

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

This study has analysed the following questions: What should be done in order to promote and enhance service delivery by local government administration? How can the interference of both political and administrative officials in local government administration be minimized? And, what is the importance of cooperative governance in local government administration? Against this background, the research examined the present state of service delivery by the South African municipalities by studying four municipalities under the Vhembe District Municipality, namely, Makhado, Musina, Mutale and Thulamela. Service delivery by South African municipalities is influenced by many factors, such as the knowledge and skills of both political and administrative officials in running municipalities and the degree to which community participation in municipal activities is being exercised. However, the inequalities of service delivery between the previous white and black municipalities have been reduced drastically.

6.2 Conclusions

In **Chapter One**, the discussion is centred on the background on the historical process of local government in South Africa. This chapter began by looking at the parliamentary committee system which allows room for public participation and is therefore one of the hallmarks of South Africa's relatively young democracy. These committees are increasingly playing a key role in ensuring that local government administration is by and for the people.

The obligation for local government is encapsulated in the South African Constitution, 1996 (Act 108 of 1996) which provides a framework for local government activities. The Constitution is an overriding component of legislation which necessarily for informs the local government legislation. While it is widely acknowledged that the Local Government

Transition Act, 1996 (Act 97 of 1996) rationalisation of local government, it is also widely agreed that it did not bring about fundamental transformation. This posed challenges to local government proponents and practitioners. A series of Acts emerged from this framework. These Acts direct municipalities in the new dispensation and form the final phase of transition for local government. Legislation flowing from the White Paper on Local Government (March 1998) are the following: the Municipal Demarcation's Act, the Municipal Structures Act, the Municipal Systems Act; the Financial Management Act and the Municipal Property Rates Act.

The newly demarcated municipal boundaries are intended to make a substantial difference in ensuring that municipalities become financially viable and creditworthy and have the necessary capacity to provide services in an equitable and sustainable manner, in the redrawing of rural areas into viable local authorities and in promoting developmental local government. The debates between traditional leaders and government have provided critical input to the Municipal Structures Act, 1998 (Act 117 of 1998). Both the Minister and the President of the country are committed to ensuring that the roles, powers and functions of traditional leaders in local government are clarified. The Municipal System Act, 2000 (Act 32 of 2000) extends the definition of a municipality to include residents and communities with the municipal area, working in partnership with the municipality's political and administrative structures. The Municipal Finance Management Act provides a foundation for orderly and sound financial management principles and practices in the local sphere of government. It is critical for councillors to understand these principles and practices and keep them in mind when carrying out their role to ensure the attainment of a developmental vision for local government. The Municipal Property Rates Act, 2004 (Act 6 of 2004) itself raises many challenges to local government practitioners, councillors and consumers. The administration aspects of the system, the equalisation of the areas that are intended to be levied, levying of areas falling under the jurisdiction of traditional authorities, farms and so on, all pose major challenges and the commitment of all stakeholders will be needed to make the implementation of the provisions set out in this Act a reality.

In Chapter Two, the statement of the problem has been formulated as follows: this research intends to survey service delivery in certain selected municipalities in the Limpopo Province. Since most of the municipalities in the Limpopo Province are manned by educators from schools, there is confusion and ambiguity in South Africa. This results in the failure of leadership and governance in local government administration to speed up service delivery to the communities. The following questions were derived from the problem, namely:

- What should be done in order to promote and enhance service delivery by local government administration?
- How can the interference of both politicians and officials in local government administration be minimized?
- What is the importance of cooperative governance in local government administration?

In trying to find answers to the above research questions and to come to a valid conclusions the research was structured as follows: Chapter One is centred on the background on the historical process of local government in South Africa which unfolds the transformation process of local government in South Africa. Chapter Two focuses on the research methodology which outlines how the research has been conducted. Chapter Three outlines theoretical perspectives on leadership and government in local government administration which are appropriate for speedy service delivery by municipalities in South Africa. Chapter Four outlines the case study in the Vhembe District Municipality where the empirical research was conducted. Chapter Five focuses on analysis and interpretation of the findings from the Vhembe District Municipality and its four local municipalities, namely, Makhado, Musina, Mutale and Thulamela. Chapter Six outlines conclusions and recommendations based on the findings from the Vhembe District Municipality.

It is necessary to note that leaders are ultimately accountable for the performance and conduct of those who serve under them. As leadership and governance perspectives underpin the delivery of an ethical public service for the health of the economy and for government to increase and improve service, the implications for leadership are enormous. The right kind of leadership can transform local government administration in South Africa while the wrong

kind can cause local government administration in a country to stagnate and cause its people to lose faith in the powers of local government administration.

