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Constraints on Public Participation in Integrated Development Planning in Ditsobotla Municipality

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A research report submitted to the Faculty of Commerce, Law and Management, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Management in the field of Public and Development Management

November 2009

Declaration

I, David Van Rooyen declare that this research report is my own, unaided work. It is handed in for the first time in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Management (in the field of Public and Development Management) at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. I confirm that it has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in this or any other tertiary institution.

David D. Van Rooyen

30 November, 2009

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I am especially grateful to my family for their patience and emotional support.

Dedication

This research report is humbly dedicated to my parents, Esau (late) and Mmabotobane Van Rooyen, who throughout my life have shown confidence in my interest to study and shown support to the best of their ability.

Abbreviations

ANC	African National Congress the current ruling political party in South Africa
BLA	Black Local Authority
CDWs	Community Development Workers
DPLG	Department of Provincial and Local Government
IDP	Integrated Development Planning
FEPD	Forum for Effective Planning and Development
GTZ	German Agency for Technical Cooperation
MFMA	Municipal Finance Management Act
MTREF	Medium Term Expenditure Framework
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Planning
SALGA	South African Local Government Association

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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to establish constraints of public participation on matters of Integrated Development Plan in Ditsobotla Local Municipality. The Ditsobotla Local Municipality was formed after the Provincial and National Elections held in December 2000. The amalgamation of the towns Lichtenburg, Coligny, Biesiesvlei and Itsoseng led to the newly demarcated area of Ditsobotla. Lichtenburg as the head office is centrally situated within the North West Province. The municipal area covers about 6465.19 square kilometres with an estimated population of 148 832. Like any other municipalities the municipality is obliged by the constitution to develop mechanisms that will encourage and promote public participation on matters of government. The IDP approach is supposed to be based on the principle of inclusive and representative consultation and/ or participation of all residents, communities and stakeholders within a municipality, as well as representatives from other spheres of government, sector specialist, and other resource persons. Due to the size, diversity and spread of Ditsobotla municipality the participation process was supposed to have been guided by the following basic principles:

- Structured and institutionalised participation
- Creation of more opportunities for participation
- Provision of adequate time for broader consultation and
- Participation and consultation during all phases of IDP process.

Pertinent literature was reviewed. In this study the data was obtained from answers to questionnaires and probing interviews that followed questionnaires. Analysis clearly showed that by confining public participation to only one form of participation mechanism, by consulting and allowing participation to happen on the eve of IDP and budget approval, as well as the non-functionality of IDP representative forum the Ditsobotla municipality failed to adhere to the cited participation principles. There are constraints inhibiting public participation in Ditsobotla IDP process. The report concludes by providing suggestions for correcting identified challenges and thus,

enabling the public to participate on matters of integrated development planning processes.

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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

By this document the researcher intends to present a proposal for a case study aimed at understanding what are the challenges and constraints facing Ditsobotla Local Municipality in utilization of the provisions of the Integrated Development Planning (IDP) to realize the notion of public participation.

Integrated Development Planning (IDP) is one of the key tools used by the South African government to tackle its new developmental role. IDP is a process through which municipalities prepare a strategic development plan, for a five year period. The IDP is the "principle strategic planning instrument, which guides and informs all planning, and development, and all decisions with regard to planning, management and development in the municipality. According to Municipal Systems Act all municipalities have to undertake an IDP process to produce integrated development plans. The IDP is a legislated plan that supersedes all other plans that guide local development (Draft Framework Guidelines for Discussion and Review-Strengthening Sustainability in the Integrated Development Planning Process 2001)

In contrast to the role planning has played in the past, IDP is a function of municipal management and is part of an integrated system of planning and delivery. The IDP process is meant to arrive at decisions on issues such as municipal budgets, land management, promotion of local economic development and institutional transformation in a consultative, systematic and strategic manner. It therefore not only inform municipal management on key issues, but also guide the activities of other spheres of government, corporate service providers, NGO's and the private sector who wish to operate within the municipal area. (Integrated development planning-local pathway to sustainable development in South Africa 2002)

Participatory democracy is a political system that allows for greater involvement of the citizenry in the decision making processes of government. Ditsobotla local

municipality adopted the Integrated Development Planning (IDP) as their core planning and management tool which was also expected to serve as a vehicle for public participation on matters of governance.

According to legislative provision each municipality must "develop mechanisms to consult the community and community organizations in performing its functions and exercising its powers" (Municipal Structures Act, No 117 of 1998) IDP is one of the fundamental tools for municipalities to comply with this legal requirement.

The study tries to comprehend the constraints of public participation processes as provided for in the IDP of Ditsobotla local municipality. In order to contextualize the study the next section will briefly focus on the history of public participation during apartheid era and changing decision making environment in South Africa before giving details of the case study.

1.1 Background to the study

Globally, public participation has moved centre-stage in the broad field of social development, and is now more or less endorsed as the default model for addressing and balancing injustices at the local level. Some theorists deem it an essential feature of any development initiative (Raniga & Simpson, 2002: 28). Those views hold sway in South Africa, too, both within and beyond the state. Policy making, budget formulation, legislative and planning processes in South Africa have gone through a number of dramatic changes since the beginning of the 1990s. This process includes a significant devolution of responsibilities to municipalities. A key feature of these changes is the role assigned to the public, which is expected to participate actively in local governance and development on a variety of fronts- including the Integrated Development Planning (IDP) process.

As a methodology IDP includes the following processes:

- A consultative process which requires meaningful involvement of a wide range of different stakeholders in various stages of the analysis and the decision making process. Getting everybody on board when and where they need to be on board.

- A strategic process which requires a focused approach, and a systematic search for the most appropriate and effective solution, keeping in mind given resources, and overall policy guidelines and principles.

