

CHAPTER FIVE

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

INTRODUCTION

The worth of any scientific research is dependent on the manner in which data were collected and analysed. This means that once data has been collected, it has to be sifted, tabulated, and grouped appropriately to convey a meaning that is consistent with the research question or problem being investigated. One may have piles of completed questionnaires, interview results and several documents collected on a particular issue, but before the data are properly analysed or converted into interpretable information, this mass of data remains meaningless. Thus, every piece of scientific research needs a data presentation and analysis component.

The main purpose of this study is to measure the performance of the Beitbridge Rural District Council over an eight-year period from the time RDCs were introduced in July 1993 to the end of the year 2001. While there are many variables that one can focus on within this framework, this study looked at three important factors: democratic participation, service provision, and management performance. The establishment of RDCs was a way of entrenching decentralisation principles and in particular, those of devolution in Zimbabwe's government system. This was intended to give people at the local level a chance to govern themselves and make decisions on the combination of goods and services that would enhance their welfare and make life good for them. Thus, RDCs were expected to raise the consciousness of local people so that they could realize that their socio-economic and political well being lay in their hands,

rather than those of central government officials and those at the sub-national levels. In fact, these officials were expected to respond to the needs of these communities and provide services in line with the demands, aspirations, and choices of these local people. This imperative humanizes communities, removes aspects of docility and hero-worshipping government officials and allows communities to take responsibility for their lives. It becomes important to find out if RDCs have accepted this imperative and if they have supplied communities with the democracy they need to determine who governs them, how they are to be governed, the combination of goods and services they prefer and how these are delivered to them. Thus, the question to ask is, has the BRDC managed to allow communities to participate freely in determining the course of development of the district? Has it raised the level of consciousness of communities through participatory approaches to planning, and decision-making?

The other important focus of this study is to gauge the BRDC's performance in service provision or delivery. This has been necessitated by the fact that RDCs, apart from the need to enhance local democracy, are established to provide a combination of services to local communities. To indicate the paramountcy of this imperative, the RDC Act of 1988, Section 71 provides an elaborate list of services council is expected to provide, as indicated in Chapter 4 of this study. Using a generic typology these include community security, subsidised, commercial, environmental, economic and convenience services. These can be indicated by means of a table as shown in Table 5.1 on page 264.

Once an RDC has been established, it should be seen to be fulfilling this task in a fair and efficient manner. This is because the provision of these services is an attempt to raise the social fabric of communities and make life good for them. Thus, measuring the performance of RDCs would not be complete if there is no mention of this social service imperative. In trying to achieve this objective, the RDC should also take into account that resources are scarce.

Table 5.1. Services of a local nature

Classification	Type of Service
Community Services	Community hall Municipal health Roads and Streets Water and drainage
Security Services	Civil Protection Traffic control Law enforcement
Subsidised Services	Ambulance Libraries Museums
Commercial Services	Electricity Gas supply Produce market Abattoirs Urban transport Water
Environmental Services Economic Services	Pollution Control Conservation Refuse collection Housing Building Control Licensing Sewerage Cleaning
Services of Convenience	Recreation facilities Nature reserves Swimming pool Ablution facilities

Source: Ismael, Bayat and Meyer, 1997:69-70.

This means that appropriate economizing choices of resource provision should be made in order to minimize waste but at the same time, maximize gain for the communities. The RDC should also take cognizance of the need to distribute and redistribute resources among communities, in order to achieve the fairness or equity criterion. This is particularly important since some communities are

disadvantaged more than others because of a multiplicity of macro and micro environmental factors obtaining in their wards. Once services are provided, communities are expected to testify to their adequacy, desirability and appropriateness. Thus, in this case the question to ask is, has the BRDC managed to provide services to communities in a fair and efficient manner and do communities consider these services to be adequate?

Among others, the desirability of RDCs is dependent on the performance of its managerial staff. The roles of the RDC staff are those of directors and managers of local government affairs. The RDC staff have the responsibility to guide council in the definition of its mission, setting objectives, laying out broad organisation plans, employing and motivating staff, setting up work standards, keeping records and generally providing leadership for their organisations. In 1937, the Brownlow Committee to President Roosevelt talked of the need for good management in the public sector when it said in its report:

Good management will promote in the fullest measure, the conservation and utilization of our national resources and spell this out plainly in social justice, security, order, liberty, prosperity, in material benefit and in higher values of life (Report on the Committee on Administrative Management to the President of the USA. US Government Printing Office, 1937:13).

Managerialism and Neo-managerialism have popularized management in public sector institutions. Thus, public managers in RDCs are seen as a solution to institutional ills and the capacity of these agencies to achieve the goals for which they were established. The managers are expected to:

- a) inculcate the values of efficiency, effectiveness and economy into RDC operations;
- b) rid RDCs of their dysfunctional culture and infuse a culture of responsibility, responsiveness, accountability and good performance;

- c) reorient RDCs into output oriented rather than input oriented establishments;
- d) rationalise RDC operations so that they are goal driven rather than driven by rules and regulations;
- e) change the service ethos of RDCs so that they cherish quality service provision;
- f) promote a participatory approach to designing programmes and making RDC decisions as a way of accepting the utility of communities and councilors in the life of these institutions; and
- g) create an amicable relationship among RDC staff, councilors and communities.

With this in mind, the question to ask is: How has the BRDC management performed in its attempt to create a competitive local government institution? This indicates that measuring the performance of these institutions cannot be complete without looking at management performance itself.

As indicated in Chapter Two, data were collected using questionnaires, interviews, and documentary search. The observation method was employed intermittently although of course, this was not as extensive as the other three techniques. Simple opportunity sampling was preferred for selecting respondents for questionnaires and interviews. Respondents to questionnaires were divided into two categories: communities within the district and the BRDC officials (both councilors and staff). A total of 250 community questionnaires were distributed while fifteen (15) questionnaires were distributed among councillors and management staff of council. See Questionnaire Schedules (Schedule A and B) in the appendices section of this study. To guard against non-responsiveness

due to illiteracy, research assistants were asked to assist community members with completing questionnaires. Altogether 248 out of 250 questionnaires were collected. This signifies a high response. However, only eight (8) completed questionnaires were received from councilors and the BRDC staff (5 from the councilors and 3 from the BRDC management staff). This means that only 53% of the questionnaires were received.

Structured interviews were conducted with individuals and groups as specified in Chapter two, pages 99 – 100. Among others, these included the Deputy Minister of Local Government and National Housing, the District Administrator of Beitbridge District, The Chairman of the BRDC, two councillors, and the Chief Executive Officer of the BRDC. See the Interview Schedule in the appendices section of this study. Documentary search included reviewing council plans; a sample of council minutes; special reports; annual reports; circulars; financial statements; the mission statement; evaluation reports; and personnel rules and regulations. The presentation and analysis of this data follows below.

RESPONSES ON DEMOCRATIC PARTICIPATION

Questionnaires, interviews and documentary search were used to collect data on democratic participation. Communities were asked to indicate their level of satisfaction with each of the following: the conduct of elections, community consultation on matters of policy, community debates on policy issues, VIDCO and WADCO participation in project planning, integration of traditional authority in RDC leadership, ward briefings by councillors, training of VIDCOs and WADCOs, and RDC/Community communication. Eighty two percent (82,2%) of community respondents indicated that they are satisfied with the conduct of council/local elections. Of these, 51,6% is very satisfied with the process. According to their comments, local elections are competitive and transparent. The administration of elections is also acceptable. It is significant to note that the electoral process

starts with primaries where each party chooses its candidate for council elections. Independents are also allowed to contest local elections, as long as they have at least forty-five people who endorse their candidature and manage to pay the electoral fees as required. It is significant to note that 4.4% are dissatisfied with the electoral process. These respondents indicate that there is a tendency for candidates to be imposed upon communities by political heavy weights in the ruling party. This tends to reduce democratic participation in the electoral process.

