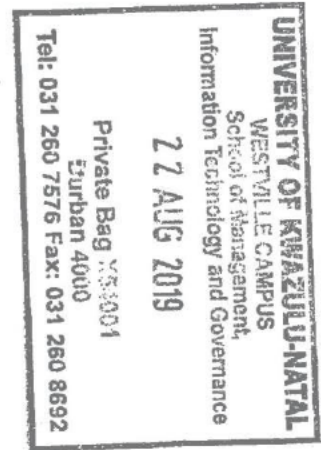
The student has identified your organisation as an excellent site for the study. Your assistance in permitting access to your organisation for the purposes of this research is most appreciated. Please be assured that all information gained from the research will be treated with the utmost circumspection. The student will strictly adhere to confidentiality and anonymity.

I am available at any stage to answer any queries and/or to discuss any aspect of this research project. Thank you for your assistance in this regard.

Ms. AB Pearce



Research & Higher Degrees: School of Management, IT & Governance
University of KwaZulu-Natal - Westville Campus



The School of Management, IT and Governance

College of Law and Management Studies

ANNEXURE B: RESEARCH LEAFLET

**UKZN HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE
(HSSREC)**

For research with human participants

INFORMATION SHEET AND CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Date:

Greetings,

My name is Moroesi Lebenya, student number: 215055576 from Matatiele, Eastern Cape. I am a registered student at the University of KwaZulu-Natal for a Masters' degree in Public Administration, academic year 2019 and 2021. I intend to do a research study, titled: **Communication Models for Rural Based Municipality: A Case Study of Matatiele Local Municipality**. The project is a prerequisite for me to successfully complete the above-mentioned qualification. I have identified Matatiele Local Municipality one of the local municipalities under Alfred Nzo District Municipality as the main scope of the study and as the institution that has the necessary information which is considered necessary for my research project. Researcher's contact number and the assigned supervisor are as follows:

<u>RESEARCHER</u>	<u>SUPERVISOR</u>
Ms Moroesi Lebenya Tel: 073 2637 596 Email: 215055576@stu.ukzn.ac.za	Name: Professor Betty Mubangizi Tel: 031 260 3557 Email: Mubangizib@ukzn.ac.za Institution: The University of KwaZulu-Natal School: Management IT & Governance Discipline: Public Governance Campus: Westville DST/NRF SARCHI Chair - Sustainable Local (Rural) Livelihoods

You are being invited to consider participating in a study that involves an examination of communication models used by rural municipalities to communicate with its citizens. The aim and purpose of this research is to explore, understand and explain the participatory communication processes in Matatiele Local Municipality and how these contribute to sustainable livelihoods. The study is expected to include 23 total number of participants that includes ward councillor, two municipal employees and fifteen (15) random informants from the community. The collection of information procedure will involve random sampling, semi-structured interviews and observations. The duration of your participation if you choose to participate and remain in the study is expected to be not longer than 90 minutes. The study is funded by DST/NRF SARChI Chair.

The study may involve the following risks and/or discomforts to key participants; Psychological or emotional risks such as fear, confusion, guilt and maybe a trigger of past emotional experiences. We hope that the study will assisted the researcher in gaining an empathetic, in-depth understanding of what participatory communication models are best recommended for rural communities. That it will educate the general public, stakeholders in social management, students, government and policy-makers on the significance of participatory communication models within rural communities with an understanding of identifying management strategies to combat the threat associated with ineffective communication and feedback between communities and municipalities. That it serves as a resource base to other scholars and researchers interested in carrying out further research in this field subsequently if applied will go to an extent to provide new explanation to the topic.

If the research could potentially involve risk, explain in full if compensation exists for this risk, what medical and/or psychosocial interventions are available as treatment, and where additional information can be obtained.

This study has been ethically reviewed and approved by the UKZN Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (approval number: HSSREC/00001694/2020).

In the event of any problems or concerns/questions you may contact the researcher at the aforementioned contact details or the UKZN Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee, contact details as follows:

HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION

Research Office, Westville Campus

Govan Mbeki Building

Private Bag X 54001

Durban 4000 KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA

Tel: 27 31 2604557- Fax: 27 31 2604609

Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

Your anonymity will be maintained by the researcher and the School of Management, I.T. & Governance and your responses will not be used for any purposes outside of this study. All data, both electronic and hard copy, will be securely stored during the study and archived for 5 years. After this time, all data will be destroyed. If you have any questions or concerns about participating in the study, please contact me or my research supervisor at the numbers listed above.

Sincerely

Moroesi Lebenya

ANNEXURE C: CONSENT FORM

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE

I (Name) have been informed about the study entitled Communication Models for rural-based Municipalities: A Case Study of Matatiele Local Municipality by Moroosi Lebenya.

I understand the purpose and procedures of the study.

I have been given an opportunity to ask questions about the study and have had answers to my satisfaction.

I declare that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time without affecting any of the benefits that I usually am entitled to.

I have been informed about any available compensation or medical treatment if injury occurs to me as a result of study-related procedures.