- An integrated approach which requires thinking and acting holistically across the conventional sectoral boundaries.

- Implementation-oriented planning, which requires becoming quite specific in terms of quantities, quality, responsibilities, location, time and costs to make sure delivery will take place (Principles of Integrated Development Planning and Assessment of the Process 2001-2002)

This approach also seeks to draw on traditions of popular participation fostered during the anti-apartheid struggle. The unbanning of the liberation movements in February 1990 ushered in an era of negotiation and bargaining for social contract and institutional choices which previously eluded South Africa. After many years of resistance against apartheid the nature of politics swung towards a negotiated settlement.

The resulting political environment led to the introduction of a variety of new processes and practices as a consequence of a radically different political culture from that which existed previously. (Houston and Liebenberg, 2001:1)

1.1.1 Public Participation during Apartheid Era

In the inception years of the apartheid rule, the goal of segregation was relentlessly made to be the order of the day which in all instances was dogmatically pursued. The

ruling party then believed that any constitutional development should have as a foundation, the recognition of group rights, either on racial or ethnical grounds. According to Riekert (1983: 144) the following are some of the failed attempts by the apartheid regime to entrench the "group basis" as the "point of departure":

- The 1977 failed proposal by P.W Botha led whites only government of a system of three parliaments classified as whites, coloureds and Indians. Each parliament was to have its own executive and own spheres of jurisdiction.

- The Schlebusch commission's proposal of the formation of a "President's Council" for whites, coloureds and Indians. This structure was to be twinned with a separate council for blacks.

- The 1984 establishment of a parliament of three chambers: a House of Assembly with white members; a House of Representatives with coloured members; and a House of Delegates with Indian members.

- The establishment of the so called "independent" homelands as a provision meant to accommodate blacks in the constitutional processes.

- The separate administration of local government affairs of whites, coloured, Indians and blacks.

- The Native Urban Areas Act of 1923 which provided for the establishment of white advisory boards for blacks, were not meant to be bona fide representative bodies.

From the foregoing it is clear that the apartheid regime laid a wrong foundation in as far as the principle of a democratic and inclusive government is concern. This unfortunate scenario form the basis on which local government was eventually perceived by South Africans, a legacy that still impact negatively on endeavours to promote public participation on matters of governance.

According to Totemeyer, "Research has indicated that many black South Africans think of government and administration, at all levels, mainly in terms of control and punishment. They judge government to be forbidding rather than permitting, discriminating rather than protective and suppressing rather than assisting and helpful" (Totemeyer, 1984: 102).The previous system was extremely unjust, premised on upholding the standards of living of whites South Africans at the expense of the development of Blacks. Such treatment inevitably created attitudes that led to most if not all blacks doubting the credibility and legitimacy as well as the legality and effective functionality of local government structures. Amongst other things, this resulted in the unequal public participation opportunities as well as varying development of the environments of white and black people.

Amongst other things Geldenhuys argues that the successful manipulation of voter's perceptions during apartheid era created a belief in the government's ability to "know best". As a result voters were increasingly persuaded of the seriousness of a security 'onslaught" against the country. The view gained currency that a particular style of government was relevant and this justified secretive and unaccountable government in the eyes of many voters (Geldenhuys, 1982: 75).

It clearly indicates that, aside from the racially based exclusivity of access, the apartheid- era government was also characterized by bureaucracy-dominated, top-down decision making. Public participation on matters of government was totally non-existent, instead the previous system placed emphasis on an elaborate set of controls, aimed at administering people instead of promoting their development and that of their surroundings.

1.1.2 The Collapse of Apartheid Local Government System

The ethnic, racial and autocratic nature of the apartheid local government institution made them natural targets for the majority of South Africans who were determined to destroy apartheid. The resistance was across the racial lines and was vividly

illustrated by the black's resistance to the enforcement of the Black Local Authority Act of 1982. Blacks rejected the BLAs because in their opinion they were not established within the correct political context. They argued that these structures were created and imposed from above by the white only regime of the time and as blacks they were never consulted. They further submitted that the white only central government was unrepresentative and took decisions unilaterally and uses the BLA's as its extension to implement such decisions.

Majority of young and the educated elite largely rejected BLA's because they didn't provide the public with an opportunity to take part in matters of local government, instead they were used as extensions of the policy of separate development and corollaries to the homeland system (Heymans and Totemeyer, 1988: 100). The fact that BLAs were linked to Bantustan structures: whereas the former were meant to represent local constituencies, national political rights could only be expressed through the Bantustan states, didn't augur well with the notion of public participation and blacks found it difficult and unacceptable to identify with the Bantustan states.

As a response to this rigorous opposition from communities, the apartheid regime introduced the Regional Services Council Act which according to Riekert was meant to represent local constituencies direct and also deal with severe fiscal deficiencies faced by BLA's , conversely by the end of 1984 the writing was on the wall for the Riekert reforms: the Orderly Movement and Settlement of Black Persons Bill had been shelved in the face of wide spread opposition from political and business organizations. (Riekert, 1983: 156).

Rural-urban influx gathered momentum as urban squatter populations grow, the BLA's were in ruins; township resistance has escalated since the Vaal uprising in September and was drawing ever wider layers of the black population into oppositional organizations; urban living conditions were deteriorating rather than improving as the fiscal crises deepen (Heymans and Totemeyer, 1988: 190).

The mass resistance to the apartheid BLA's and other attempted reforms at local level heralded the demise of the racially based municipalities and ushered in the birth of non-racial municipalities that served as a foundation for the envisaged participatory democracy.

Clearly stated, the Apartheid Regime failed to accommodate public participation as an integral facet of its governance system. Their attempt to counter claims of non-inclusion by introducing reforms were also vigorously resisted by the masses of our people who were in reality shedding light to a very simple basic truth: the majority are not demanding solutions, but rather the right to participate in the formulation of solutions.