According to interviews carried out with councilors and the Chief Executive Officer of the BRDC, there have not been any incidents of violence during elections. One of the reasons for this is that Beitbridge district has mostly been a one party district. The unity accord signed in 1987 between ZANU-PF and PF-ZAPU, created a dominant ZANU-PF party with no other political party in contention. Thus, if there had been any disgruntlement with council elections, these were largely insignificant and covert. However, the rise of the MDC party in 2000 has raised the potential of opposition to ZANU-PF and as a result, the next council elections in 2004 are likely to be hotly contested.

In any democratic dispensation, communities are expected to take part in policy making particularly during the initiation and formulation of public policies. Fundamentally, this is because policies are formulated to solve societal or community problems. Communities know and experience these problems. As such, they have an idea as to how they think they can be empowered out of their predicament. To exclude them would be to minimise one's understanding of issues that are at the core of these problems. Consequently, policy makers are expected to consult with these communities to know how they feel about specific issues and how these are solved. This is the essence of an empowering democratic dialogue. It appears that the BRDC has not performed well in this aspect of community empowerment as shown in the graphical presentation in the next page.

Only 40.6% of the community indicated satisfaction, with 13,2% of these being highly satisfied with community consultation on policy matters. More than 120 of the respondents, about 54.4% show dissatisfaction with this process. In fact, their comments indicate that in most of the cases, they are told what council will do for them. They are not even aware of the policies that guide the operations of council and those that need to be formulated. This also means that there are no meaningful policy debates (58.9%). What exists are 'policy communiqués issued by council at their own will and with no latitude for communities to voice dissatisfaction. Although communities may be asked to react on any action of council, such reactions seldom occur because of lack of knowledge and the fear of going against authoritative decisions of council.

In addition to dissatisfaction with the community consultation process, there is also an element of unhappiness with the openness of council to policy debates by or with communities. Only 37,9% of respondents shows approval of this process. This is a rather low percentage showing that most policy issues are discussed at institutional level.

From the above, it can be seen that the community has a minimal role to play in matters of policy. In fact, most policies are dictated to communities. In addition, this may actually indicate that communities are not conversant with most policy issues and feel reluctant to take part in the policy process. This only means that the performance of council on these themes has to be transformed.

In every ward, there are VIDCOs and WADCOs. These are local structures, which are expected to participate in project planning, development and management. Each rural ward has a VIDCO structure. There are at least 54 VIDCOs in Beitbridge. Most of these VIDCOs are functional and take part in project work. They participate in project planning and development. A 72.6% approval rate is indicated for this type of work. A similar percentage of respondents (67.3%) expressed approval for community autonomy in project

work. This means that communities are given the responsibility to manage local projects. The BRDC, together with NGOs assist these communities with project management training. However, communities seem to be dissatisfied with the kind of training that is provided. A high percentage (62.9%) of dissatisfaction with training is indicated. VIDCOs and WADCOs are the grassroots structures for initiating and managing local development. They cannot do so if they are not trained to raise their skill levels in planning, decision making, and managing local programmes and projects. The process of training those involved in these structures will also improve the manner with which they are expected to participate in the whole local governance process, a fundamental requirement for democratic involvement in local affairs.

In spite of the failure to train those involved in VIDCOs and WADCOs, the high rate of participation in project work shows that the BRDC or those sponsoring projects are aware that project success lies in the contributions made by communities. By their nature, projects may also require the physical presence and the labour of communities. Thus, it is only logical that those whose labour would be needed be included in decision making, so as to induce them to take part in project work. Sometimes such projects require financial and other technical inputs from communities. Without their (communities) involvement in the whole project process, demands for funds, labour and other inputs may be rebuffed. In fact, projects become meaningful if communities are allowed to run them. This enables them to be closely attached to the project. It becomes their 'baby' and a strong sense of nurturing this baby becomes prevalent and, indeed, the driving force behind continuous participation. Significant then is the fact that continuous participation in project planning has the effect of cultivating a culture of democratic participation, which is seen as essential for community empowerment and self-determination.

Another important indicator of democratic participation that was tested is that of involving or integrating traditional leaders in matters of policy and RDC decision

making. It is significant to note, from the onset, that the formation of RDCs as a major form of local governance tends, to marginalise traditional authority. However, in Zimbabwe, the understanding and policy guidelines are that traditional leaders can be incorporated into RDCs as appointed councilors. Traditional leaders should not comprise more than 25% of the whole council complement. The role of these leaders is to give advice to council on matters of land and local/community traditions. Besides, they could be used to mobilise communities to participate in council affairs particularly, in terms of collecting resources from their subjects. Significant also is the fact that those traditional leaders who wish to stand for election as councilors, are allowed to do so although this is not encouraged, in case they loose. If the latter happens, their authority in that particular ward may be damaged. Thus, government has a wish to avoid this at all cost. However, in practice, traditional authority functions are overly dominated by local councilors, WADCOs and VIDCOs. This has greatly minimised the authority of these leaders. The traditional leaders now seem to be subservient to these modern forms of local power. Communities themselves are rather dissatisfied with the manner in which their traditional leaders are given the chance to participate in local affairs hence, a modest 36.8% approval rate. This means that the current practice is not popular.

One of the major tenets of liberal democracy is that representatives have to continuously seek the community mandate on policy issues as well as inform the same of new decisions and developments taking place in the district. This means that there has to be continuous interaction between representatives (the councilors) and the communities they lead. This helps to build the requisite elements of democracy and community empowerment. The question is, does this actually take place in Beitbridge? Only 20.1% of respondents indicate that councilors sometimes call for meetings to tell communities about new decisions of council. This low figure indicates a derailment of democratic participation. Council should always get back to their constituencies to discuss matters of council. It is only then that they can be legitimised. In fact, the problem of poor

interaction between the BRDC and its communities is further indicated by a low community/councilor communication rate (30.1%) and a very low staff/community relationship rate (13.3%). In addition to asking communities to provide input on their satisfaction or otherwise with the BRDC's attempts to fulfill the fundamental imperative of decentralisation and local government, councilors and council staff were also asked to give their opinions on this issue. These were asked to respond on the following:

- the existence and active participation of community groups in council affairs;
- the level of operation of these groups in the development hierarchy, that is, at village, ward or district level;
- participation of groups in policy formulation, implementation and evaluation;
- the authority that determines the relationship between and among groups and council;
- the groups that participate in the planning process;
- whether the BRDC has a well written strategy for encouraging communities to participate in the policy making process; and
- whether the RDC has a public relations department/unit or not.

The response of councilors and staff on community groups that are present in the BRDC is indicated in Table 5.2 on page 274. The diagram also shows whether each of the groups is active in local authority issues or not.

Table 5.2 Community groups in the BRDC

	EXIST	ACTIVE	NOT ACTIVE
Women's groups	X	X	
Farmers Groups	X	X	
Business Groups	X		X
Youth Groups	X		X
Religious Groups	X		X
Elderly Peoples Groups	-	-	-
NGOs	X	X	
Government Agencies	X		X
Residents Associations	X		X
Political Parties other than ZANU-PF	X		X

According to responses from councillors and the BRDC staff, all groups except the elderly people's groups are present. It is interesting to note that residents associations and other political parties, though present, are not active. Urban Beitbridge is full of substandard residential structures, untarred roads, no commuter service to the shopping malls except taxis, which charge exorbitant prices, and very little if any, recreational facilities. To have a residents association that is not vocal on these issues and how they should be solved undermines the process of representation and democratic participation.

