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Community Participation in rendering local government services in the Capricorn District Municipality

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

**CBP**- Community Based Planning  
**CDM or Municipality**- Capricorn District Municipality  
**CDWs**- Community Development Workers  
**CoGHSTA**- the Department Of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs  
**Councilors**- Ward Councilors  
**IDP**- Integrated and Development Plan  
**MFMA**- Municipal Finance Management Act  
**MSA**- Municipal Systems Act  
**RDP**- Reconstruction and Development Programme  
**RSA**- Republic of South Africa  
**SA**- South Africa  
**WCM**- Ward Committee Members
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ABSTRACT

This study sought to assess community participation in the rendering of services in the Capricorn District Municipality. The concept of community participation is central in underpinning successful development programmes. However, this is usually undermined in communities where cultural factors and political factors influence decision making.

The study was premised on the review of literature and documents as the Researcher believed that more research on the subject matter has been done extensively. Personal interviews were done with officials within the Public Participation units in both the Capricorn District Municipality and its Local Municipalities so as to gain insight as to how implementation of public participation processes is done in the CDM’s area of jurisdiction.

Literature was reviewed in terms of the legislative requirements with regard to the implementation of public participation methods in the Local Government sector. Various documents were reviewed so as to understand what other scholars have written about the subject matter. Personal interviews were done with officials within the Public Participation units in both the Capricorn District Municipality and Its Local Municipalities so as to gain insight as to how implementation of public participation processes is done.

An assessment of how Capricorn District Municipality implements public participation methods was done in line with what the legislation provides for as well as what the scholars said about public participation. Gaps in the implementation of such were also identified, wherein recommendations were made on how best Capricorn District Municipality can improve on the public participation processes so as to comply with the legislative requirements.
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1. INTRODUCTION

In the 1950s, the White-led government introduced legislation known as the Group Areas Act 41 of 1950. This Act, created under the apartheid regime, assigned racial groups to different residential and business sections in urban areas. The purpose of the Act was to exclude non-Whites from living in the most developed areas. This resulted in large numbers of non-whites commuting large distances from their homes to their places of work. The impact of this legislation was so severe that Blacks, Coloureds and Indians, who constitute the majority of the population, were not given the opportunity to participate in general elections or to contribute to the process of making and implementing policies that affected them.

After the apartheid regime collapsed, the new democratic South Africa emerged where everyone, irrespective of race and religion, could freely participate in the affairs of government (Masango, 2002:55; Van Rooyen, 2003:1). The Reconstruction and Development Programme was to give effect to the concept of public participation in the affairs of government by ensuring that public participation became a legislative requirement, as contained in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996 and the Municipal Systems Act, Act 32 of 2000.

Public participation is highly emphasised at local government level (Sec 152 (1) (e) of the constitution). This sphere of government is considered as closer to the people. Public participation in the making and implementation of policies is indispensable for sustaining democracy and promoting good local governance and administration (Cloete 1995:4). Democracy relies on the engagement by citizens as a means of forming better solutions to civic matters. Participatory democracy provides a mechanism for involving people to participate in governing the processes of government as it is referred to as “the government of the people, by the people, for the people”.

Public participation is regarded as an active process in which participants take initiative and action that is stimulated by their own thinking and deliberation wherein they can exercise effective control. It encourages a bottom up approach (Fox and Meyer 1995:29). It further promotes democratic principles such as political equality, majority rule, popular sovereignty and popular consultation and includes standing for
elections, voting in elections, becoming informed, holding and attending community meetings, joining civil and/or political organisations, paying taxes, protesting and petitioning (Cloete 1995:21).

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce the topic under investigation as well as to elaborate on the problem statement, and the key issues that relates to the issue under investigation. Furthermore, the objectives of the study will be outlined as well as the approach that will be used to collect data.

1.2. **PROBLEM STATEMENT**

Public participation in South Africa at a National level in general and at the Local Government sector in particular, has been promoted by the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996 and the Municipal Systems Act No. 32 of 2000. It is seen as an essential component of any government system that considers itself a democratic state.

This research focuses on public participation as one of the main challenges facing the Capricorn District Municipality (also referred to as “the Municipality” or “CDM”).

There are three sub problems that emanate from the main research question.

1.2.1. **The research problem is stated as follows:**

Public participation is one of the major challenges facing the Capricorn District Municipality in the rendering of local government services in its area of jurisdiction.

The following sub-problems emanate from the main research problem:

1.2.1.1. **Sub- Problem 1:** Planning, decision-making and service provision within the Municipality do not adequately respond to the needs of the communities as they are not fully consulted on the matters that affect them.

1.2.1.2. **Sub- Problem 2:** There is lack of a representative and administrative system or mechanisms through which the views and concerns of the citizens are heard.

1.2.1.3. **Sub- Problem 3:** Communities within the Municipality lack ownership of the development that happens in their own areas since their needs are not adequately addressed when the municipality renders services.
1.3. KEY QUESTIONS PERTAINING TO THE RESEARCH

- What is the current level of community participation in the rendering of local government services in the Municipality and its impact on the socio-economic development of communities?
- To what extent does service provision by the Municipality respond to the needs and values of the communities?
- Are there any representative and administrative system/mechanisms through which the views and concerns of the citizens are heard?
- Have the community needs been addressed in the rendering of services to ensure ownership by communities?
- What are the possible ways that can assist in ensuring public participation by communities within the municipality in its municipal affairs?

1.4. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To gain insight and understanding on whether service provision by the Capricorn District Municipality respond to the needs and values of the communities.
- To establish if there are representative and administrative system or mechanisms through which the views and concerns of the citizens are heard.
- To understand if the communities’ needs have been addressed or not by the Municipality in the rendering of services to ensure ownership by communities.
- To find possible ways that can assist in ensuring public participation by communities in the municipal affairs and to articulate those in a set of recommendations in the last chapter of the research.

1.5. RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

In accordance with Chapter 4, section 16(1) of the Municipal Systems Act, Municipal Councils have to develop a culture of community participation. Section 17(1) of the further states, that the municipality must develop the mechanisms, procedures and processes for community participation of which the Integrated Development Planning (IDP) is one of those mechanisms. The Integrated Development Planning process affords the community an opportunity to identify their needs and prioritise them accordingly. Chapter 5 of the Municipal systems Act
stipulates that municipal planning should be developmentally oriented to ensure that people’s voices are heard.