1.1.3 The Restructuring of Public Participation Processes in Local Government

With the demise of the evil system of apartheid the ANC led government became the legitimate government in 1994. It was immediately faced with the daunting task of changing its role as a liberation movement to that of government in power. One of the key focus areas of the ANC as government was of ensuring the realization of what is commonly referred to as "participatory democracy". During the liberation struggle the ANC led the masses of the South African people fight a political system that didn't embrace the principle of people's participation in matters of governance.

The above scenario led to the clarion call by the liberation forces for "government of the people by the people" which was also used to rally support for the fight against apartheid. This call emerged as a daunting challenge for the ANC as the current ruling party because it must now practically demonstrate to communities that the strategies implemented during the apartheid era to deny people opportunity to participate in government decision making processes would not be applicable anymore, but what was called for is an era of being responsible citizens in a legitimate democracy.

Responsible citizenship would include voluntary participation in activities in which members of the public, directly or indirectly, share in the processes of governance through democratic institutions and platforms. The ANC started showing its commitment to a people centred government in 1994 by adopting the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) which was meant to serve as an actual programme of government when ANC assumes the responsibilities of government after the first democratic elections. Central to the six RDP principles was the principle of 'a people-driven process'(The Reconstruction and Development Progamme, 1994: 04).

According to the RDP document development is not about the delivery of goods to a passive citizenry. It is about active involvement and growing empowerment (Reconstruction and Development Programme, a Policy Framework, 1994). This puts emphasis on the need to have people taking part in matters of governance. To turn things around, the South African ANC led government has since committed itself to instituting wide-ranging participatory processes in the different spheres and institutions of governance in the country and for the purpose of this work, the researcher intends focusing on participatory processes in the workings of local government.

The Post-Apartheid government has shown a clear commitment to the realization of a form of public participation which is genuinely empowering, and not token consultation or manipulation. This involves the promulgation of pro-participatory pieces of legislation and establishment of various public participation forums. The commitment of government on participatory democracy was officially entrenched by the adoption of the Republic of South Africa's constitution (Act No. 108 of 1996:84).

The constitution is considered to be laying the foundations for a democratic and open society in which government is based on the will of the people and every citizen has a right to impart or receive information or ideas. The constitution inter alia mandates local government to render democratic and accountable government for local

communities and to promote and encourage the participation of communities and various stakeholders in matters of local government.

In terms of the local sphere of government the Constitution states:

- Section 152(1) (e). Municipalities are obliged to encourage the involvement of communities and community organizations in local government.
- Section 152. The objects of local government (are) to encourage the involvement of communities and community organizations in matters of local government
- Section 195 (e). in terms of the basic values and principles governing public administration- people's needs must be responded to, and the public must be encouraged to participate in policy making.

As a cornerstone of democracy in South Africa, the Bill of Rights prescribes that everyone is equal before the law and has the right to equal protection and benefit of the law (Section 9(1)). Sub-section 2 of the same section further states that, equality includes the full and equal enjoyment of all rights and freedoms, which implies that the South African constitution doesn't provide for any form of discrimination against anyone.

Section 16 (1b) emphasizes that everyone has a right to freedom of expression, which includes freedom to receive or impart information or ideas and embraces the notion of equal participation by all South Africans on issues of governance.

Chapter 10 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa advocates on the need to have a public administration that promotes the following principles:

- public participation on policy matters;
- transparency and
- representativeness of the South African People.

The foregoing constitutional prescriptions enjoin Municipal Councils to involve the broader civil society and community formations in formulation of municipal budgets, planning and other developmental priorities. The amendment of the Local Government Transition Act, 1993 in 1996 also shed some light on certain issues of public participation, amongst other things this ranged from the participation of the public on matters of seating in council meetings where Auditor General Report on council is considered to commenting on investments made by council (Local Government Transition Act, 1996:10).

The introduction of the White Paper on Local Government in 1998 placed issues of public participation at the helm of the democratization processes, according to its provisions inter alia 'municipalities should develop mechanisms to ensure citizen participation in policy initiation and formulation, and the monitoring and evaluation of decision-making and implementation'(White Paper on Local Government,1998:20). According to the White Paper municipalities require active participation by citizens at four levels:

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

The introduction of an approach that seeks to align planning of municipalities with those of provincial and national government as well as plans of agencies from these spheres was the sole intention of the introduction of the Integrated Development Planning approach in 1996. Gaventa and Valderama posit that public participation is generally seen as a crucial element of IDP's, not least because of the expectation that it strengthens their legitimacy, and helps ensure that their content and strategic direction are as appropriate as possible (Gaventa and Valderrama, 1999). A central role is starkly reserved for public participation in the IDP- so much so that IDP's in theory, should reflect, in some detail, the needs and priorities identified by the public.

The promotion of a system of government with strong community involvement was made evident by the enactment of the Municipal Structures Act in 1998. According to this act municipalities are required to develop mechanisms to consult with communities and community organizations. They are also expected to annually review the needs of communities along with the municipal strategies devised to meet those needs.

Chapter 4 (section 4) of the Municipal Structures Act enjoins municipalities to set up ward committees as one mechanism to serve as representative structures through which communities can participate in local governance and development activities, including planning and budgeting. Ward committees are expected to hold regular public report back meetings so as to ensure that their respective constituencies are not left behind on matters of local governance.

To reinforce the legislative environment on public participation a philosophy of service delivery in which citizens are placed at the centre of public service planning and operations was developed and called *Batho Pele* Principles, *Batho Pele* is a Southern Sotho translation for 'People First'(Batho Pele Principles, 1998: 05). Eight *Batho Pele* principles were developed to serve as acceptable policy and legislative framework regarding service delivery in the public service. These principles are aligned with the Constitutional ideals of promoting and maintaining high standards of

professional ethics; providing service impartially, fairly, equitably and without bias; utilizing resources efficiently and effectively; responding to people's needs; the citizens are encouraged to participate in policy-making; and rendering an accountable, transparent, and development- oriented public administration.