Responses also indicate that although other political parties exist, they are not active in local government issues. This is due to the fact that they are not represented in council. This lack of representation, because of the "winner takes all" electoral process, has denied these parties a platform through which they can criticise council and advocate for a different policy agenda, other than that which is advocated by ZANU-PF. If communities know of the existence of alternatives

and they can thus put pressure on council to deliver the requisite services in a more efficient and effective manner. The absence of an active opposition also means that what ZANU-PF wants as policy will, inevitably become policy. This undermines democratic participation, particularly if these policy actions come from senior government officials and are imposed on councils. Besides, it instills fear in those who have alternate ideas, as these would be interpreted as harbouring anti ruling party sentiments. This is dangerous. The danger comes in many forms and one of them is where party officials and communities are sanctioned by preventing them from benefiting from certain services such as drought relief, development loans, and project. All these community services are channeled through the ruling party so that those who do not belong are easily left out. At the extreme, the danger comes through physical persecution and denouncing members of the opposition through the media so as to dehumanize and undermine their personality.

From the responses, Beitbridge does not have a senior citizens' home. It can be argued that a population of about 90 000 people does not need this sort of facility, as resources for it cannot be easily made available. However, a counter argument would be that the urban settlement is growing rapidly. In fact, many elderly people are living in the dilapidated old location, which approximates nothing but a squatter camp, with no one seeming to notice the desperate position of these elderly citizens. Any community has to show respect for the elderly and empower them to make a living up to the end of their days on earth.

Seven (7) of the eight (8) councilors and staff (87.5%) who responded to the questionnaire indicate that women's groups are the most active. Farmers' groups follow this, with five (5) out of the eight (8) respondents (64,5%). This is understandable in that women form the backbone of Beitbridge's rural economy. They are the ones who till the land, engage in community development projects, and take care of homes, while their husbands go to the cities and farms to search for employment. As a result, women have managed to organise themselves into

formidable economic groups. Both the responding councilors and staff indicate that women's groups have been strengthened by the visible hand of the ZANU-PF Women's League which has done a tremendous job in mobilising women and raising their socio-economic and political status and consciousness. As a result, women in Beitbridge have become a dynamic force that can influence elections at the local level and even see to the downfall of councilors. Councils can, in fact, improve their capacity to empower communities by organising society around these women.

To a large extent, white commercial farmers and communal farmers represent farmers' groups. The amalgamation process has meant that the two groups of farmers should cooperate to utilise land for the benefit of all. In Beitbridge, there has developed an amicable relationship between the two groups. Commercial farmers have agreed to assist communal farmers in times of draught. Thus, whenever there is draught, communal farmers make representation of this situation to council after which a formula on how communal livestock can be accepted on commercial farms is developed. Consequently, although there is animosity between black and white farmers in Zimbabwe generally, Beitbridge district has not experienced this problem. White-owned farms have not been invaded by 'War Veterans' as communities feel that there is fair land sharing and their livestock is not exposed to the dangers of communal drought because of this sharing spirit. Besides, commercial farmers offer employment to communities and thus, they are a vital source of income for these local people.

On participation in the policy process by groups, respondents indicate that women, farmers, and NGOs have a telling influence on the nature and substance of policy. Seven (7) out eight (8) respondents, approximately 87.5%, indicate this. These groups make resolutions, which are then passed to council for consideration. On the other hand, youth groups, religious groups, and political parties, other than ZANU-PF, have a minimal role to play in RDC policy making. In fact, these groups are not very coherent themselves and it is not surprising

that they do not have well framed development agendas that they can articulate to influence policy decisions.

It is also significant to note that the participation of groups in RDC affairs can also depend on who determines the relationship between such a group and the RDC. One would expect the group concerned and the RDC to have a mutual relationship initiated by the two. If any other third party is involved, the relationship may be turbulent and conflictual particularly where one party feels that it has been forced into the relationship. In the BRDC, the groups and the council determine most relationships. In such a situation there are amicable relationships that foster democratic participation in matters of local governance. It is significant, however, that there are some relationships, which are determined by central government through ministerial directives, via line ministries who have deconcentrated structures in localities and legislative provisions. For example, the District Administrator is the coordinator of district development. This is provided for in the Prime Minister's decentralisation directive of 1984 (Mushauri in Hofmeister and Scholz, 1997:265). A struggle for power between the RDC and District Administrator's Office leads to conflictual relations that undermine the rubrics of democratic participation in the district.

Councilors and council staff were also asked to indicate whether or not VIDCOs and WADCOs participate in district development planning. All respondents indicated that these two organs are actively involved in district development planning. Explanations for this include the following:

- VIDCOs and WADCOs construct their own development plans, which are submitted to the District Development Planning Committee.
- The chairpersons of VIDCOs and WADCOs are part of the District Development Committee and consequently, they are involved in prioritising district plans.

However, the respondents also mention the problem of chairpersons of these structures who tend to dictate plans to communities. Sometimes VIDCO and WADCO plans are dominated by influential figures at the village and ward levels. These include teachers and ZANU-PF officials. Besides, priorities of VIDCOs and WADCOs are seldom implemented to realise community goals hence, the tendency by communities to say that they are not consulted or they have a low level of involvement as indicated earlier. All these responses indicate that the whole process of community participation needs to be investigated seriously by the BRDC, in order to enhance democracy and good governance at the local level. Council is in charge of the local communities and has to see to it that all local participation is invigorated and made meaningful and empowering.

Besides these issues, it is also important to indicate that the public is normally informed through community meetings with councilors and when council staff does attend such meetings, although this rarely happens. During such meetings, councillors report back council plans and development decisions. It is significant to note that information is only disseminated through the word of mouth. No written reports are distributed among community members. Although communities are free to inspect council documents, no one has the time to go all the way to council to ask for council minutes, budget statements and other council documents. Thus, communities rely on these oral reports, which very much depend on the eloquence of each speaker. Significant also is the fact that some information is deliberately left out if the speaker suspects that it generates controversy and he/she is unable to defend himself/herself if questions are asked. The literacy rate in Beitbridge is quite high and as such, the council should feel obliged to document and circulate information to communities without fear. Another problem is that there is no public relations department. Each councilor or council officer acts as a public relations officer and may tailor information according to his/her audience at a particular moment. This is highly unacceptable, as it encourages information discrimination and distortion.

The second aspect that is investigated in this study is the performance of the BRDC in service provision. The next section deals with this aspect. It presents and analyses the responses of interviewees, questionnaire respondents and documentary evidence gathered on this aspect.

THE STATUS OF SERVICE PROVISION IN THE BRDC

As indicated earlier, the BRDC is expected to provide a large array of services of a local nature. These include health, education, water, public transport facilities, sanitary/sewage facilities, housing and crime prevention. Results obtained from communities through the questionnaire method are presented by means of a frequency table and graph, as shown on the next page. Below is an analysis of each of the services that were considered in this study.

The provision of health

Beitbridge has one District Hospital. The hospital was renovated and modernised in 1990. However, it still lacks sufficient medicines, nurses and doctors. Consequently, it makes many referrals to the Gwanda Provincial Hospital (GPH) and the National Central Hospital (NCH) in Bulawayo. There are thirteen (13) Rural Health Centres (RHCs) or clinics of which eight (8) are administered by the BRDC. These eight (8) are located in Zezani, Masera, Swereki, Shashe, Tongwe, Chasvingo, Makakavhule and Dulibadzimo. The other five (5), Majini, Dite, Shabwe, Chituripasi and Chikwarakwara are administered by the GOZ and directly by the MOHCW. The RHCs are moderately equipped and serviced with running water and radio communication systems. However, not all of them have electricity. There is also insufficient accommodation for nurses.