Section 42 of the Municipal Systems Act states that a municipality through the appropriate mechanisms, procedures and processes for community participation established in terms of Chapter 4, must involve the local community in the development, implementation and review of the Performance management system.

In light of the above statement the objective of the study is to gain insight on whether service provisions by the Capricorn District Municipality adequately respond to the needs and values of the communities, especially the special focus groupings, the poor and the disadvantaged sector of the community. The study will further explore on the public participation methods that the Municipality has in place in relation to the best practices around the country with regard to public participation.

1.6. **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The research methodology can be described as a procedure by means of which an endeavour is made to obtain answers to questions and to solve identified problems in a systematic manner with the support of verifiable facts.

1.6.1. **DATA COLLECTION METHOD**

The research methodology for the study is descriptive, sourced from available literature including legislation. Due to the restricted extent of the research, no empirical survey will be conducted. A number of normative criteria to deal with the research problem will be identified from the available literature, from which conclusions will be drawn and recommendations made.

The research will focus on secondary data. Major applicable legislations will be reviewed. Different views on participation, different motivations for community participation and the element and objectives of community participation will be reviewed and analysed with the view to draw out key elements and objectives of community participation.

Municipal documents will be reviewed. The researcher will interview officials who compiled the documents so as to better understand the context for which they were developed.
1.6.2. DATA QUALITY ASSURANCE

Comparisons will be made of the documents that contain similar information. Communication with people who were involved in the development of the documents will be conducted in order to determine the accuracy and reliability of the data. Municipal officials who deal with public participation will be interviewed while reports from all public participation forums e.g. Integrated Development Plan (IDP), Outreach programmes etc. will be reviewed. Cross tabulation of the findings from both sources will be done to ensure quality.

1.6.3. DATA SOURCES

Documents will be reviewed in order to gather background information about the subject under investigation. It will also help in understanding the history, philosophy, and operation of the Municipality with regard to public participation issues. It will further assist in revealing the truth on whether implementation of programmes was done as planned. It is necessary to determine if such a difference exists so as to fill in the gaps identified going forward.

Literature review and document analysis will be done using key words in various search engines, databases and administrative documents. The documents may be internal to an organization or may be external from the organisation. They maybe in either in hard copy or electronic format and may include reports, program logs, performance ratings, funding proposals, meeting minutes, newsletters, and marketing materials. Key themes and relationships will be identified in those documents.

1.7. SUMMARY

Public participation is one of the major challenges facing the Capricorn District Municipality in the rendering of local government services in its area of jurisdiction. The study will try to ascertain as to whether planning and the decisions taken by the Capricorn District Municipality adequately respond to the needs and values of the communities, especially the special focus groupings, the poor and the disadvantaged sector of the community as well as to establish if there are representative and administrative system and mechanisms through which the views and concerns of the citizens are heard. This will assist in understanding why communities do not own up
to development in their areas so as to know how best such problems can be addressed in the future.

In light of the above, the research methodology for this research will be of a descriptive/historical nature which will focus on a theory search and literature review and which will entail examining of existing primary and secondary literary sources, followed by particular recommendations. Literature will be reviewed so as to establish if there are any public participation mechanisms in place in the Municipality. The extent of the literature review is explained in up-coming section. An explanation of what community participation is in the rendering of services within the Municipality will be provided as well as the definition of community public participation. The analysis will be conducted against the legislative frameworks that prescribe how public participation has to be conducted.
CHAPTER 2: COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN THE RENDERING OF SERVICES IN THE CAPRICORN DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY

2.1. INTRODUCTION

Public participation is regarded as an active process in which participants take initiative and action that is stimulated by their own thinking and deliberation wherein they can exercise effective control. It encourages a bottom up approach (Fox and Meyer 1995:29). It further promotes democratic principles such as political equality, majority rule, popular sovereignty and popular consultation and includes standing for elections, voting in elections, becoming informed, holding and attending community meetings, joining civil and/or political organisations, paying taxes, protesting and petitioning (Cloete 1995:21).

The South African government has committed itself in terms of promoting public participation in governance. Mechanisms have been put in place to ensure that public participation takes place. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996, mandates local government to “…provide a democratic and accountable government and encourage the involvement of communities and community organisations in the matters of local government.” Chapter 4, section 16(1) of the Municipal Systems Act, no 32 of 2000, also stipulates that municipal councils have to develop a culture of community participation.

Section 17(1) of the Municipal Systems Act, no 32 of 2000 (the Act) further states that the municipality must develop the mechanisms, procedures and processes for community participation of which the Integrated Development Planning (IDP) is one of those mechanisms. The Integrated Development Planning process affords the community an opportunity to identify their needs and prioritise them accordingly. Chapter 5 of the Act stipulates that municipal planning should be developmentally oriented to ensure that people’s voices are heard.

This chapter explores the legislative frameworks underpinning the concept of public participation in the Local Government Sector, definition of public participation, the importance of public participation, common understanding regarding public participation, the importance and principles of public participation, as well as methods of public participation employed in the Capricorn District Municipality and the challenges faced.
2.2. LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK AND OTHER POLICY DOCUMENTS

The South African government has put in place various policies and legislation that seek to promote public participation. This section will highlight some of the policies and legislation that promote public participation.

2.2.1. THE CONSTITUTION OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA (ACT 108 OF 1996)

Chapter 7 of the Constitution of South Africa (1996) of which the researcher shall refer to as The Constitution sets out the policy directives with regard to the local government. Section 152(1) (e) stipulates that municipalities are obliged to encourage involvement of communities and community organizations in the matters of local government. Section 195 (1) (e) further states that people’s needs must be responded to, and the public must be encouraged to participate in policy making.

2.2.2. LOCAL GOVERNMENT: MUNICIPAL STRUCTURES ACT (ACT 117 OF 1998)

Sec 72 and 73 of the Municipal Structures Act 117 of 1998 allows for the establishment of participatory mechanisms by municipalities through the establishment of ward committees in each ward in the municipality. The object of a ward committee is to enhance participatory democracy in local government. The primary function of a ward committee is to serve as a communication channel between the community and the municipal council. Section 81 of the same Act stipulates the participation of traditional leaders that observe customary law to attend municipal council meetings.