It is also clear that governance is a way of governing. It takes the views and interests of those affected by government more seriously than in the past. The governed refers to the community at large. This includes individuals, community organizations and businesses, trade unions and NGOs. Political leaders have realized that they need to involve the community and all their constituent parts in the functioning of government. Relationships, partnerships and alliances have therefore become more important in local government administration than in the past. Local government is government which is closer to the people and, as such, it is responsible for the provision of services to the communities within its jurisdiction.

In **Chapter Three**, the study is compelled to conclude that for government in South Africa to tackle poor service delivery, confusion and ambiguity with regard to roles, functions, powers of various institutions of governance and officials, it should have leaders with vision and charisma; leaders who are good at strategic planning, are respected leaders domestically and internationally, and leaders with skills in development. They should be leaders of action, proactive leaders, good communicators and leaders with good relationships with private sectors. The local government of the day should uphold the principle that the local government should be people-centred, people-driven and people-controlled. This means that people should be afforded an opportunity to actively take part in the activities of the local government. The development of the communities should involve all stakeholders so that it can take place effectively and successfully.

The study suggests that administrators in local government should have the relevant knowledge and skills to run municipalities successfully. For municipalities in South Africa to succeed in service delivery, officials in local government or municipalities must be development-oriented; they must provide service impartially, and equitably without bias, and the employment of officials in municipalities must be based on the ability and capability of the candidate. The code of conduct contributes towards developing ethics and accountability

among municipal officials. The reason for this is that municipal officials will endeavour to perform their duties effectively and efficiently for them not to violate the provision of the code of conduct and be called to account for such violation.

In **Chapter Four**, the unit of analysis is the Vhembe District Municipality which was established in terms of the Municipal Structures Act, 1998 (Act 117 of 1998) which provides for the establishment of municipalities, their categories, competencies, functions and electoral procedures for office bearers. It is one of the six successors of the now defunct Northern District Council, and comprises four local municipalities, namely, Makhado, Musina, Mutale, and Thulamela. The Vhembe District Municipality, with a population of over 1,1 million living on about 21407 km² of land, is in the far North of Limpopo Province and shares borders with Capricorn, Mopane and Bohlabela District Municipalities in the southern, eastern and northern directions, respectively.

Thohoyandou (Meaning Head of Elephant) is the political capital and hub of economic activities for the Vhembe District Municipality. (The Vhembe District Municipality derives from the Vhembe River which divides South Africa and Zimbabwe and the *Vhembe Voice* a newsletter issued by the Vhembe District Municipality quarterly.) The other major towns are Makhado, Musina, Thulamela, Dzanani, Sibasa, Vuwani, Malamulele, Saselamane and Elim. The main languages spoken are Tshivenda, Xitsonga, Sepedi, English and Afrikaans.

To conduct the research in the Vhembe District Municipality, permission was applied for from the Vhembe District Municipality's Manager. The Vhembe District Municipality's Manager approved the application and issued the letter of introduction that would be used by the researcher when visiting these other four municipalities, namely Makhado, Musina, Mutale and Thulamela. The letter was addressed to the local municipalities' managers and the researcher used it when distributing five questionnaires to each municipality. The first two questionnaires were meant for municipal mayors and municipal managers. The last three were meant for three departments in each municipality including the district municipality. The targeted departments were the Department of Administration, Community and Technical

services. The three departments were chosen because they were considered to be core departments in terms of service delivery to the communities.

6.3 Recommendations

The study suggests that more appropriate leadership for developmental local government should be a visionary and charismatic leader, one with strategic leadership, a builder of capacity and able to make policy judgements. He or she should be a respected, accountable and transparent leader, able also to develop leadership and build partnerships and coalitions, a leader of action, able to represent the diversity of interests, a leader with relationships with the private sector, one who can demonstrate value for money, proactive person and a good communicator.

Regarding governance, there are ten ways of governing better, namely, catalytic local government; steering rather than rowing, community-owned local government: empowering rather than serving; competitive local government: injecting competition into service delivery; mission-driven local government: transforming rule-driven organizations; results-oriented local government: funding outcomes not inputs; customer-driven local government: meeting the needs of the customer not the bureaucracy; enterprising local government: earning rather than spending; anticipatory local government: prevention rather than cure; decentralized local government forming a hierarchy to participation; and market-oriented local government: leveraging change through the market place.

A number of recommendations follow to address the problems accruing from the findings of the case study in this research project.

6.3.1 Establishment of the White Paper on the Implementation of Governmental Policies and Acts.

During the empirical research, it was established that both political and administrative leadership agreed that legislation to effectively run and govern municipalities is in place, but the implementation thereof is often ignored or neglected. Hence, the study recommends that

the National Government should establish a White Paper on the Implementation of Governmental Policies and Acts. It is believed and hoped that this will force both political and administrative officials to see to it that governmental policies and Acts are implemented effectively and successfully. It is also hoped that in this manner service delivery to the communities will be enhanced and promoted.