Although these clinics depend on grants from the MOHCW, these are not sufficient to meet the maintenance needs of clinics such as buying cleaning material and medicines. Health provision in Zimbabwe is supposed to be free for all those earning below Z\$1 500 per month. However, these clinics end up charging a Z\$50 levy for every consultation made. Those who do not have the money, are treated free of charge. The problem however, is that members of the community who do not have the Z\$50 tend to stay away from the clinic although they need medical assistance. This makes the levy a counterproductive instrument. Consequently, more than 50% of community members who completed the questionnaire indicate a poor performance on health provision.

It is also significant to indicate that a State Registered Nurse (SRN) runs each clinic. If this person cannot be recruited, then a State Certified Nurse (SCN) takes charge of the hospital. In addition, there should be a nurse's aid, an Environmental Health Technician and a groundsman. The RDC Circular, Number 2 of 2001 shows that each clinic is expected to provide a number of health-related services such as:

- promotive services (e.g. family planning advice and the provision of contraceptives);
- disease surveillance (e.g. monitoring of the health situation);
- environmental health services (e.g. the siting of toilets);
- outreach services (e.g. supervision of traditional midwifery);
- baby delivery services;
- treatment and rehabilitation; and
- referrals. In fact, the shortage of medicines has turned these clinics into referral agencies as every small case is referred to Beitbridge District Hospital.

According to the CEO of the BRDC, the Ministry of Health applies three criteria for the establishment of RHCs. These are:

- (i) Distance: The distance to other RHCs should not be less than 20 km. And should have a population of not less than 5 000.
- (ii) Accessibility: The RDC should have access roads throughout the year.
- (iii) Water supply: There should be water supply throughout the year and preferably, piped water.

This has led to clinics being congested with those seeking medical treatment, especially where there is a high population density. For example, Dulibadzimo clinic cannot afford to handle cases in Beitbridge urban and nearby Makakavhule, Malala, Mtetengwe, and Chamnanga. As a result, communities go straight to the Beitbridge District Hospital, only to cause more congestion and delays. All these problems have influenced community responses where only 30,6% indicates satisfaction with health provision. As indicated in the clinic establishment criteria, some wards have no clinics. Even those that have do not have adequate medicines to treat the sick. However, it is significant to indicate that the infrastructure is there, but what is needed is improvement in the service provision itself particularly in terms of the availability of medicines, the availability of qualified health personnel (nurses and doctors), the maintenance of medical facilities and accommodation for health staff.

The provision of Education

Education reports indicate that there are fifty-four (54) primary schools and eleven (11) secondary schools in Beitbridge. Most of the primary schools are administered by the BRDC. In addition, the Council facilitates the financing of building materials, maintenance and the provision of school furniture. Communities also take part in the actual building/construction of these schools. However, the Ministry of Education and Culture (MOEC) supplies these schools with teaching materials and also pays teachers' salaries. Taking into consideration the catchment area of a 10 kilometre radius for each primary

school, it is clear that Beitbridge is well supplied with primary education. What is needed, is to upgrade the classrooms, provide more staff accommodation and improve the supply of qualified teachers.

As indicated earlier, there are eleven (11) secondary schools in the district. These are Vhembe, Chidihwa, Nuli, Malunguzi, Chasvingo, Tongwe, Majini, Zezani, Shashie, Chamunangana, and Chituripasi. Below is a table indicating the names of secondary schools, the authority in charge of the school and enrolment figures as at September 2001.

Table 5.3 Secondary schools in the Beitbridge District (1996 Figures)

Ward	Name of School	Authority	Enrolment
Chipise	Tshitulipasi	BRDC	86
Dite I	Malunguzi	BRDC	179
Mtetengwe I	Tongwe	Government	490
Mtetengwe II	Nuli	Government	330
Mtetengwe III	Tshidihwa	BRDC	282
Maramani	Tshimimile	BRDC	190
Machuchuta	Kohomela	BRDC	194
Dendele	Zezani	ELCZ	356
Siyoka I	Siyoka	BRDC	300
Siyoka II	Kwalu	BRDC	333
Beitbridge Urban	Vhembe	BRDC	769

Source: Ministry of Education and Culture, Beitbridge Circuit, 2001:1

These secondary schools are capable of absorbing all children in the district who qualify for secondary education. Where classrooms are not sufficient, the school is expected to introduce a 'hotsitting' arrangement where some classes are conducted in the morning while others are conducted in the afternoon. Another important point to indicate is that there are only two secondary schools that offer advanced level (Form VI) education. These are Zezani and Vhembe. The remaining schools end with ordinary level (Form IV) classes. This situation needs

improvement, as it denies many children the chance of doing 'A' levels, yet this is the qualifying level for anyone who wishes to enroll for university education.

Community responses on the provision of education indicate an 83,5% satisfaction rate. This is because primary and secondary schooling are considered to be the core educational services and they seem to have been catered for appropriately. Every primary school has a non-formal component to cater for adult education. The high literacy rate, in the district testifies to this. What still needs to be improved is the supply of qualified teachers, a lower teacher/pupil ratio and an increased budget allocation to cater for teaching materials particularly in the science subjects. Another important component that is needed is that of kindergartens or pre-schools. These are not a common phenomenon in communal wards. They can be found in urban Beitbridge, but still, they are not enough. In Beitbridge there are only three kindergartens for a population of more than 25 000. In rural areas, kindergartens are more plentiful during drought years or in spring or early summer when communities have less food supplies. Kindergartens fall under the MOHCW as part of its duty to feed children, particularly from poor backgrounds. Thus, one can safely conclude that crèches are seasonal. In these crèches children are fed with beans, soup and sadza (maize meal/thick porridge). They have played a meaningful role in preventing diseases and malnutrition. It is important that this becomes a regular feature in order to play a meaningful role in the education of children.

One can conclude that the performance of the district in educational provision is commendable. There is high community participation, particularly in school construction, the payment of academic fees and the school development levy. Parents are also involved in school management through School Development Committees or Associations. The Ministry of Education and Culture through its offices in the district, supervises educational provision to make sure that it approximates national standards.

The Provision of Water

Water provision has been made possible through boreholes, wells, piped water schemes, dams and irrigation works. However, 80 boreholes and 445 wells were dry in 2002. This left the district with 243 boreholes, 569 wells, 32 piped water systems of which 18 are non functional. Table 5.4 illustrates how these water points are distributed through out the communal wards.

Table 5.4 Water points per ward in Beitbridge District (1999 figures).

WARD	BH	Dry BH	Well	Dry well	Piped Sch.	Non Fnal Sch.
Chipise	29	7	41	34	5	2
Dite I	27	5	13	9	4	2
Dite II	22	6	60	53	-	-
Mtetengwe I	24	8	19	12	4	2
Mtetengwe II	21	4	85	71	8	5
Mtetengwe III	10	3	62	48	2	2
Masera	7	2	49	37	1	0
Maramani	40	22	23	17	3	2
Machuchuta	23	11	46	39	2	1
Dendele	15	6	60	50	-	-
Siyoka I	12	4	55	42	3	2
Siyoka II	6	1	55	43	2	1
Resettlements	7	1	2	0	-	-
TOTAL	243	80	569	455	32	18

KEY: BH - Borehole
 Fnal - Functional
 Sch - Scheme

Ministry of Energy and Water Development Report, 2000:1

It is important to note that not all water points are perennial. This has necessitated the intervention of other actors like the DDF, the Integrated Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Programme (IRWSSP) under the Ministry of Water, Energy and Rural Development (MOWERD), and NGOs like the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), to assist local communities with the supply and maintenance

of boreholes. Communities are also trained through the Community Based Management Component (CBMC) of the IRWSSP to manage and maintain water points since 1994.