2.2.3. LOCAL GOVERNMENT: MUNICIPAL SYSTEMS ACT (ACT 32 OF 2000)

Section 16(1) of the Act, requires a municipality to develop a culture of municipal governance which compliments formal representation in government, with a system of participatory governance and must encourage and create conditions for the local community to participate in the affairs of the municipality. Section 17 of the Act further states that the municipality must establish mechanisms, processes and procedures for community participation. These mechanisms must allow communities to fully participate in many forms such as petitions, complaints, and public comments’ procedures. Section 18 of the Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000 stipulates that a municipality should ensure that it communicates information
concerning community participation. In so doing, the municipality must take into account the special needs of the illiterate, people with disabilities, women, and other disadvantaged groups and ensures that communication is done in local papers and radio stations using the locally spoken languages.

Section 5 of the Act stipulates that members of the community have the right to:

- Contribute to the decision-making processes of the municipality and submit written or oral recommendations, representations and complaints to the municipal council;
- Be informed of decisions of the municipal council;
- Regular disclosure of the affairs of the municipality, including its finances.

Chapter 5 of the Act states that municipalities must develop an Integrated Development Plan (IDP) and the plan must be reviewed annually. The IDP is seen as the means to achieve developmental and participative local government, requiring that different departments link their plans, objectives, budgets, resource auditing, performance monitoring, and community consultation in the spirit of cooperative governance.

The importance of community participation in the IDP process reflects the concept of "bringing government to the people" and active public participation in socio-economic development. Therefore the IDP is the important tool in the transformation of local government, conceived as the main instrument for ensuring that local government can fulfil its developmental role in overcoming the socio-economic, institutional and spatial fragmentation of the past (Mc Ewan, 2003:472; Bekker & Leide, 2003:146).

Cuthill (2003:378) states that over and above the legislative requirements for participation, public participation in local government is needed for the following reasons:

- Public participation in local governance provides meaningful and appropriate opportunities for participation and results in many operational benefits for government. It provides quality information for planning and decision-making,
up to date feedback on community attitudes and perceptions, and early identification of potential issues.

- Public participation enables local government to develop a better understanding of community values, aspirations and needs.
- The process of participation can produce soft outputs such as building participants' skills, knowledge and ability, and relationships based on trust and tolerance; hence participation can build both human and social capital.
- Widespread engagement with issues of participation and local governance creates enormous opportunities for redefining and deepening the meaning of democracy, for linking civil society and government reforms in new ways, and for extending the right of inclusive citizenship.
- Participation by civil society can foster equitable, transparent and accountable government.

2.2.4. MUNICIPAL FINANCE MANAGEMENT ACT, 2003

Chapter 4, section 21 of the Municipal Finance Management Act, 2003 (MFMA) states that the mayor must coordinate the process of preparing annual budgets and reviewing the municipality’s Integrated Development Plan, and that the process must be consultative. Section 22 of the Act requires the accounting officer to publicise the annual budget, and must invite the local community to submit representations in connection with the budget. Section 23 of the Act further states that the municipal council must consider any views of the local community.

2.2.5. WHITE PAPER ON THE TRANSFORMATION OF PUBLIC SERVICE

The following eight Batho Pele Principles on services delivery apply: Consultation, Access, Information, Redress, Service Standards, Courtesy, Openness and Transparency and Value for Money. However, to ensure that these principles are adhered to, communities should be awarded the opportunity to express their opinions in this regard, which in turn necessitates intensive and through community participation in government affairs (Department of Public Service and Administration, 2003; 126; Van Rooyen, 2003:129).
Within the context of Batho Pele (which means “putting people first”), providing quality services means putting in place a service delivery system that meets the needs of the people it serves. Batho Pele demands from each public servant that he or she gives of himself or herself in rendering services to their customers. The quality of our service delivery depend on the extent we are able to internalise the spirit of Batho Pele. In order to provide quality services in the right quantity, government institutions must develop service standards in consultation with the customers. The setting of the service standards is important as it is a means to improve service delivery. (Batho Pele handbook, 2003:97)

Prior to 1994 South Africans were not encouraged to complain about the services they received as people were positively restrained from voicing their opinions. (Batho Pele handbook 2003:192).With the advent of the country’s first democratically elected government, there was a dramatic change in this attitude. The promulgation of the South African Constitution and the Bill of Rights since 2006 provided the public with the right to free speech and our right to complain and have redress if our rights are compromised in any way.

2.2.7. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Chapter 6 of the Municipal Systems Act stipulates that municipalities must involve the local community in the development, implementation and review of the municipality’s performance management system. It further states that the community must be allowed to participate in the setting of appropriate key performance indicators and performance targets for the municipality.

2.2.8. THE WHITE PAPER ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT, MARCH 1998

The White Paper on Local Government (1998:68) states that municipalities should develop strategies and mechanisms (including but not limited to participative planning) that continuously engage with citizens, businesses and community groups. Municipalities require active participation by communities at four levels:

- As voters; to ensure maximum democratic accountability of the elected political leadership for the policies they are empowered to promote;
• As citizens; who express, via different stakeholder associations, their views before, during and after the policy development process in order to ensure that policies reflect community preferences;
• As customers and end-users; who expect value for money, affordable services, and courteous and responsive services; and
• As organized partners involved in the mobilization of resources for development via businesses, non-governmental organizations and community-based institutions.

It is of importance that municipalities should develop mechanisms to ensure community participation in policy initiation and formulation, and in the monitoring and evaluation of decision-making and implementation.

2.2.9. LOCAL GOVERNMENT LAWS AMENDMENT ACT, 2008

The Local Government Laws Amendment Act of 2008 requires that all municipalities that have established ward committees must budget for all the ‘out of pocket’ expenses incurred by ward committee members while performing their council duties. This Act goes further to suggest that municipalities must develop their own policies, guided by the national and provincial frameworks and determine the criteria for calculation of the out of pocket expenses.

2.2.10. DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SERVICE AND ADMINISTRATION: A HANDBOOK FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT WORKERS, 2007

The handbook for community development workers (2007:7) states that the former President Thabo Mbeki in his State of the Nation Address on 14 February 2003 stated that:

"Government will create a public service echelon of multi-skilled community development workers who will maintain direct contact with the people where these masses live. We are determined to ensure that government goes to the people so that we sharply improve the quality of the outcomes of public expenditures intended to raise the standards of living of our people. It is wrong that government should oblige people to come to government even in circumstances in which people do not know what services the
government offers and have no means to pay for the transport to reach government offices”.

Community development workers are participatory change agents who work in the communities where they live, and to whom they have to answer for their activities. They are required to help people in communities improve their own lives and change their circumstances. To do this Community development workers are expected to help community members to understand how they can participate in the plans for development in their communities. Furthermore, they are expected to facilitate community participation in policy making and implementation, and in service delivery.