As an initiative applicable to all spheres of government, *Batho Pele* emerged as one of the critical and key departures from an Apartheid dispensation which exclude all South Africans from government machinery to one that seeks to include all citizens on matters of governance.

As earlier indicated in this work, municipalities are further obliged by the Municipal Systems Act to provide for the need to do planning in and integrated and consultative manner. This Act places emphasis on the importance of building capacity and allocating resources for community participation. It further provides for various mechanisms and procedures for taking into account submissions of communities and community groupings on matters of municipalities. This is to a larger extend done through the preparation, implementation and review of Integrated Development Plans (IDP's) as well as the establishment, implementation and review of the municipality's performance management system as prescribed in Chapter 6 of the systems act.

The Municipal Systems act blew life into the concept of integrated development planning process, through which IDP's are developed. Central to this planning system is how resources are allocated, especially the budgets of local municipalities. According to facilitator's guide for Community-Based Planning (CBP) 'unless poor people can influence these budgets, the ability to promote sustainable livelihoods for poor people will be limited, as is the impact of local democracy'(Facilitator's Guide for Community Based Planning, 2005:05). Community Based Planning emerged as another tool for public participation.

This initiative was piloted in Mangaung Local Municipality during 2001-2. CBP promoted and encouraged the active involvement of the community, especially poor people, so as to improve the quality of plans and services, extended community

control over development and empower communities so that they take action and become less dependent. Community Based Planning is postulated on the following principles:

- Poor people are included-nothing for the poor without the poor
- Plans, and planning process, must be realistic and practical
- Planning must be linked to legitimate structures in a given community
- Planning should include implementation, monitoring, evaluation and annual review
- The plan must be people focused and empowering
- The emphasis should be to build on strengths and opportunities rather than focus on problems
- Plans must be holistic and cover all sectors
- Planning must promote mutual accountability between communities and municipal council
- There must be commitment by councillors and officials to the whole process.

To add on the legislative provisions governing local government in general and public participation in particular, government enacted the Municipal Finance Management Act of 2003 Act no 56. Throughout its contents the MFMA stresses on the need of local communities to participate on financial matters of local government.

In order to address the challenge of lack of information about government services as well as the absence of effective communication between communities and their elected representatives, government introduced a handbook on Community Development Workers (CDW's). Amongst other things CDW's are expected to

promote the principle of community participation and disseminate government and other information to community members in a timely and equitable manner (Handbook on Community Development Workers in South Africa, 2003:10).

Without any shred of doubt, it evidently clear that the post apartheid administration was committed to governance democratization process which placed public participation at the centre of almost everything, as to how this pro-participatory legislations and mechanisms assisted in the realization of active participation by the public on matters of governance is a subject for the current discourse.

Implicit in the highlighting of public participation in local development planning are the assumptions that a strong ethos of grassroots activism and organization endures, that a rich and representative-enough range of organizations exist to channel popular aspirations and energies efficiently, and that the public (or "the community") can easily be enlisted as partners in the development process (Pieterse, 2002). As an attempt to test the accuracy of such assumptions, the study is intended to assist in a better understanding of public participation environment in South Africa in general and local government in particular, and also its strengths and weaknesses.

As such the study may also help in solving problems identified within the broader municipal IDP processes. The findings from this work can also be useful to the Ditsobotla local municipality, its community and all stakeholders trying to find a lasting solution to the municipality public participation related problems. The researcher further hopes that this study will contribute to a social discourse that will help to enrich our new democracy.

1.1.4 The Role of Other Spheres of Government in the IDP Processes

According to the Constitution of South Africa, section 40 (1), government is comprised of three spheres, that is: national, provincial and local spheres of government which are distinctive, interdependent and interrelated. This establishes a

degree of autonomy between the spheres of government, providing for each sphere to have both executive and legislative powers over issues set out in Schedule 4 and 5 of the constitution. The fact that the constitution doesn't clearly stipulate the degree of this autonomy creates a possibility of a contradictory planning process. In its effort to get all spheres working together in a more focused and integrated way, the Intergovernmental Relations Framework Act has been passed and is meant to give guidance on the conduct of intergovernmental relations (Intergovernmental Relations Framework Act, 13 of 2005: 02). In the spirit of this Act National and Provincial spheres are expected amongst others to ensure that the following are realized by the local sphere:

- Provision of general IDP guidance
- Participation by sector departments in the development of Local IDP's
- Ensuring linkages between local IDP's and both provincial growth and development plans and national spatial development framework
- Help in training local government and their constituencies on issues of public participation
- Issuing of legislation and policies in support of the IDP's
- Provision of financial assistance

The foregoing clearly gives an indication of the importance of other spheres in realizing a meaningful and realistic IDP process, as well as the importance of IDP as a planning tool for all spheres of government, hence the essence of public participation in this process. It is the IDP that should guide how the provincial and national sector departments allocate resources at local government level.

At the same time, it is crucial for municipalities and local stakeholders to consider the sector departments' policies and programmes when developing own policies and

strategies. It is also in the interest of the sector departments to participate in the IDP process to ensure that its programmes and those of municipalities are aligned.

1.1.5 Ditsobotla Current Situation

To comply with the provision of the Municipal Systems Act, calling for each local authority to adopt a single, inclusive plan for the development of the municipality, the Ditsobotla local municipality has performed the following activities:

- Tabled the draft IDP and the draft 2007/2008 MTREF Budget and supporting documentation in the municipal council by the Mayor.
- Convened public hearings with all communities on the 2007/2008 MTREF Budget and IDP.
- Convened a municipal council meeting to debate and discuss the fact of findings from the public hearings.
- Tabled the final IDP and 2007/2008 MTREF budget and supporting documentation in the municipal council.