A survey was conducted in 1994 to determine water needs of the Beitbridge communities in each ward. Only Chipise and Masera had enough water points in the form of boreholes. The other wards needed several boreholes to be constructed in their villages. Table 5.5 shows the survey under district population, reliable water points and extra boreholes needed.

Table 5.5 Need for more water points per ward in Beitbridge District

Ward	Total population	Reliable water point	Needed boreholes
Chipise	6 470	31	-
Dite II	7 370	29	22
Dite I	9 400	37	13
Mtetengwe I	6 070	25	2
Mtetengwe II	9 311	60	2
Matete III	7 412	34	15
Masera	2 206	28	-
Maramani	3 787	20	4
Machuchuta	3 558	22	13
Dendele	5 278	28	13
Siyoka I	6 359	18	18
Siyoka II	6 290	30	5
TOTAL			107

District Development Fund Report, 1999:3

It is significant to note that these irrigation schemes have become a source of food supply and employment for communal people. It is important that BRDC diversifies these schemes and makes them available to a large section of its communal people. The table above shows that the district still needs more water points, hence the 42,4% satisfaction percentage. Dams also provide Beitbridge

town with water. There are 68 dams scattered throughout the district. These include the largest dam, the Zhove Dam along the Umzingwane River, which was completed in 1994. It is significant to note that some of these dams need rehabilitation in order to ensure a perennial supply of water. Community programmes are being initiated to try and involve communities in the building, maintenance and management of dams. One should also indicate that there are some dams that have irrigation schemes attached to them. This in fact, is one of the projects the BRDC wants to engage in throughout the district, that is, to have as many dams as possible attached to irrigation schemes. Besides each of the small-scale irrigation schemes of about 20 hectares each, there are large-scale schemes maintained by government. These are Chikwarakwara, Tongwe, Shashe, Jalukanga, Bili, and Kwalu. Below is a table showing the ward, the location of the irrigation scheme and the size of the plot being cultivated.

Table 5.6 Large Scale Irrigation Schemes in Beitbridge

Ward	Name of Scheme	Size in Hectares (ha)
Chipise	Chikwarakwara	65
Mtetengwe I	Tongwe	24
Maramani	Shashe	120
	Jalukanga	45
Machuchuta	Bili	23
Siyoka II	Kwalu	48

District Development Fund Report, 1996:2

The Provision of Roads

There are three types of roads that are found in the Beitbridge District. These are primary roads, secondary roads and tertiary roads. There are five (5) primary roads that is, Beitbridge - Bulawayo; Beitbridge - Harare; Lutumba - Chikwarakwara; Makakavhule - Hwali; Makado – Hwali. These are also known as national roads. The roads are maintained by the DDF. The secondary roads are

those that link other outlying areas of the district with primary roads for example, Lutumba - Tongwe, Makakavhule - Lutumba, and Makakavhule – Shashe. Council maintains these roads as Beitbridge communities commuting from one ward to the other use them.

Tertiary roads are those found in urban Beitbridge, farms and mining enterprises. These are the responsibility of the BRDC, individual farmers, and mining authorities respectively. In addition there is a railway service to Bulawayo, Harare and Johannesburg in South Africa. The roads are sufficient and reasonably well maintained. Fifty two point four percent (52,4%) of community respondents show satisfaction with the roads in Beitbridge. On observation, however, tertiary roads particularly, in urban Beitbridge need a great deal of attention. There are no tarred roads in the townships. As a result, and because of high traffic flow, the residential areas are always clouded with dust. This, in itself, is a health hazard and has led to several cases of dust tuberculosis in the district. However, statistics were not available to show the exact numbers of tuberculosis cases caused by dust from these roads.

The provision of transport services

Since 1980, buses owned by companies located outside the district serviced Beitbridge district. These companies obtained permits to service specific routes in the district. Most of them however, serviced routes along the primary roads on their way to urban centres in Bulawayo, Masvingo, Harare and Johannesburg. Only these companies serviced a few secondary roads to rural Beitbridge. Companies that used primary roads include the Shushine Bus Service, Chitanda Bus Service, Magwizi Bus Service, Dambanyika Bus Service, Inkosimayivuma and Country Boy Bus Service. However, most of these bus services are no longer servicing these routes. Either they have gone bankrupt or have just decided to ignore Beitbridge routes. This has led to a proliferation of minibus services with no fixed routes and times. This causes a lot of problems for

travelers in the district hence, the low level of community satisfaction (16,5%) with transport services.

The provision of recreation facilities

It has been observed that Beitbridge has a low level of recreation facilities. The only common recreation facilities are soccer and netball fields. This is what one can find in communal areas, resettlement areas and commercial farms. A similar situation exists in urban Beitbridge. There are no parks, halls for film shows or places for electronic games. Urban Beitbridge, apart from the usual soccer and netball fields, has one recreation club with two tennis courts only. Apparently, it appears that recreation facilities in Beitbridge are in the form of bottle stores. This is where people flock to after work. Consequently, all spare time is spent drinking rather than on something that can relax one's mind and prepare one for the next day. Because of this, people are not satisfied with the performance of the BRDC in making recreation facilities available. The community responses indicate an 18,2% rate of satisfaction with the provision of recreation facilities.

The provision of security

The council has a police force to ensure compliance with council laws. However, these are not enough to cover the whole district. In fact, they are expected to service the urban centre only. Even then, the force is overwhelmed by the amount of ground it has to cover. The only advantage is that people in Beitbridge are peace loving people and do not engage much in criminal activities. However, security is a problem nowadays, because a lot of people from Masvingo, Bulawayo and Harare flock to Beitbridge, in order to try and cross the border into South Africa legally or otherwise. Those who fail to do so, end up roaming the streets and selling cheap wares. Some of them find themselves resorting to criminal activities such as pilfering, mugging elderly people and engaging in the black market particularly, the sale of hard currency.

Two aspects of the study, that is, democratic participation and service provision have been analysed so far. The third aspect focuses on the performance of the BRDC's management in its effort to provide excellent services to the community and maintain the council as a viable institution for local development.

MANAGERIAL CAPACITY OF STAFF IN THE BRDC

Management in any setting is expected to drive organisation action. However, it is significant to indicate that the performance of public sector management, in general, has been disappointing over the years. Among others, rigidity, central control, lack of responsiveness and accountability, misuse of resources, ineffectiveness, an obsession with rules, lack of skills and a general ineptitude in the performance of its duties have characterized it. While most of this blame for non-performance is directly apportioned to these managers, it should be mentioned that as executive instruments of government institutions, political office bearers who wield control over these institutions and, invariably determine their modus operandi directly influence their action. The African experience tells us that most of these leaders themselves have not been accountable and responsive to the people they represent (Commonwealth Secretariat, 1996:6). One would say, is it not a case where the public manager copies from the master or doing what the master says should be done? Whatever the case, it is significant that once political office-bearers fail to perform their duties appropriately, it is highly unlikely that public managers will execute their duties well. In fact, for the political arm of government institutions to get away with what it wants, it is likely to recruit subservient managers who are not likely to question their decisions.