Community development workers give community members information and help to empower individuals and communities. One of the main roles of the community development workers is to guide and support community members working in community-based projects such as small business development projects, projects that help people generate an income, or projects that develop local assets and resources (Community Development Worker Handbook, 2007:14).

2.2.11. THE PROMOTION OF ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT, 2000

The Promotion of Access to Information Act of 2000 gives the public access to state and other information required for the protection of rights. Within the context of local government, the public has a right (using the correct channels and procedures) to access any information or records of a municipality.

2.2.12. COMMUNITY BASED PLANNING

Community based planning supports the participatory objectives of the IDP by grounding local governance through effective linkages with communities. The strategic thrust of municipal-level decision-making in the IDPs is maintained while empowering communities to take on development responsibility and making the local government more accountable (Chimbuya et al., 2004). Community based planning also serves as an important aspect of community participation. Community-based planning seeks the active involvement of the community, especially poor people, so as to improve the quality of plans and services, extend community control over development and empower communities so that they take action and become less dependent. The following are the principles of community-based planning:
• Plans and the planning process must be realistic and practical.
• Planning must be linked to legitimate structures like ward committees.
• Planning should include implementation, monitoring, evaluation and annual review.
• The plan must be people-focused and empowering.
• The emphasis should be to build on strengths and opportunities rather than focus on problems.
• Plans must be holistic and cover all sectors.
• Planning must promote mutual accountability between communities and officials.
• There must be commitment by councillors and officials to the whole process.

The community implements its action plan through local structures such as ward committees or local stakeholder forums. These will be supported by community development workers, who have a critical role to play during the planning, as well as during implementation. Government recognises the importance of communities playing an active role in implementation, including managing funds such as the discretionary funds per ward provided under community based planning. The role of the resources provided by government is to leverage voluntary action by communities.

2.3. UNDERSTANDING COMMUNITY AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The term community participation is defined as the actual act of taking part on the involvement of community members in specific community activities (Bayat and Meyer 1994:156). In community participation, the participants should be members of the same community.

According to Buccus 2007:3, public participation can help to enhance development and service delivery, it makes governance more effective, and deepens democracy. It is important to start by defining or explaining what public participation is in order to have a better understanding of the concept. The following section provides a few definitions and explanations of public participation from various authors from different countries.
The World Bank defines participation as a process in which stakeholders influence and share control over development initiatives and the decisions and the resources which affect them. For the last ten years the World Bank and related international development organisations have moved away from the more elitist ‘external expert stance’ in development planning, and towards a ‘participatory stance’. This means that instead of just having the project sponsors and designers imposing development projects on the local contexts, the Bank engages with various stakeholders, especially local groups, in developing and implementing projects (Buccus 2007:6)

Public participation has been defined as the forum for exchange, organised for the purpose of facilitating communication between government, citizens, stakeholders, interest groups, and business regarding a specific decision or problem (Soneryd 2003:60).

Public participation has also been defined as a process of engagement, where people are enlisted into the decision process to contribute to it (Petts 1999:147). It is a process of involving all organised and unorganised group of people on a particular issue (Thomas 1995:55).

2.4. FORMS OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION
Public participation takes many forms and dimensions. Below is a discussion of the different forms of public participation at the Local Government level.

2.4.1. CONSULTATION
Consultation involves a process of communication between the government and the governed in dealing with public issues (Craythorne 1997:99). It is a two way process, where each has something that the other wants. Therefore, it is a form of participation in which information is available and opinions of participants are elicited.

2.4.2. SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRES
Survey questionnaires are used for asking prepared questions of a sample population that is statistically representative of all members of the public (Atkinson 1992:21). They are undertaken to find out what the attitudes, views and opinions of the public are about a specific issue. It is one of the forms of public participation in
policy making and implementation, which provide policy makers with valuable information on public preferences.

2.4.3. PUBLIC HEARINGS

Public hearings are traditional methods of seeking public views on a particular issue. They give the public an opportunity to express their views and ask questions on public policy issues. They are held prior to the enactment of the law or before the implementation of a policy (Atkson 1992:88)

2.4.4. MASS MEDIA

Mass media such as radio, television broadcasting, newspapers and magazines play a vital role in disseminating information. Members of the public can communicate their opinions and views in specific issues in one of the mass media as listed. (Patton 1989:43) or be communicated to by the municipality through one of those when the municipality wants to convey a certain message to the community.

2.4.5. PUBLIC MEETINGS

Meetings are at the heart of public participation processes; whether social get together, committees, workshops or public meetings (Ranney 1995:300). A public meeting normally involves a speaker giving a presentation followed by a question and answer session (Fred 2003:88). While public meetings are useful for giving information and gaining support around a clear cut public issue, they are poor vehicles for debate and decision making (Ridley 2001:32).

2.5. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION THEORIES

There are a number of public participation theories, namely, the democratic theory, social mobility theory, and social exchange theory. Only three theories are selected in this regard as they are more relevant to this particular research.

2.5.1. DEMOCRATIC THEORY

A basic assumption of this philosophy is that in any democratic state all citizens should participate equally in public decision-making, and should exercise relatively equal amounts of influence in the political system (Howell, Olsen & Olsen 1987:5). Public participation is an essential component of any system that considers itself a democracy. Opportunities for public participation have expanded
greatly, yet what needs to be measured is the impact and implementation of participation (Kweit & Kweit, 1981:8).

2.5.2. SOCIAL MOBILITY THEORY

This theory argues that people can be mobilised for political involvement through participation in all kinds of community activities or special interests associations such as business and professional associations, labour unions, welfare organisations, neighbourhood associations, etc. This theory simply means that as people participate in community programmes and activities they tend to become more aware and informed about public issues, they develop skills in discussions and decision-making, and they seek greater influence in decisions that affect them. Mobilised individuals are more likely to turn their attention towards political affairs and to participate in different kinds of political endeavours (Howell et al., 1987:6).

2.5.3. SOCIAL EXCHANGE THEORY

This theory states that people will usually engage in social activities to acquire benefits. These activities incur various costs such as resources, time and sacrifices of other activities. In this theory individuals treat social interaction as a transaction, in which they seek to minimise costs and maximise benefits. The theory, in terms of public participation, suggests that people will only be involved in such programmes if they can see the benefits of their participation and if their needs will be met. Three things must be done in order to stimulate and sustain public participation; viz. maintain a situation in which the costs of involvement are minimised; maximise the rewards associated with participation; and establish a trust that the rewards will be delivered (Howell, et al., 1987:7).