All these activities were done within the legislatively prescribed timeframe (Ditsobotla Local Municipality - Budget 2007-2008: 05). The municipality was expected to managed the public hearings by issuing a brief document, that would contain information on all issues such as proposed tariff increases, the implementation of projects that are categorized as backlogs and new infrastructure per ward and district, the performance of the municipality with regard to service delivery on municipal services, future projects during the MTEF budget period, the municipal debt position of the municipality.

In terms of section 22 of the MFMA, the municipality placed the final draft of the 2007/2008 MTEF budget, other supporting documentation and the IDP on its website immediately after the municipal council had adopted them by a formal resolution. This was intended to create the public knowledge environment and stimulate

discussion and debate by all stakeholders. In its endeavour to ensure optimal results during the public hearings the municipality has also placed the publication of the budget, IDP and other supporting documentation in the local print. The municipality's effort in ensuring maximum publication was undertaken to invite all members of local communities to submit their representations with regard to the aforementioned documentation. The municipal council processes accommodated reviewing of the IDP/Budget throughout the financial year (Ditsobotla Local Municipality – Budget, 2007-2008: 5-6).

It is apparent from the above cited that there was a clear attempt by the Ditsobotla Municipality to accommodate its residents on matters of governance through IDP public participation provisions, as to why there still an outcry about the inclusiveness, transparency and effectiveness of this process is a subject of this study**.**

1.2 The Problem Statement

As earlier shown in the study, Ditsobotla Municipality has rightfully developed its IDP document as means of ensuring that the community and community groupings it serves participate in the decision making processes of the municipality and the protests and unrest about lack of consultation and participation still occur. This is a major concern as approaches like IDP are meant to ensure that consultation and participation is realized.

The study focuses on the challenges faced by Ditsobotla IDP as a participatory democracy tool. The problem to be addressed is the evaluation of public participation constraints experienced in the IDP and their contribution to the realization of IDP objectives of the municipality.

1.3 The Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study is to understand how Ditsobotla municipality applies its IDP, and what constraints exist in terms of ensuring that this process is used as a public participation tool for democratic local government. Municipalities need to be responsive to the needs of residents as consumers and end –users of municipal services and this in turn requires a great deal of interaction between municipal councils and their communities. This will subsequently lead to a situation that will ensure that all stakeholders are at least informed about the expectations of the community and the ability of the municipality to deliver services. The IDP is regarded as suitable tool to be used for civil society participation in matters of local government. In order to understand the application and challenges of the IDP the Ditsobotla local municipality IDP is used as a case study.

1.4 The Research Questions

The research seeks to comprehend the application and challenges of public participation mechanisms in Ditsobotla Local Municipality's IDP process. For the purpose of this research study, two main questions will be thoroughly investigated:

- How effective and efficient is public participation mechanisms in the IDP process?
- What are the (perceived) public participation constraints in the IDP process?

1.5 Importance of the Research

This study becomes more important when one appreciates and acknowledges factors such as the highly publicized protests, both peaceful and violent taking place in various municipalities in the country and the high level of misunderstanding about local government performance. It is of paramount importance for municipalities to

create a conducive environment for the participation of the community in the affairs of the municipality. One of the best measures to create this enabling environment is the establishment of well structured interaction channels between municipalities and communities.

Given the present public participation challenges faced by the Ditsobotla municipality, the study attempts to present a situation that will enable the community groups to fully utilize the opportunities provided by the IDP as a public participation tool. It may also be of assistance to further research and publications. The participation of all stakeholders in the IDP process has the potential of giving effect to the notion of participatory democracy and reduction of the current spate of protests.

1.6 Limitations of the Study

Due to time constraints and capacity linked challenges, this study was not intended to cover all public participation aspects, some of the aspects that might be presented in this study as sub-issues could be build out into research topics on their own. It should therefore be understood that in this research not all the sub-issues were fully dealt with, but that some were partially dealt with in order to give an overview of the research question.

Challenges in respect of interviews encountered. Participants felt that this exercise was not going to help them to turn things around as a result tended to not fully cooperate with the researcher.

1.7 Structure of the Report

This research report is comprised of six chapters and a bibliography. As the first chapter is already covered, a brief outline of the remaining five chapters follows.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter will deal with the review of appropriate literature that relates to the research question as groundwork for the research. This literature will provide some theoretical insights and a framework for research.

Chapter 3: Research Question and Methodology

The research methodology and various ways of data collection used in the study are considered. In this chapter the appropriateness of the usage of research methodology and data collection procedures are also explained.

Chapter 4: Research Findings

This chapter will present research findings established through a case study. This will be views and perceptions from community groups and municipal officials from Ditsobotla municipality around public participation opportunities within the IDP process and the effectiveness of IDP as a participatory democracy tool.

Relevant documentation on the status of IDP processes in Ditsobotla municipality is used to shed some light on issues and substantiate the argument presented.

Chapter 5: Data Analysis

Data presented in Chapter 4 is dissected in order to present the results of the study. The outcomes of the analysis will be used to lay foundation for recommendations.

Chapter 6: Conclusions and Recommendations

This chapter gives a summary of the findings as presented as the results of the data analysis and provides conclusion as well as recommendations that are expected to pave way for effective implementation of IDP as a public participation tool, and also serve as the researcher's contribution on the ensuing discourse on public participation.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Although there has been an acceptable perception that municipal councils IDP's stimulate and encourage participatory democracy practices that inter alia allow for broader public participation in matters of local government, the current challenge remains how to fully realize the utilization of IDP as a public participation tool.