Whatever the case, one can indicate that that public management is crucial in the effective performance of duties by any government institution. Consequently, many governments have adopted initiatives to improve the capacity of their

management systems. These initiatives are seen as essential in dealing with the rising expectations of society, the need for regional and global competitiveness, the need to institute a responsive, accountable and committed system, which are capable of empowering communities and promoting democratic and good governance. Such a system should be one that assumes ownership of government institutions and has an inherent desire to see public institutions succeed in what they do, hence the call for entrepreneurial management. Entrepreneurial management is driven by public choice theory and consequently, the need for public managers to possess innovative, proactive and 'hands on' skills, which are seen as essential for catapulting their public organizations to the highest forms of institutional performance. Thus, recognition of these fundamentals has made it imperative for this study to gauge the performance of the BRDC management since it is a vital cog in the overall performance of this institution. The questions asked or issues investigated centred on the three management dimensions of Graham Allison's management typology. Allison indicates that management is expected to be pivotal in (a) strategic decision making; (b) managing internal components; and (c) dealing with external constituencies of an organization (Allison in Golembiewski and Gibson, 1985:456). Consequently, the following were checked to determine the BRDC management astuteness.

a) **The Planning regime**, that is, whether the BRDC:

- Has a mission statement;
- Has strategic plans;
- Departments formulate plans and what kind of plans they formulate;
and
- Coordinates the different plans into one coherent plan?

b) **The Project Regime**, checking:

- The nature of programme and project planning and implementation;
and

- The programme and project monitoring and evaluation regime.

c) Coordination and team building efforts

d) The nature of financial management, specifically:

- The production of timely and accurate budgets;
- Preparation of other financial statements;
- The presence of an asset inventory;
- The financial accountability of managers; and
- Revenue raising capacity.

e) General administration with specific reference to:

- The establishment of effective personnel management systems;
- Effective recruitment systems;
- Effective management and administration of meetings; and
- Record keeping.
- The management of transport.

Planning Action

Councilors and staff indicate that the BRDC has strategic plans (6 out of 8, which is 75%). Respondents, calculated as a percentage, enumerated the following strategic plans:

- (i) Housing provision strategy (87,5%);
- (ii) A general strategy for the BRDC as a whole (87,5%);
- (iii) Development plans (87,5%); and
- (iv) General sectional plans (75,0%).

A majority of respondents indicated that the prevalent plans are the short-term plans for operational purposes. However, most of these are ad hoc and their implementation depends on the whims of departmental heads. Obviously, this is not conducive for running council affairs. As such suggestions have to be made

in order to improve this situation. Although there was a general indication that planning takes place, these assertions were not accompanied by documentation to prove the point. No documents were produced, which stated the choices and priorities of the BRDC on a long-term (over 5 years) basis, or a medium-term (5 years) basis. One also expected to see planning documents indicating overall policy direction, resource availability and how different departments are integrated. This was not available. With this in mind, one can safely say that no meaningful planning is taking place. Although it is there, it is not comprehensive or taken seriously. In fact, one can safely say that the BRDC's planning process is weak and unsystematic. Policy prioritization is weak and needs to be reviewed. This means that most planning is, indeed, ad hoc and depends on departmental heads.

The programme/project regime

The BRDC has a unit or department for projects. This is separate from the main departmental structure of the council. This is because most projects are funded by NGOs. As a result, the sponsoring institutions insist on having separate structures that cannot be incapacitated by the council's bureaucracy. This is also done for the purpose of accountability. The top officers include the Project Coordinator, Assistant Coordinator, and Field Officers in charge of specific programmes. Although a degree is a requirement, the current project coordinator does not have one. The incumbent has a diploma and some certificates in local government and project management. Although most projects have an agricultural orientation, there is no one with agricultural qualifications on the project management team. The assistant project coordinator only has a certificate in accounting. This is the same with field officers. The Project Coordinator has more than ten years working experience. Field officers also have more than five years relevant work experience. Officers in the project unit are privileged in that they have a chance to attend skill based courses designed to enhance their efficiency and effectiveness in handling projects.

Most, if not all, projects are community based and need well-trained officers who can coordinate community efforts and even motivate communities so that they can have an interest in project work. Several projects are currently running in the district. The coordinating officer is expected to write project appraisal reports to indicate progress in each of the projects. Another form of evaluation is through monthly meetings where each officer is expected to give an account of the operations and progress of the project(s) he/she is supervising. However, the problem is that the records for these meetings are not well written and besides, they are not well kept. In fact, some of them get lost in the process.

One should, however, indicate that project management is well organized. Annual plans are produced. A review of progress is carried out and work-in-progress is clearly noted. Project priorities are clear and any project to be discontinued is discussed and reasons for discontinuity are provided. The project regime makes it easy to know which project exists and in what locality. There is evidence of project analysis, particularly economic and social analysis, assessment of project costs, operational and maintenance implications and the lessons and experiences of previous related projects, are also provided. Implementation plans are also available. These show:

- full quantities and costs;
- scheduling of activities;
- implementation responsibilities;
- the monitoring requirements; and
- how to deal with problems that may arise.

However, although these plans are evident, there are problems with BRDC's project regime, as most projects are not implemented according to plan. Secondly, it appears that there is no efficiency in implementation. An interview with the Council Chairperson indicated that resources are misused, project vehicles are diverted to destinations where there are no projects at all and there

is no close monitoring and supervision. Consequently, some projects have experienced a reduction in production due to management laxity, particularly in making prompt decisions. For example, when an internal audit indicates misuse of resources, no disciplinary action is taken with regard to members responsible for such waste. There is a tendency to adopt a “wait and see” attitude rather than deal with the officers responsible for this waste of resources. Sometimes council shops go without the necessary goods, not because there is no money but due to management negligence. This tends to erode the profitability of such a venture. Chickens are sometimes left without food and this affects their growth and at the end of the day, the price they can fetch from the market.

A review of project documents indicated that project evaluation reports do not succinctly indicate project efficiency, effectiveness and appropriateness. Hence, there is a tendency to have projects from which communities cannot easily derive benefits for example, shops, bottle stores and grinding mills. Regular quarterly and annual reports are produced, but although these reviews may record physical and financial progress, they tend to be overly descriptive and lack the analytical focus that is necessary for directing management effort towards improving project systems. This results in the lackadaisical manner in which management deals with these problems. In addition, although these reviews are carried out, it is clear that the lack of commitment by staff in project implementation leads to very little systematic monitoring. This is because there are no regular performance-monitoring meetings or reports. Any monitoring that is done is usually on an ad hoc basis, for example, when there are requests for progress reports by the CEO or NGOs. This shows a lack of commitment to project success by these incumbents.

Sometimes council initiates programmes to benefit communities, but fails to manage them in such a way that communities benefit. An interesting project is the Wildlife Management Programme that the BRDC has initiated and implemented to control wildlife and, at the same time, make sure that

communities where wildlife is found can benefit. The BRDC project reports indicate that five wards are expected to benefit from wildlife in Beitbridge. These are Maramani, Machuchuta and Masera in the west and Chipise and Dite in the east. Quotas are sold to Safari companies and 50% of the revenue is expected to accumulate to the council, while the other 50% should go to the communities directly. Estimated wildlife populations, quotas and costs of each animal are given below in US dollars.

Table 5.7 Wildlife in the Beitbridge District

Species	Estimated Population	District Quota	Revenue/ US\$	Total in US\$
Elephant	600	3	8 000	24 000
Buffalo	400	unlimited	1 500	unlimited
Lion	20	1	2 500	2 500
Leopard	100	5	2 000	10 000
Eland	500	5	650	3 250
Waterbuck	100	1	700	700
Nyala	300	3	1 250	3 750
Zebra	160	4	550	2 200
Kudu	500	5	550	2 750
Bushbuck	200	2	450	900
Impala	1 500	20	75	1 500

BRDC Wildlife Report, 1996:2

As can be seen from the figures, wildlife is intended to be a viable source of income for communities in these wards. However, since the programme started, communities have not received their share of wildlife proceeds. All the money goes to council coffers. This is rather unfair, as the same wild animals particularly, elephants ravage the community's crops in the fields and leopards and lions eat their livestock. This means that this programme is not beneficial to the community and thus, its relevance is questionable unless new implementation modalities are put in place.

Another important factor to consider in managerial capacity is financial management. Below is a presentation and analysis of data concerning the performance of the BRDC in managing council finances.