2.6. THE IMPORTANCE OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Public participation is important in all aspects and can benefit various stakeholders in the process. The importance of public participation is discussed below:
2.6.1. BETTER DECISION-MAKING
Public participation allows all people to work together to produce better decisions and allows authorities the ability to facilitate a better decision. In so doing, the public will be afforded the opportunity to participate in addressing specific developmental problems. Public participation is therefore important for decision making and seeks to integrate economic, social and environmental concerns (Howell et al., 1987:1).

2.6.2. COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNICATION
A properly conducted public participation scheme can enhance understanding of issues and promote communication among all participants (Creighton, 2005:19).

2.6.3. POLITICAL LEGITIMACY
A public participation process creates legitimacy and credibility to the planning process to the extent that it promotes open communication and democratic decision-making. Public participation ensures that public officials remain accountable to their constituencies (Howell et al., 1987:2).

2.6.4. MINIMISING COSTS AND DELAYS
Public participation, if properly conducted, will cost less as there will be no objections from the interested parties. Public participation further eliminates unnecessary delays due to objections (Creighton, 2005:18).

2.6.5. INCREASE EASE OF IMPLEMENTATION
Participation in decision making gives people a sense of ownership for that decision, and once that decision has been made, they will want to see it work (Creighton, 2005:19).

2.6.6. FACILITATING COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
Through public participation the powerless people will be empowered to take control of the development in their area. Community participation provides an avenue by which all members of the community, irrespective of their status, can influence the policy-making and implementation process. Participation is a key to building an empowered community (Masango, 2002:56).

2.6.7. CONTROL AND MONITORING
Informed members of the public can exercise control over the policy-making and implementation process and can monitor the activities of the policy-makers and
officials. Continuous participation could serve as a mechanism to limit abuse of authority and ensure that public officials deliver services in a responsible manner. (Masango, 2002:57).

2.6.8. INCREASED LEVEL OF INFORMATION IN COMMUNITIES

Public participation improves governance is by increasing levels of information about local government in communities.

2.6.9. IMPROVED NEED IDENTIFICATION FOR COMMUNITIES

Public participation leads to improved need identification for communities. Bearing in mind that Section 153(a) of the Constitution lists as a key duty of a municipality to manage its administration, budgeting and planning processes to give priority to the basic needs of the community, this is of particular importance.

2.7. COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION MECHANISMS IN THE CAPRICORN DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY

There are a number of ways that communities within the Capricorn District Municipality participate in matters that affect their development to effectively influence the decision making processes.

2.7.1. WARD COUNCILLORS

As per sections 72, 73, and 77 of the Municipal Structures Act, the ward councillor is responsible for organising meetings and setting the ward committee agendas. If the ward councillor does not attend the meeting, the ward committee may set the agenda itself.

Councillors are the most direct form of access people have to government. Usually people will turn to a councillor for direct advice and support. Communities within the Municipality can directly discuss their problems with local councillors who will in turn take their problems to the council for discussion and decision making. It is the councillor’s responsibility to ensure that community needs are communicated to the highest authority so that they can be put on the priority list during the planning stage.

2.7.2. INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT PLANNING MEETINGS

The IDP is seen as the means to achieve developmental and participative local government, requiring that different departments link their plans, objectives,
budgets, resource auditing, performance monitoring, and community consultation in
the spirit of cooperative governance (Chapter 5 of the Municipal Systems Act, 2000).

The Capricorn District Municipality has established an IDP Representative
Forum constituted by members of various organisations such as youth and gender,
non-governmental organisations, business communities, Farmers’ Unions and
government departments. Communities can utilise this forum to inform the
municipality about their needs. Municipalities have to intensify the manner and
method of ensuring that all the stakeholders attend these meetings in order for them
to make valuable inputs which will influence future plans.

2.7.3. USE OF MEDIA AS A COMMUNICATION TOOL

Mass media such as radio, television broadcasting, newspapers and
magazines play a vital role in disseminating information. Members of the public can
communicate their opinions and views in specific issues in one of the mass media as
listed. (Patton 1989:43) or be communicated to by the municipality through one of
those when the municipality wants to convey a certain message to the community.
The Municipality utilises various channels of communication to allow communities to
present their issues and how they want the council to deal with the issues. All
important council documents that affect the public is put on the organisational
website for easy access.

2.7.4. WARD COMMITTEES

Section 72 and 73 of the Municipal Structures Act 117 of 1998 allows for the
establishment of participatory mechanisms by municipalities through the
establishment of ward committees in each ward in the municipality. The Municipality
through its local municipalities have established ward committees structures. Ward
committees play an important role in creating a democratic culture of local
participation and accountability. The main role of the ward committee is to make
sure that voters are involved and informed about council decisions that affect their
lives. Their main tasks are to communicate and consult with the community in
respect of development and service plans.
2.7.5. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT WORKERS (CDWs)

In his State of the Nation Address on 14 February 2003, former President of South Africa Thabo Mbeki stated that:

“Government will create a public service echelon of multi-skilled community development workers who will maintain direct contact with the people where these masses live.”

They are community development workers within the Capricorn District Municipality area although they report directly to the Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGHSTA). A close working relationship between the ward councillors and community development workers does exist. However, the Municipality has got no control over the community development workers as they do not report directly to them.

2.7.6. COMMUNITY BASED PLANNING (CBP)

The Community Based Planning supports the participatory objectives of the IDP by grounding local governance through effective linkages with communities. The strategic thrust of municipal-level decision-making in the IDPs is maintained while empowering communities to take on development responsibility and making the local government more accountable (Chimbuya et al., 2004). CBP planning also serves as important aspect of community participation. The Municipality in the 2009/10 financial year had launched the community based plan as a participatory platform in its four local municipalities. The results from the Community based planning were fed into the 2011/12 IDP although no follow up to the process was made after the process were completed.

2.7.7. PUBLIC MEETINGS AND COUNCIL OUTREACHES

Meetings are at the heart of public participation processes; whether social get together, committees, workshops or public meetings (Ranney 1995:300). The Capricorn District Municipality have planned quarterly council outreaches where the community is given a platform to raise their concerns with regard to service delivery issues. Key government departments whose services mostly affect the community are invited to these meetings so that they can respond to specific issues as and when they arise. It is in these meetings that communities ask questions and the municipality responds to them.
2.7.8. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

Chapter 6 of the Municipal Systems Act stipulates that Municipalities must involve the local community in the development, implementation and review of the municipality’s performance management system. It further states that the community must be allowed to participate in the setting of appropriate key performance indicators (KPIs) and performance targets for the municipality.