The social development theory places emphasis on the need for municipalities to engage in consultation with civil society in meeting their needs and objectives. Accountability and democracy are inseparable (Heymans and Totemeyer, 1988:19). Furthermore, the decentralization of power to locally elected and thus accountable representatives in the essence of democracy (Heymans and Totemeyer, 1988:5) this analysis implies that the decision making process for local government, in particular, should always be kept as close as possible to the people (Kendall 1991:13-14).

According to the Local Government Transition Act (No. 97 of 1996) municipalities are required to produce IDP's that are to "serve as the framework for mobilizing and prioritizing the use of development resources, and aligning internal capacity and systems with strategic development objectives" (Bauer, 1998:9).Local Government legislation imposes an obligation on local authorities to consult with their residents, communities and other in the performance of their tasks.

This has been supplemented by the policy framework on local government set out in the White Paper on Local Government; it stipulates that municipal councillors should promote the involvement of citizens and community groups in the design and delivery of municipal programmes. Local Government structures must develop strategies and mechanisms (including, but not limited to, participative planning) to continuously engage with citizens, business and community groups.

The municipalities must engage in consultation with civil society in meeting their objectives. The Structures Act (No 117 of 1998) stipulates that each municipality is required to develop mechanisms to consult the community and community organizations in performing its functions and exercising its powers (Section 19 (3)).

The various requirements that different pieces of national legislation impose on local government structures are drawn together by the provisions of the Municipal Systems Act (No 32 of 2000).The act makes provision for public participation in local government (Chapter 3). This chapter obliges local authorities to develop a culture of municipal governance that shifts from strict representative government to participatory governance, and must for this purpose encourage and establish conditions for all stakeholders to participate in matters of local government.

The act further makes a provision for comprehending municipal planning into a coherent and a single, easy to follow five year planning cycle subject to annual monitoring and review. Municipal Councils are expected to adopt IDP's annually as their core planning and management instrument. The above cited legislation provisions require the Ditsobotla Local Municipality to promote and encourage public involvement in developmental local government. The IDP focuses on the forums allowing community and community groups to make submissions on matters of governance as well as participating in monitoring and evaluation activities.

Five bodies of literature dealing mainly with IDP, defining public participation, benefits of public participation, common limitations of public participation and potential solutions for successful public participation processes. In the review that follows, the literature is used in support of the arguments that have been made. Legislatively municipalities are obliged to ensure that local government accords the public an opportunity to participate on matters of governance, the success of the public participation processes to a larger extent depends on the effective implementation and utilization of the IDP provisions as prescribed by legislation. This research study is relevant in a way that it attempts to understand how, given

these policy imperatives, the municipal IDP encourages and promotes public participation in matters of local government.

2.2 Understanding IDP

The Forum for Effective Planning and Development (FEPD) defined Integrated Development Planning as: "A participatory approach to integrate economic, sectoral, spatial, social, institutional, environmental and fiscal strategies in order to support the optimal allocation of scarce resources between sectors and geographical areas and across the population in a manner that provides sustainable growth, equity and the empowerment of the poor and the marginalised." (Forum for Effective Planning and Development, 1995)This definition singles out IDP as the principal strategic planning and development instrument which is expected to guide and inform all planning, budgeting, management and decision-making processes in each and every municipality.

According to the Municipal Systems act section 25 (1) each municipal council must, within a prescribed period after the start of its elected term, adopt a single, inclusive and strategic plan for the development of the municipality. At the centre of the IDP is the determination of the needs and priorities of a municipality's stakeholders and community which should be addressed towards improving the quality of life in respect of those concerned. Community and stakeholder participation in determining those needs is therefore at the heart of the IDP process.

The Systems act clearly indicates that a municipality must mobilize the involvement and commitment of its stakeholders by establishing effective participatory process. To live up to the notion of public participation, it is further expected of the municipality to ensure participation by previously disadvantaged groups. The Act places emphasis on the importance of building capacity and allocating resources for community participation. It further provides for various mechanisms and procedures

for taking into account the differences in communities. Methods for helping realize this inter alia include IDP forums, ward committee, public meetings, "road shows", budget consultation, engaging with community members through stakeholder meetings, forums and individual consultations.

IDP phases are closely linked to the municipal budgeting cycle. It is a five year plan, reviewed annually, leading to the amendment of the plan should the need arise. According to the integrated development planning guide issued to municipalities by the Department of Provincial and Local Government, this process should be a very interactive and participatory one which requires the involvement of a number of stakeholders at all prescribed stages. IDP has created the legal, fiscal and policy environment for community-driven development, but the opportunities for such forms of development are not being seized (Gwagwa and Everatt, 2005).

To what extent have the community of Ditsobotla been shaping the IDP, and what are the popular participatory constraints are the areas to be examine by this study in more details.