Financial management in the BRDC

As indicated earlier, the focus on financial management was on timely production of budgets, accurate budgeting, the production of annual accounts, the preparation of regular financial plans and cash flow forecasts, the production of accurate asset inventories and management accountability on financial matters. Other important issues included management capacity to collect revenue in a cost effective manner, its ability to come up with innovative ideas on new sources of revenue and capacity to manage its meager available resources.

It is evident from document reviews that budgets are prepared on time, on an annual basis. Council accounts are also audited. The reports of these audits are made available within three weeks of each audit. This is good. However, the main purpose of these audits is to ensure that the BRDC abides by the financial regulations of the GOZ rather than to encourage it to improve its effectiveness in managing council finances. Budgets, although prepared on time, have not been accurate. According to policy provisions, accuracy is expected to be within 20% of the budgeted estimates of actual income and expenditure. However, more often than not, the estimates are very far from these limits. An analysis of financial statements indicates that expenditure can be underestimated by as high as 38% and income can be under budget by up to 48%. This calls for improvement in financial decision making.

Statements for commercial enterprises are produced on an ad hoc basis and do not emphasize the need to improve performance. Financial plans and cash flow forecasts are also produced. Although these are produced quarterly, they have been significantly inaccurate and as such they are not used frequently to manage council finances. As far as asset inventories are concerned, document reviews

indicate that the BRDC does not have a coherent inventory system. It is even difficult to get documents on inventory control. This makes it difficult to have an accurate maintenance budget. In addition, unscrupulous councilors and managers can team up to 'milk' council of its resources since the majority of councilors would be ignorant of what is happening. Unfortunately, this situation has actually happened in the BRDC and has led to a lot of financial losses in the council.

While some councilors are conversant with financial issues, others are not. The most conversant are councilors with businesses, teachers and commercial farmers. The rest have a problem understanding these issues. As a result, the rather financially ignorant councilors find it difficult to make intelligible contributions on financial issues. They can be easily manipulated and mesmerized by accounting figures. This in itself reduces the level of financial accountability of council staff.

For council to have its revenue in place in line with its budget, it has to have an appropriate system for revenue collection. An interview with the Chief Executive Officer indicated that the BRDC finds it difficult to collect all its revenue, particularly the development levy, where collection may be as low as 30% of the budgeted income. Sometimes there are even problems in collecting business levies and house rentals. This tends to have a negative impact on council's efforts to meet the volume of activity for which it has budgeted. On the other hand, council has found it a bit easy to collect revenue from wildlife programmes, lease rents, vehicle taxes, business licenses, beer levies, and commercial enterprises income. On the whole, between 75% and 80% of the revenue is collected each year. This exacerbates over expenditure, as the expected income falls far short of what is needed in each financial year. Significant within the revenue collection regime particularly on the development levy, is the realization that communities are ordinarily poor. This limits their capacity to pay development levies. These communities, although willing to pay, are such that

their financial position does not allow them to pay. Thus, non-payment is not a deliberate attempt by communities to short change council, but a result of financial deficiencies facing these rural communities.

On the other hand, urban dwellers also have problems with paying what they owe to council. This includes failure to pay house rentals and water charges, hospital fees and school levies which are normally paid after a year or so. The problem is that the BRDC has no effective strategy to use when communities fail to pay levies. There is no concerted effort by the DC to follow these funds. If there are follow ups, they are not consistent and they normally die down before monies are actually collected. This is sometimes attributed to kickbacks being paid by defaulting members. Urban migration also makes it difficult to keep figures for those who are required to pay the development levy. In order to solve the problem, the BRDC normally relies on peace-meal procedures. Sometimes it tries to deny those who have not paid levies certain services like processing birth certificates and hawkers licenses. Communities and councilors furthering the conflict relationship between councilors and communities have opposed this. Similarly, there are no effective sanctions for non-payment of rent and business licenses. On the former, council usually disconnects water services from the residence in question. However, a house owner who decides to get water from neighbours can circumvent this situation and render it ineffective.

From the above, it was not surprising when an overwhelming 100% of community respondents indicated that the council has financial management problems. The problems indicated include general over expenditure, misuse of funds, failure to collect most of the revenues in a given year and a general lack of financial prudence. These problems have not been solved yet. Consequently, remedial action is needed in order to harness this anomalous situation. Respondents offered some suggestions of the courses of action that can be followed to alleviate the problem. These include:

- General cutbacks on programmes: This means that the council should avoid doing too much considering that its resources are limited.
- Strict internal auditing to notice any financial anomalies at an early stage: This should be done quarterly, at least.
- Strict financial controls by the Chief Executive Officer who in fact is the accounting officer of council.
- Control of RDC vehicles that are misused and which are causing more resource wastage in terms of skyrocketing maintenance and fuel expenditures.
- Putting in place programmes where communities can pay through labour, for example, they can be made to assist in building dams, schools, roads, and clinics without asking for pay.

Some of these are plausible and can lead to the collection of more revenue than is currently the case.

Another important aspect of management capacity focused upon was general administration. This involved making an assessment of personnel systems, record keeping systems, effective administration of meetings, the transport management system, the administration of stores and timely procurement of resources for council. Some interesting findings emerged. All eight (8) council and staff respondents indicated that there was no proper staff distribution among departments. Some departments are overstaffed while others are stretched, for example, the project and technical/engineering department. In some departments, there are inexperienced and unqualified people. Even the department head is not appropriately qualified hence, the inability to proffer appropriate management services to his/her department. Examples include the Finance Department, Engineering Department and Project Management Department and the Housing Section.

Apart from this anomaly, council and staff interviewees indicated that there are no proper recruitment systems. Although proper recruitment procedures are laid down clearly, they are not followed. There is a tendency to recruit those known to councilors, the Chief Executive Officer or senior managers. Once a vacancy has been identified, these people go to their home areas to recruit their kith and kin. They then lobby for these relatives to be employed. This means that the recruitment system promotes 'villagism' or 'homeboyism', for lack of a better adjective, at the expense of academic/professional qualification and competence. If such a person is recruited in a department that is not headed by his/her relative, the incumbent tends to undermine his/her supervisor. This is because the incumbent sees his/her supervisor as the 'only official' in council. Whatever happens in the department, he/she quickly goes to his/her relative to relay the information. This makes it difficult to enforce discipline. Besides, it creates pockets of allegiances, creates divisions, suspicions, fear and an environment not conducive to organisation excellence.

This sad story also indicates that there are no coherent management systems. Council staff interviewees indicated that although staff rules and regulations exist, these are seldom followed. Although absenteeism is rife, it is not investigated, and staff reprisals are rarely carried out, hence the prevalence of the misuse of resources. Job descriptions exist, but these are rather sketchy and are not revised. While a job description states one thing, it is common to find someone doing chores that are completely outside of this description. This leads to job overlap and a reduction in accountability.

Another important administrative imperative is about the management of meetings. Council holds several meetings for legislative and administrative purposes. This means that meeting agendas have to be produced and circulated in time. Those who are expected to contribute should be given sufficient time to research on issues that need their input. Once sessions begin, minutes are to be taken, transcribed, crosschecked and circulated to the appropriate persons. If it is

a legislative session, communities should be conscientised and given a chance to sit in if space allows. It is significant that these minutes are important as a source of information for council deliberations and courses of action that the body wishes to undertake. Findings indicate that the management of meetings is not appropriate. For example, notification of meetings is not done in a timely manner. Dates of meetings can be arbitrarily changed and, at short notice for that matter. Although meeting agendas are circulated, they usually do not provide details. They are just a list of items to be discussed, without specifying exactly what is to be discussed and decided upon. Sometimes sessions take too long because councilors are allowed to deliver long winded, repetitive and inconclusive speeches. This tends to reduce the quality of meetings. The same takes place during staff or department meetings. Although minutes are accurate, they usually do not point out succinctly and in procedural terms, resolutions on courses of action to be taken on a specific issue. This tends to create implementation delays. Sometimes minutes are late, and when they materialize, members are no longer enthusiastic about the issues of concern.