There was little or no public participation in the performance management systems in the Municipality. Communities are only invited to IDP consultation meetings where the main focus is on the projects planned for the coming financial year as opposed to their involvement in terms of the setting of KPIs and targets. The only time that the community is involved with regard to PMS is in terms of the annual report as it is subjected to public hearing before it is finally adopted.

2.7.9. TRADITIONAL AUTHORITIES

Section 81 of the Municipal Systems Act stipulates the participation of traditional leaders that observe customary law to attend municipal council meetings. The traditional authorities within the Municipality also have seats in the Council. The Capricorn District Municipality has an established Magoshi forum where all traditional authorities within its area of jurisdiction meet to raise their concerns with regard to service delivery provision in their respective area. In addition to that, there is a separate IDP consultation forum that is specifically targeting the traditional authorities.

2.7.10. COMPLAINTS MANAGEMENT SYSTEM AND CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

In order to provide quality services in the right quantity, government institutions must develop service standards in consultation with the customers. The setting of the service standards is important as it is a means to improve service delivery (Batho Pele handbook, 2003:97). The Municipality has suggestion boxes as a means of getting feedback or service delivery complaints from customers. However, the service standards are non-existent, as such; one may not determine whether the Municipality is rendering the services that the community expects in terms of quality and quantity. The Municipality has not conducted the customer satisfaction surveys to determine the level of satisfaction by its customers. However,
it had launched the socio-economic impact study which determined the level of access to services by the community under its area of jurisdiction.

2.7.11. ACCESS TO INFORMATION

The Promotion of Access to Information Act of 2000 gives the public access to state and other information required for the protection of rights. The Municipality has developed a Promotion of Access to Information manual to guide all its customers on how to request for municipal information in order to ensure transparency, openness and accountability.

2.8. CHALLENGES FACING CAPRICORN DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY WITH REGARD TO PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Below is a discussion of the challenges that the Capricorn District Municipality is faced with regard to issues around public participation considering what is deemed to be best practice. The Municipality has established public participation structures to afford communities the opportunity to participate effectively in local government matters. However, communities sometimes show a lack of interest in participating in local government matters for various reasons. There are barriers that prevent communities from effectively participating in local government matters.

2.8.1. POWER RELATIONS

The political appointment of ward committee members and community development workers is seen as a barrier to effective community participation. This is because it is believed that these people were appointed by politicians who knew that they were influential or would carry forward their mandate. This also restricts the influence of traditional authorities to take decisions as these groups of people are of the opinion that they all have power over the community they serve.

2.8.2. PARTICIPATORY SKILLS

Public participation can become more complex and demand different types of skills, knowledge, experience, leadership and managerial capabilities. If participants have a poor educational background or are not properly trained to participate they will find it difficult to contribute meaningfully to the discussions and will eventually withdraw from participation. Similarly, when essential planning skills and experience are lacking at local authorities, they also become obstacles for more meaningful participation. Not all ward committee members and community development workers
have a formal educational background. As such, the community lacks some confidence in them and that leads to poor participation by community members. The community will withdraw from participation if they realise that local government officials are not capable of translating their needs into technical proposals of a high quality standard.

2.8.3. POLITICAL WILL

A politician's inability to promote community participation and the lack of high level political and bureaucratic support for participating at a local level also contributes to non-participation. There are some ward councillors who seem not to be committed to their work as such making community members hesitant to participate in any matter that affects their lives. Communities will participate effectively if they see that their voted leaders are communicating with them (Cuthill, 2003:382).

2.8.4. CONSULTATIVE STRUCTURE

Municipalities do not invite a wide range of stakeholders to participate in matters that affect their welfare, thereby shaping their environment. Participation is often conducted during the execution of projects and programmes, but not during initial project design. This becomes a challenge since government comes with already predetermined outcomes that cannot be changed during participation (Makgoba, et al, 2004). Community members will raise their concerns at the forums, however, no feedback is provided as to whether those demands will be met or not nor an indication as to when the needs will ever be attended to or not. Reports from consultations are not used to inform future planning of programmes and projects.

2.8.5. INSUFFICIENT FINANCIAL RESOURCES AT LOCAL LEVEL

Participation at local government becomes an unfunded mandate since financial resources to implement development activities proposed by communities are often abandoned due to lack of financial resources (Tosun, 2004:11). More often than not, municipalities are not able to respond to all community needs because of financial constraints.
2.8.6. HISTORICAL FACTORS

The history of segregated municipal units that were characterised by economic, social and financial disparities left the majority of people in the dark with regard to participation. Since blacks were excluded from participating in municipal matters, this has left them not being fully aware of their role in the new local government structure (Makgoba & Ababio, 2004). This calls for an intensive public participation programme to ensure that even the previously disadvantaged groups play a meaningful role in their own development.

2.8.7. COMMUNITY DISILLUSIONMENT WITH LOCAL GOVERNMENT INEFFECTIVENESS

According to the Municipal Systems Act, the municipality is expected to identify the needs of the community and find a mechanism to address those needs. However, due to limited funding the municipality cannot always address those needs within the expected timeframe. For the ordinary member of the community this could be seen as a failure of their municipality and this could result in the community disassociating themselves with any public participation conducted by the municipality (Makgoba & Ababio, 2004).

- There are a number of factors which impact negatively on public participation processes, e.g., Vast distances that had to be travelled due to the size of municipal areas;

- There are misgivings with regard to the way the IDP process is managed, amongst others, bureaucratic red-tape and under-resourcing of the IDP participatory structures;

- The municipality’s inability to ensure the participation of the business sector in the IDP meetings at local municipal level. The IDP representative structures appears to be inappropriate mechanisms to ensure the participation of the business sector;

- The lack of special efforts to ensure the participation of non-organized marginalized groups in the IDP process (e.g. the landless or the unemployed);
If creative ways were to be found to address to these impeding factors, we might see significant improvements in the quality of public participation in the IDP processes of municipalities.

2.9. SUMMARY

The chapter gave different views on public participation as well as the methods employed within the Municipality and the challenges experienced in the implementation of public participation methods. It is clear that the Municipality has systems in place to ensure that the public voices are heard although there is a need to tighten the systems as they are not tight proofed. The next chapter gives an overview of the research methodology that was employed in the study.
CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter aims to give an overview of the research methodology used in order to understand community participation in the rendering of services in the Municipality. The research methodology was descriptive. No empirical survey was conducted as the researcher believed that there was more literature on the subject matter, of which the researcher had to validate against the subject under investigation.