If I have any further questions/concerns or queries related to the study I understand that I may contact the researcher at Cell: 073 2637 596 and/or Email: 215055576@stu.ukzn.ac.za

If I have any questions or concerns about my rights as a study participant, or if I am concerned about an aspect of the study or the researchers then I may contact:

HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION

Research Office, Westville Campus

Govan Mbeki Building

Private Bag X 54001

Durban

4000

KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA

Tel: 27 31 2604557 - Fax: 27 31 2604609

Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

Additional consent, where applicable

I hereby provide consent to:

Audio-record my interview / focus group discussion YES / NO

Video-record my interview / focus group discussion YES / NO

Use of my photographs for research purposes YES / NO

Signature of Participant

Date

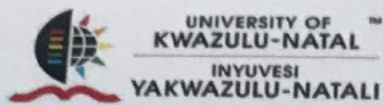
Signature of Witness
(Where applicable)

Date

Signature of Translator
(Where applicable)

Date

ANNEXURE D: ETHICAL CLEARANCE



16 April 2021

Miss Moroosi Lebenya (215055576)
School of Man Info Tech & Gov
Westville Campus

Dear Miss Lebenya,

Protocol reference number: HSSREC/00001694/2020

Project title: Communication Models for rural based Municipalities: A Case Study of Matatiele Local Municipality.
Degree: Masters

Approval Notification – Expedited Application

This letter serves to notify you that your application received on 19 June 2020 in connection with the above, was reviewed by the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC) and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number. PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

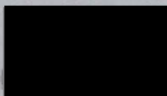
This approval is valid until 16 April 2022.

To ensure uninterrupted approval of this study beyond the approval expiry date, a progress report must be submitted to the Research Office on the appropriate form 2 - 3 months before the expiry date. A close-out report to be submitted when study is finished.

All research conducted during the COVID-19 period must adhere to the national and UKZN guidelines.

HSSREC is registered with the South African National Research Ethics Council (REC-040414-040).

Yours sincerely,



Professor Dipane Hlalele (Chair)

/dd

Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee
Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban, 4000, South Africa

ANNEXURE E: AGENDA OF IDP MEETING



MATATIELE
LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

**COMMUNITY OUTREACH
PROGRAMME**

18 NOV 2019 – 21 NOV 2019

AGENDA

No.	Item:	Responsibility
1.	Opening prayer	Community member
2.	Introduction and apologies	Team leader
3.	Welcoming	Traditional leader
4.	Purpose of community outreach	Team member
5.	Ward report: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Ward report presentation- Confirmation of needs	Ward councillor
6.	Presentations by sector departments and public education programmes	Delegated persons
7.	Inputs and discussion	All participants

ANNEXURE F: DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUES

1. INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1.1 Interview questions to municipal officials

1. What communication strategy does the municipality have in place for its citizens?
2. Which communication models do you use to communicate with the public citizens?
3. What measures does the municipality take to ensure communication modes used are effective and reach everyone?
4. Matatiele Local Municipality has both the urban and rural settlements, how do you ensure that each communication model used to communicate with citizens is best suitable?
5. Is the municipality aware that each community may require its technique of communication due to its demographics? Explain
6. What measures are put into use to ensure participatory communication is effective?

1.2 Interview questions to municipal officials

1. Why are IDP outreaches necessary? And how often are they held?
2. Would you say the communication models used when informing the public citizens are effective and reach everyone targeted?
3. How well do citizens respond to the programmes?

1.3 Interview questions to ward committee

1. What is the role of a ward committee
2. How do you relay information presented to you by the municipality?
3. How are participatory communication measures encouraged within your community?
4. How often are engagements held with the municipality and community?
5. How would you rate communication between the municipality and community, as well as feedback?

1.4 Questions for Community Members and Amakhosi

1. Do you understand or have heard of the term participatory communication?

Sesotho	A na wa utlwisisa kapa o ile wa utlwa ka lentswe le la puisano e kopanetsweng?
IsiXhosa	Uyayazi okanye wake weva nggama le ngxoxo apho abantu bathatha khona inkxaxheba?

2. How well informed and aware of any development that happens in this village

Sesotho	Wena o tseba jwang haholeteng diprojeke mona bodulong?
IsiXhosa	Wazi kangakanani ngezinto ezizokwenzeka nezenzekayo kwilali yakho?

3. What modes of communication does the municipality use to communicate with you (Mafube Village)?

Sesotho	Masepala ha a batla hobua kappa a fetisa molaetsa, o ye a yetse jwang?
IsiXhosa	Yeyiphi indlela athi uMasipala ayisebenzise ukunxibelana nawe?

4. How often does the community have a participatory meetings with the municipality?

Sesotho	Ke hakae baahi ba dulang mme ba ntshe pono ya bona le masepala?
IsiXhosa	Zibanjwa kangaphi intlanganiso phakathi kwabahlali kunye noMasipala?

5. How well informed are you of IDP outreaches and who informs you about them?

Sesotho	O tseba hakae ka di IDP outreaches mme hadile teng otsibiswa ke mang?
IsiXhosa	Wazi kangakanani nge IDP outreaches futhi xazihlala waziswa ngubani?

6. According to you, how often would you like to hear from the municipality and what form of communication would suggest they use when communicating with you (Mafube)?

Sesotho	Ho ya ka wena, o ne onka rata ho utlwa hakae hotswa ho masepala ebile, o ne o ka kgetha haba batla hole bolella kappa hole letsibisa molaetsa ba bue jwang le lona?
IsiXhosa	Ngokwakho ungathanda ukuba uMasipala anxibelane nawe kangaphi kwaye esebenzisa eyiphi indlela yonxibelana nawe?

2. OBSERVATIONAL METHOD

- How is the information presented to the citizens by the municipal administrators?
- What evident tools shows the result of the research problem?
- Identify methods of communication adopted - focus was on how they are employed in the meeting/ outreaches?
- Assess the role played by stakeholders – what communication models are mostly utilised by municipality and which communities responds to effectively?