A good organization is one that has interdepartmental teams to discuss and coordinate the work of all such departments. The existence of teams is beneficial and assists the planning process in that it is easy for these teams to lay out operational parameters which complement each other, rather than operate in isolation. Interviews with senior council staff indicate that teams do not exist in the BRDC. Each department is independent of the other and produces action plans consistent with what it considers to be necessary for its survival and 'appropriate' execution of its duties. What exists in the BRDC is a management committee that is frequently referred to as a team. This committee acts as a coordinating agent for council. This is mandatory in all RDCs. As such, it should not be confused with the concept of teams, as it is only there to perform routine coordinating tasks. The crux of the matter is that each department holds its own planning and evaluation meetings and submits its reports to the Chief Executive

Officer. The Head of Department determines the agenda and pace of these meetings.

The other important matter was that of keeping records. It was observed that the BRDC is sufficiently computerised. Thus, records are kept through a computer system and manually, through filing. However, problems are still experienced, as accurate information is not properly harnessed by the two systems. More than anything else, these are problems of negligence on the part of management in not ensuring that their internal staff does not perform effectively all the time. It may also be attributed to failure to have well designed work systems procedures for staff to follow. This allows employees to adopt lackadaisical approaches to their work. This undermines organisation excellence. One of the reasons for laxity in information recording or keeping records is because there is a poor system of monitoring and evaluating work actions.

Another important aspect of general administration that was investigated concerned the management of council vehicles. This has a negative impact on these two important functions of management. Processes that are not monitored and evaluated are not likely to produce the needed results. In fact, how can management know whether work performance is efficient and effective, and targets are met if it ignores this vital component of its functions? This is not to say that there is no monitoring and evaluation but to indicate that these are not done properly. Monitoring and evaluation are not systematic and consistent. At best, they depend on a manager's whims. They do not seem to be an integral part of management excellence.

Transport management is vital for any institution, particularly the BRDC, which is vast and needs council officers to visit different wards to check on projects and check if communities are getting the services they require. The council does have a considerable fleet of vehicles, most of which are pick-ups or 'bakkies'. The Project Department has the most vehicles. There is a maintenance section,

which is responsible for servicing these cars and any council equipment. Vehicles are allocated to departments. There are two pool vehicles that can be used by any officer, as long as he/she needs it for council business and, accordingly obtains its release. On observation, these vehicles, together with those belonging to departments, have been misused. There is a prevalence of these vehicles being used by council staff and councilors for personal rather than council business. Consequently, this has had the effect of wearing down these vehicles, increasing their maintenance costs and lowering their life spans. Sometimes the condition of vehicles is so bad that council technicians are unable to repair and maintain them so that they have to be taken to privately owned garages, which charge exorbitant prices. This raises maintenance costs and has the effect of depleting the budget.

The last question asked was on cultivating mutual relationships between council staff themselves, council staff and councilors, and council staff and communities. Although this theme was handled above, it is relevant here as it concentrates on management efforts to create an amicable operational environment within council and with those outside council. It is an attempt to gauge the capacity of staff to handle councilors, communities and colleagues.

It was found that council committees do not always attend meetings called by council staff to discuss specific committee issues. Sometimes only the chairperson attends. This weakens the decision capacity of council management, since these committees are indeed part of the management team of council. Another important finding was that there is no amicable relationship between council staff and councilors. Council staff despises councilors while the latter view the former with suspicion. This is a universal phenomenon. There is no trust between the two. Councilors accuse council staff of embezzling council funds and failing to advise council properly on matters of policy. Thus, these councilors view council staff as incompetent hacks that are just a burden to council. Some of the lack of trust between the two stem from the fact that the recruitment of staff

is rather biased along tribal lines. Thus, Sotho councilors will tend to like Sotho managers. This is the same for those who speak Venda, Shangani and Shona. This situation erodes staff accountability to councilors. As a result, these managers tend to take advantage of the situation to misuse council resources.

It is significant to indicate that at face value, these distressful scenarios are not immediately evident. They are beyond the naked eye. A casual visitor would leave council thinking that all is well. Its only when one tries to unravel the mysteries within the inner cocoons of council operations that these problems can be detected.

There are also relational problems between council staff and communities. Communities also accuse council staff of embezzling council funds, misusing vehicles and having a domineering attitude. Communities also accuse council staff of being unfriendly with no humane qualities, and not supportive to the general public. It is always difficult they say, to talk to council officers. Even when one wants a birth certificate or to pay levy, the manner in which he/she is received and asked questions, reveals a master servant relationship where the council staff are the masters. Consequently, when council staff call for meetings in wards, communities are reluctant to attend, adding that it is not useful to do so as these members of staff are rude and can be insulting. In addition, these staff members come to meetings with decisions having been made. Thus, the whole process seizes to be consultative and rather becomes prescriptive where discussions or the flow of information is unidirectional with council staff being the providers of information and communities the recipients. These revelations indicate lack of proper service provision and an inability to promote democracy and good governance by council staff. These happenings do not augur well for the smooth running of council affairs. Indeed the situation needs some remedy. It is significant to note that once officials adopt attitudes that do not promote democratic values, the tendency is for such officials to exhibit four key biases that are likely to undermine the performance of an organisation. Brenton and

Wintrobe as cited in Dunleavy (1991:149) indicate that these four biases include the following:

- a) officials always distort information communicated upwards to superiors or politicians so as to present their own or their section's activity in the most favourable light.
- b) officials respond to decisions by their superiors or politicians in a discretionary way, implementing decisions consistent with their self-interest more speedily, and de-emphasizing those that are inconsistent.
- c) in choosing between broadly equivalent policy choices, officials always favour outcomes advantageous to their interests.
- d) officials 'search' behavior for new policy solutions is heavily influenced by self-interest.

This is the case with the BRDC and without doubt, such tendencies have minimized the performance levels of the council and its ability to offer excellent services to its communities. This means that the council still needs to put in place several practical measures to enhance community satisfaction in service provision.

Page 307 provides a summary of results indicating what communities think about the BRDC's management capacity with specific reference to the allocation of business and stands, handling of squatters, dealing with street vendors, handling council funds, initiating community projects, creating employment, distributing food relief, assisting communities with development issues and cultivating council/community relations. In simple terms, the results indicate a lack of satisfaction, which the BRDC has to address.

CONCLUSION

This chapter brings out interesting findings on the operations of the BRDC. Apart from the provisions of the District Councils Act of 1988, which guides its actions, the BRDC has an operational manual, which spells out the basic convictions of council and how it should conduct its business. Some of the convictions that councillors and management staff are expected to commit themselves to are as follows:

1. As councillors and officers, we are convinced that the democratic principles of governance, in which transparency and accountability are dominant, are paramount in serving the community.
2. As councillors and officers we believe that social development and social justice cannot be attained in the absence of peace, and the absence of respect for all human rights, obligations and freedoms.
3. As councillors and officers we commit ourselves to create an economic, political, social, cultural, religious and legal environment that will enable each person individually and corporately to achieve the basic corporate mission of development (BRDC Convictions, Mission Statement and Management profile document, 2000:1-2).

Although these are laudable guiding convictions, the practice does not show strict adherence to these assurances. It is evident that considerable effort is made to enhance democratic participation, provide excellent services and to manage council operations appropriately. However, there are shortcomings that need attention as indicated in the conclusions and recommendations in the next chapter.