According to Salkind (2000:10 - 11), non-experimental research includes a variety of different methods that describe relationships between variables. Included in such methods is the descriptive / historical research method, which describes the characteristics of existing and past phenomena.

Historical research, according to Salkind (2000:12), relates past events to each other and/or to current events. Historical research answers a question regarding the nature and extent of events that took place in the past. Researchers often accomplish historical research through the use of primary sources such as original documents and first-hand information as well as secondary sources that may originate from second-hand sources.

Salkind (2000:11) stresses that not only can descriptive and historical research stand on their own, but it can serve as bases for other types of research in that a group’s characteristics often can be described from a descriptive / historical point of view in order to arrive at acceptable theoretical perspectives.

(Leedy, 1980:3-9) is critical of those academics who display a prejudice for a given research methodology:

“... it is difficult to defend the position of those who claim that unless research fits an arbitrary prejudice for a given methodology, it fails to be research. All highways are of equal excellence; each, however, traverses a different terrain, but they all converge on the same destination. In other words, when research is viewed as an offensive against ignorance of the truth, then the four principal research methodologies are merely separate avenues leading in the direction of enlightenment. No one methodology is superior to any other, and they all
converge at one coveted point: the point from which we are able to discern that of which we were hitherto unaware ... “(Leedy, 1980:3-9).

According to Salkind (2000:188), the descriptive / historical researcher proceeds in terms of four different steps, which correspond closely to those of other types of research. The four steps are explained in the paragraphs that follow.

1. First, the historical researchers define a topic or a problem that they wish to investigate, in this instance, the ethical foundations of service quality in tourism and hospitality management: a theoretical perspective.
2. Second, the researcher formulates a hypothesis (es), which is expressed as a question, or questions.
3. Third, the researcher sets out to utilize a variety of sources to gather data. Salkind (2000: 188) emphasizes that while these sources may differ markedly from those in other research methodologies, the analysis of written documents are usually the domain of the historical researcher.
4. Fourth, the evidence gathered needs to be evaluated both for its authenticity as well as for its accuracy. The researcher therefore needs to establish the value of the data from primary as well as secondary sources that underlie the salient arguments of the research. This requirement is concomitant to the researcher developing a critical and evaluative attitude towards the collected information.

Salkind (2000:191) holds that the evaluation of primary and secondary data is accomplished through the application of two separate criteria: authenticity (external criticism) and accuracy (internal criticism).

In light of the above, the research methodology for this research was of a descriptive/historical nature and focused on a theory search and literature review which entailed examining of existing primary and secondary literary sources which will be followed by particular recommendations. The extent of the literature review is explained in following section.
3.2. DATA COLLECTION

Information was sourced from available literature including local government legislation in order to draw out key elements and objectives of community participation. Different views were sought from municipal officials just to get first hand information on how community participation is conducted in the Municipality in line with what the literature on community participation suggested on how it should be conducted.

3.2.1. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research was designed around five key research questions.

- What is the current level of Community participation in the rendering of local government services in the Capricorn District Municipality and its impact on the socio-economic development of communities?
- To what extent does service provision by the Capricorn District Municipality respond to the needs and values of the communities?
- Are there any representative and administrative system/mechanisms through which the views and concerns of the citizens are heard?
- Have the communities needs been addressed or not by the Municipality in the rendering of services to ensure ownership by communities?
- What are the possible ways that can assist in ensuring public participation by communities within CDM in the municipal affairs?

3.3. RESEARCH METHODS

All key research questions required mostly a thorough review and analysis of primary documents in the form of policy and legislation relevant to public participation in South Africa. In addition, an extensive consultation of secondary sources, more specifically a thorough review of literature on the subject of public participation and local governance, was also done. This required surveying books, journal articles, newspapers, popular articles, research reports as well as extensive use of the internet.

The researcher further looked to compare and contrast the Municipality's case with similar public participation policies, institutions and mechanisms as suggested in the literature reviewed. Lastly, a few interviews were conducted with key informants.
on public participation within the Municipality in order to supplement the findings from the literature.

An analysis of the public participation methods applied within the Municipality was done against the documents reviewed in order to check if the Municipality is implementing public participation methods in line with best practices. It turned out that the Municipality has various public participation methods in place; however, their effectiveness is questionable. Gaps were identified in terms of the processes and mechanisms in place with regard to public participation and recommendations to that effect will be done in the next chapter.

3.4. DATA SOURCES

Literature review and document analysis was done using key words in various search engines, databases and administrative documents. Key themes and relationships were identified. Documents were reviewed in order to gather background information about the subject under investigation. It also helped in understanding the history, philosophy, and operation of the Municipality with regard to public participation issues. It further assisted in revealing the truth on whether implementation of programmes was done as it's supposed to be in line with best practices, as stipulated in the local government legislation and various literature on community participation so as to fill in the gaps identified going forward.

3.5. DATA QUALITY ASSURANCE

Comparisons were made of the documents that contain similar information. Municipal officials who deal with public participation were interviewed in order to get the real sense of how public participation methods are applied within the Municipality in line with applicable legislation.

3.6. SUMMARY

Various documents were reviewed in order to understand what community participation is. Municipal officials that deal with public participation was interviewed so at to understand how it is done within the Municipality in line with different local government legislation. Although it is evident that the Municipality has put processes and mechanisms for public participation in place, gaps were still identified in line with best practices. The next chapter will provide recommendations as to how the
Municipality can improve on its existing public participation processes and mechanisms in order to conform to best practices.
CHAPTER 4: RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

4.1. INTRODUCTION

The Municipal Systems Act places specific responsibility on the municipality to engage with the community, and these administrative issues are left to the discretion of the municipality. Unless the participatory functions and processes are institutionalised and properly coordinated, the community will be denied its democratic right of being informed about municipal issues and to participate fully in matters directly affecting their lives.

We have observed in chapter 2 the various public participation methods employed in the Municipality and the challenges experienced to that effect. This chapter seeks to recommend ways on how to improve on the existing public participation processes within the Municipality and ways on how to fill the gaps where they exist. Recommendations will be made as per specific challenge raised in chapter 2 so as to get a clear understanding on how best a challenge can be addressed.