6.3.2 Political appointment of both political and administrative officials to the positions of municipalities.

Affirmative action can be defined as laws, programmes or activities designed to redress past imbalances and to ameliorate the conditions of individuals and groups who have been disadvantaged on the grounds of race, colour, gender or disability (White Paper on the transformation of Public Service, 1995:53). Therefore the principle of affirmative action encourages both public and private sectors to consider historically disadvantaged communities when it comes to the appointment of people to the positions which are vacant in both sectors. This practice indirectly undermines the capacity of an incumbent and the skills required for particular positions. This practice amounts to political appointment, because it also undermines the requirements of the post and the capacity and relevant skills required by the particular post. This study suggests that this may be one of the reasons why the municipalities in South Africa are unable to deliver goods and services as expected by the communities. Thus, the study recommends that the practice of political appointees should be immediately terminated because it undermines the requirements of the post and the capability and relevant skills required by the particular post.

6.3.3 A minimum qualification requirement (Grade 12) for the appointment of councillors

According to Section 68 Subsection of Municipal Systems Act, 2000 (Act No. 32 of 2000), a municipality must develop its human resource capacity to a level that enables it to perform its powers in an economically effective, efficient and accountable way and, for this purpose, must comply with the Skills Development Act, 1998 (Act no. 81 of 1998), and the Skills Development Services Act, 1999 (Act No. 28 of 1999). Hence a minimum qualification

requirement should be set (Grade 12) for the appointment of councillors to their positions, because this Grade 12 qualification will allow councillors to study and fully comprehend municipal by-laws and legislation. This will make them more effective in carrying out their duties and responsibilities.

6.3.4 Interaction of councillors with the communities in which they are working

Councillors are elected to represent local communities on municipal councils to ensure that municipalities have structured mechanisms of accountability to local communities, and to meet the priority needs of communities by providing service equitably, effectively and sustainably within the means of the municipality. In fulfilling this role councillors must be accountable to local communities and report back at least on a quarterly basis to constituencies on council matters, including the performance of the municipality in terms of established indicators. In order to ensure that councillors fulfil their obligations to their communities, and support the achievement by the municipality of its objectives set out in Section 9 of the Municipal Structures Act, 1998 (Act 117 of 1998), councillors should have a personal itinerary to enable them to visit the villages in their wards accordingly. During their visits, it is further recommended that they should talk about general issues, such as the operation of municipalities with members of the communities. It is important that members of the communities know exactly how the municipalities operate. This may reduce the demonstrations that are taking place in South African municipalities.

6.3.5 Community participation

According to Section 16 (1) the Municipal Systems Act 2000 (Act 32 of 2000) a municipality must develop formal representative government with a system of participatory governance, and must for this purpose encourage, and create conditions for, the local community to participate in the affairs of the municipality. It is, therefore, imperative that municipalities in South Africa adhere to this rule of community participation to the best of their ability in order to construct healthy relations with their communities. Thus, the study suggests that community involvement in municipal activities should not appear only on paper, but be

practically and effectively implemented. Members of the communities should be actively involved in all municipal activities so that they are kept abreast of what is happening in their municipalities.

6.3.6 *Councillors' accountability to their political organizations*

Councillors are being deployed by their political parties to their positions as councillors. Therefore every councillor should be accountable for his/her duties and responsibilities to his/her political organization. For this reason, the study recommends that political organisations/parties should strengthen their branches by electing dedicated and committed members to the executive positions of their branches and that the councillors should have people to whom to account for their duties and responsibilities.

6.3.7 *Relinquishing their executive positions in their branches when appointed councillors*

Since councillors are expected to report on the activities of municipalities to their branches, the study suggests that councillors who have been holding executive positions in their branches before their appointment as councillors should relinquish their positions, because they cannot be players and referees at the same time

6.3.8 *Payment of services by rural residents*

According to Section 74(2) of the Municipal Systems Act 2000 (Act 32 of 2000), a tariff policy must at least have the following principles, namely, that users of municipal services should be treated equitably in the application of tariffs; the amount individual users pay for services should generally be in proportion to their use of that service, and tariffs must reflect the cost reasonably associated with rendering the service; including capital, operating, maintenance administration and replacement of costs and interest charges. The study, therefore, recommends that the residents in rural areas should be made to understand by their councillors that it is essential to pay for the services that they are receiving, because no services will be rendered to the people who are not contributing anything to the

municipalities. Some residents in the rural areas are working and they qualify to pay for the services rendered by the municipalities.

6.3.9 *Recommendation for further research on capacity building*

Capacity building of both political and administrative officials in municipalities, according to the White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service, 1995 (1995:63) is the training, teaching and educating of both political and administrative officials in order to assist them in understanding their role in municipalities. The study also recommends further research on the effective capacity building of both political and administrative officials to show how this capacity building should best be carried out in an effort to improve and enhance service delivery in municipalities in South Africa.