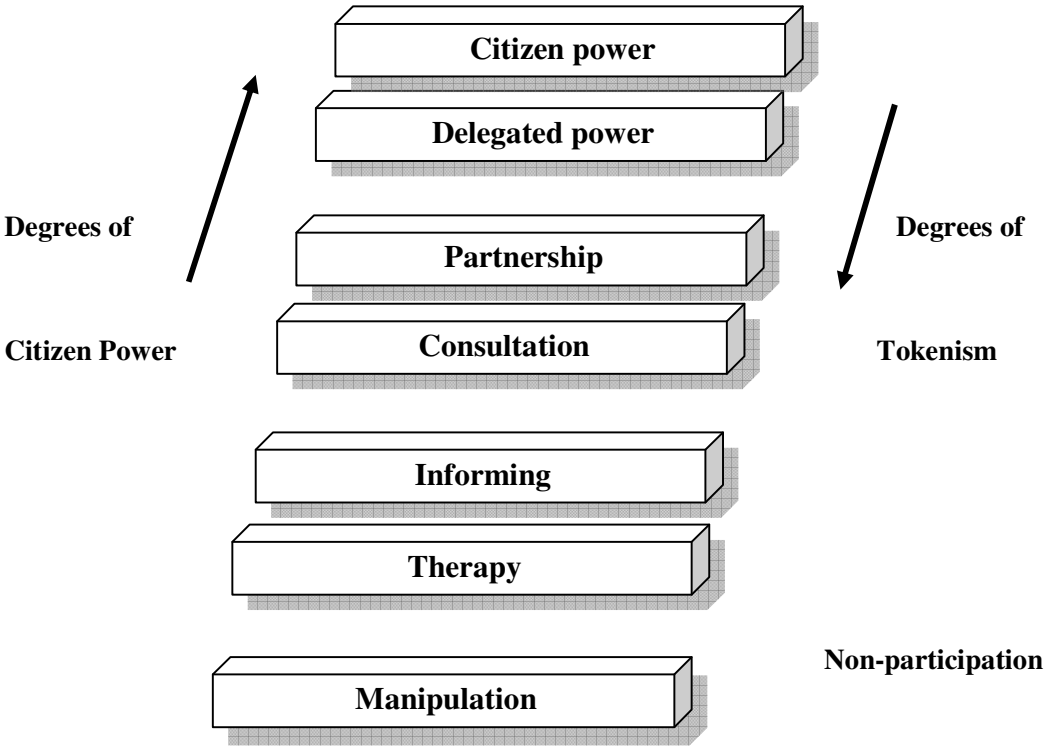
2.3 Defining Public Participation

Development processes are undertaken under varying socio-political conditions, as a result public participation is usually defined according to practical experiences in a given situation. According to Friedman, public participation can refer to any number of activities or practices- from making submissions to a policy process, to helping craft, implement and monitor initiatives (Friedman, 2006). Or, from a slightly different angel, it can describe the "ownership of a development process, bottom-up planning, grassroots planning, public involvement, participatory planning, democratic planning, and collaborative planning, and more (Putu, 2005:8).

To complement the discourse, Harrison posit that participation be seen as part of a "process around which social groupings can organize to present their interests in a conducive environment" (Harrison, 2003:27-28).

The discourse is further enriched by Arnstein method of categorising participation in a form called "Ladder of Participation" (Arnstein, 1969). This method is shown in Figure 1 and expatiated on Box 1. This method, explicitly differentiate the degree of involvement or participation of the public from total manipulation to total citizen control.

Figure 1



Box 1

Ladder of Participation

Citizen Control – People participate by taking initiatives independently of external institutions for resources and technical advice they need, but retain control over how resources are used. An example of citizen control is self-government – the community makes the decisions.

Delegated Power – In this regards government ultimately runs the decision-making process and funds it, but communities are given some delegated powers to make decisions. People participate in joint analysis, development of action plans and formation or strengthening of local institutions.

The process involves interdisciplinary methodologies that seek multiple perspectives and make use of systemic and structured learning processes. As groups take over local decisions and determine how available resources are used, so they have a stake in maintaining structures or practices.

Partnership – An example is joint projects – community has considerable influence on the decision making process but the government still takes responsibility for the decision. Participation is seen by external agencies as a means to achieve project goals, especially reduced costs. People may participate by forming groups t o meet predetermined objectives related to the project.

Such involvement tends to arise only after eternal agents have already made major decisions. Participation may also be for material *incentives* where people participate by contributing resources, for example, labour in return for food, cash or other material incentives.

Placation – The community are asked for advice and token changes are made.

Consultation – Community is given information about the project or issue and asked to comment – e.g. through meetings or survey – but their view may not be reflected in the final decision, or feedback given as to why not. External agents define problems and information gathering processes, and so control analysis. Such a consultative process does not concede any share in decision-making.

Informing – Community is told about the project – e.g. through meetings or leaflets; community may be asked, but their opinion may not be taken into account.

Therapy – People participate by being told what has been decided or has already happened. It involves unilateral announcements by an administration or project management without any listening to people's responses.

Manipulation – Participation is simply a pretence, e.g. with "people's" representatives on official boards but who are not elected and have no power, or where the community is selectively told about a project according to an existing agenda. The community's input is only used to further this existing agenda.

The above postulations clearly substantiate the fact that public participation can be defined in various ways by different people, and for a variety of reasons. For the purpose of this work, public participation is regarded as an open, accountable process through which individuals and groups within selected communities can exchange views and influence decision-making, a democratic process of engaging people, deciding, planning, and playing an active part in the development and operation of services that affect their lives.

2.4 Benefits of Participatory Democracy in Local Government.

There are various benefits that can be realized as a result of practicing participatory democracy in local government and to a larger extend these benefits seem axiomatic. Robert Chambers argues that the benefits are so attractive that, once institutions encounter them, participation would spread through them like a "benign virus" (Robert Chambers, 1997). According to some social development theory scholars practicing participatory democracy can have far reaching benefits for democracy , "civil society participation in local government enhances the potential for local authorities to meet the expectations of the inhabitants of a municipal area and in addition to enhancing understanding of needs, civil society participation enhances understanding of the impact of policy and programmes, and promotes the development of priorities" (Houston, 2001:217).

Houston argues that interaction with the public enables the local authority to discover what citizens expect their local government, areas where the implementation of policy and programmes are inadequate, and thereby promote the development of priorities. In contemporary society it is crucial for local authorities to take well informed decisions which are made possible by the relevant information at hand.