Following the recommendations, concluding remarks will be made with regard to community participation in the rendering of local government services within the Capricorn District Municipality.

4.2. STRATEGIES TO OVERCOME PUBLIC PARTICIPATION BARRIERS

The following strategies are posed in the literature to overcome public participation barriers within CDM.

4.2.1. POWER RELATIONS

The unclear roles between the ward committee members (WCMs), community development workers and the traditional authorities are a major challenge to effective communication. There is a need nationally to define clear roles and responsibilities as it is not clear as to who is in charge with regard to community issues. This has somehow restricted the influence that the traditional authorities have over the communities they serve.
4.2.2. PARTICIPATORY SKILLS

Not all ward committee members and community development workers have a formal educational background. As such, the community lacks some confidence in them and that leads to poor participation by community members. These leads to community withdrawal as they realise that local government officials are not capable of translating their needs into technical proposals of a high quality standard. There is a need to ensure that the minimum requirements set for one to become either a ward community member or a community development worker. The Municipality should ensure that sufficient budget is made available for the training of ward community members while the Department Of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGHSTA) should ensure training of community development workers. There should be continuous training and sensitising of local officials to deal effectively with community matters.

4.2.3. POLITICAL WILL

There are some ward councillors who seem not to be committed to their work as such making community members hesitant to participate in any matter that affect their lives. Communities will participate effectively if they see that their voted leaders communicating with them (Cuthill, 2003:382). It is important that councillors give the community an ear to voice their concerns. And that it is the councillor’s responsibility to ensure that community needs are communicated to the highest in authority so that they can be put on the priority list during the planning stage. It is important that the Municipality come up with the mechanisms to monitor the performance of councillors so as to ensure their commitment to the work they’ve been deployed to do.

4.2.4. CONSULTATIVE STRUCTURE

Community members will raise their concerns at the forums, however, no feedback is provided as to whether those demands will be met or not nor an indication as to when the needs will ever be attended to or not. Reports from consultations are not used to inform future planning of programmes and projects. It is important that the Municipality has feedback sessions with communities after a certain period. This will show that it is accountable to the community it serves and transparent in its work and will gain the community trust. The Municipality must also
encourage the promotion of accountability of elected officials to citizens, meaning that there must be constant feedback to the community.

4.2.5. INSUFFICIENT FINANCIAL RESOURCES

Participation is often conducted during the execution of projects/programmes, but not during initial project design and this could be attributable to insufficient financial resources to cater for that. The Municipality can make optimal use of the available resources to ensure that the community is consulted before the project commences as opposed to the current method where they are only consulted when the project is about to be implemented. The current workforce in existence can execute that function without necessarily having to appoint a service provider to render such function. There is a need to encourage communities to participate in the budgeting process to ensure that resources are allocated where needed most.

4.2.6. HISTORICAL FACTORS

Since blacks were excluded from participating in municipal matters, this has left them not being fully aware of their role in the new local government structure (Makgoba & Ababio, 2004). This calls for an intensive public participation programme to ensure that even the previously disadvantaged groups play a meaningful role in their own development. There is a need to develop a public participation policy and plan that will guide on how public participation will be carried out in the districts as well as indicating the different roles each stakeholder has to play in order to make it a success. These issues should be plotted on a year planner, indicating who is responsible for what task, and by what date. There is an urgent need for awareness campaigns on public participation issues.

4.2.7. COMMUNITY DISILLUSIONMENT WITH LOCAL GOVERNMENT INEFFECTIVENESS

According to the Municipal Systems Act, the municipality is expected to identify the needs of the community and find a mechanism to address those needs. However, due to limited funding the municipality cannot always address those needs within the expected time frame. For the ordinary member of the community this could be seen as a failure of their municipality and this could result in the community
disassociating themselves with any public participation conducted by the municipality (Makgoba & Ababio, 2004).

There are a number of factors which impact negatively on public participation processes, namely:

- People are experiencing participation fatigue as they are tired of “participating in their own development” without seeing the meaningful benefits of their participation;
- The municipal inability to ensure the participation of the business sector in the IDP

The District needs to find ways to constantly update the community about progress in responding to their needs, whether it’s in the short, medium or long term. And if there are any changes to what was promised, those changes also need to be communicated to them. It is important that the Municipality develop the service standards in consultation with its stakeholders so that it gets an idea of what services the community expects, at what level and an extent. The District should ensure that there exist dedicated personnel to monitor the implementation of service standards as they will serve as an improvement measure in ensuring that we deliver quality services to the people, at the right quantity and up to their expectation.

4.2.8. COMPLAINTS MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

There is also a need for the development of a complaints management system where the community can raise their complaints without necessarily having to wait for a Council outreach that normally happens once per quarter in different areas within the district. All the complaints raised should be analyzed and be attended to avoid their recurrence in the future.

4.2.9. CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEYS

Measuring customer satisfaction is key to organisational success and effectiveness. There is a need to conduct customer satisfaction surveys for both internal and external clients so as to measure their level of satisfaction. This will ensure that service provision meet the customer needs. It is also important to ensure that results of the survey are taken into consideration as and when the Integrated
Development Plan is been developed and or reviewed. This will motivate community members to continuously participate as their inputs are not disregarded.

5. CONCLUSION

Public participation is one of the major challenges facing the Capricorn District Municipality in the rendering of local government services in its area of jurisdiction. The study tried to ascertain as to whether planning and the decisions taken by the Capricorn District Municipality adequately respond to the needs and values of the communities, especially the special focus groupings, the poor and the disadvantaged sector of the community. It further tried to establish if there are representative and administrative system and mechanisms through which the views and concerns of the citizens are heard in order to ensure an understanding as to why communities do not own up to their own in order to come up with ways on how best can such problems be addressed in the future.

Various documents were reviewed in order to understand what community participation is. The literature reviewed revealed that public participation is an important issue to communities. Municipal officials responsible for public participation were interviewed so at to understand how it is done within the Municipality in line with different local government legislation. Different views on public participation as well as the methods employed within the Municipality and the challenges experienced in the implementation of public participation methods were provided.

From the discussions throughout the whole document, it is clear that the local government sector is too legislated with regard to public participation issues. In light of the public participation methods and mechanisms as suggested by different literature, it is evident that the Municipality is well on track with regard to the implementation of public participation in its area of jurisdiction. Although it is evident that the Municipality has put processes and mechanisms for public participation in place, gaps were still identified in line with best practices. Various recommendations have been made with regard to addressing the challenges identified.
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