The availability of relevant information empowers governments, administrators and managers to decide and to take action. (Du Toit, van Der Walt, Bayat and Cheminais, 1998: 89).In any democratic system, accountability is made effective by public input in areas where public representatives fail to comply with the mandate of providing good, effective government. Consequently, "the citizen has a surveillance role to play to ensure that the public functionaries comply with the mandate that was granted to them (Hilliard and Kemp, 1999:43)."

Public participation in local government activities is essential for long term democratic stability. Public participation promotes legitimacy and public support for the policies and programmes of local authorities, and thereby ensures democratic stability" (Houston, 2001:217).

In some instances public participation is positioned as heart that makes the local government "tick". Mathekga and Buccus argue that for the local government system to live up to its potential, it depends not only on availability of skilled personnel and financial resources but also on the role played by communities in the structures (Mathekga and Buccus, 2006:103). For local authorities to succeed they must be able to deal with its stakeholders. These are the people who are outside the organization but whose actions can have a huge influence on it. If they turn against the municipality, they can create big problems, if they support the municipality, they can create huge benefits. According to Hilliard and Kemp (1999) the preceding era of local governance in South Africa serves as a good example of an illegitimate system, it was characterized by a type of authoritarian paternalism, and this led to overwhelming rejection by the African population in particular.

Public participation ensures that citizens feel they have ownership of local government programmes. According to Kweit and Kweit (1977) public participation is an affirmative activity that can contribute to the enhancement of the Aristotelian concept of a political person "who can only be fulfilled as a human by taking part in the actions of the polity" In their opinion public participation helps in the effort to overcome a sense of powerlessness among the community and community groups.

Burkey (1993) perceives public participation as "a basic human need" "through which people grow and mature as human beings" by becoming "more aware of their own situation, of the socio-economic reality around them, of their real problems, the causes of these problems and what measures they themselves can take to begin changing their situation" he argues that an effective public participation programme would encourage community development by building civil capacity and spreading skills gained through participation. Participatory development is an end and a means. It is an end because participation builds skills and enhances people's capacity for action and for enriching their lives. It is a means because participation contributes to better development policies and projects- Sandstrom (cited in the World Bank discussion papers-Participatory Development and the World Bank, 1992).

These observations are further supported by evidence as by Plummer (1999), who cites that public participation provides opportunities for participants to learn about their basic rights, to develop negotiation and organizational skills, to mobilize community resources and to network with other deprived groups. The nurturing of existing skills and the development of new skills through public participation can have a widespread and long-term impact on poverty and on the relationships between the poor and government.

Thus participation is said to enhance self-reliance, constitute an "essential part of human growth" (Nampila, 2005:56), and have the potential to "reduce poverty and social injustice" (Taylor and Fransman, 2004: 1). Blair hails public participation as process that ensures better allocation of resources at local level and helping in the reduction of poverty levels (Blair, 2000:89).

The foregoing submissions lead to an overall conclusion that, public participation inter alia is expected to enhance local democracy and play a pivotal role in the success of local development initiatives.

2.5 Common Limitations of Public Participation

A variety of cultural and socio-economic draw backs and factors can determine how, why and in what role community and community groups become involved in public participation processes. According to Rubenstein (1995:106) failure to examine these limitations will lead to the notion of civil society participation becoming "something of a sacred cow." Given the huge number of these factors the researcher will attempt to focus on what is term "key factors" by many social development scholars.

Juster and Johnson (1991:87) perceive citizens and community groups competence as an important factor for effective participation in planning of issues that would influence them directly, such as the improvement of the community socially, economically and otherwise.

A significant limitation for civil society's participation in developmental local government is "the technical nature of contemporary government" (Pauw, 1999:148). Rubenstein (1995:78) argues that this has a number of consequences, such as the capacity disparity between government officials and representatives of community and community groups, which creates unequal power relations. This may lead to community and community groups having a limited impact on the participatory processes, with these processes driven largely by local authorities or, in some instances, by technical consultants.

This observation is further shared by Plummer (1999:127) citing that the scope of knowledge and skills already available within the community impacts upon community and individual participation. Political awareness, technical know-how and management skills may also affect the stage and form of participation. He argues that the availability of specialist trade skills- financial or accountancy skills, for instance, will promote more willingness and offer broader opportunities for participation on matters of governance .

The usual cry on insufficient or no information provided is one of the key drawbacks having adverse effect on participatory democracy. Meaningful participation in local government matters requires that the public be informed about participation and government issues, problems and strategies- hence the need for transparent government (Clapper, 1993:102).

Brynard (1989:67) argues that there is a tendency among public officials to discourage openness in public administration, and this has the greatest potential of impeding the realization of a cross-pollination of information between citizens and government, an important factor in improving citizen participation generally, since a poorly informed public can't sustain high levels of genuine citizen participation, nor will it be interested in examining public administration activities closely (Clapper, 1993:102)

Hanekom (1987:10) presents that the different parties involved in any public participation process in an effort to influence public management are not always equally competent, articulate and well organized. The above reality is made possible by the fact that, most local communities are extremely diverse in character. This scenario is as a result of what Strinati terms "atomization" meaning that a mass society consists of people who can only relate to each other like atoms in a physical or chemical compound. He argues that central to this process of atomization is the decline of mediating social organizations which results from industrialisation and urbanization. These are organizations, like the village, the family and the church which once provided a sense of psychological identity, social conduct and moral certainty for the individual.

In contrast, their modern counterparts like the city or science do not work in the same way; they cannot foster identity, define conduct and fashion morality (Strinati,: 1995:23). As a result of these trends most urbanized and industrialized communities are not well organized. Some communities have elaborate networks of strong organizations, with regular participation by a mass membership in their activities, broad similarities of interest and accountable leadership. (Houston, 2001:8).This diversity gives rise to one critical question. Are the organizations and individuals participating in municipal IDP's representative of all the relevant community and community groups in the municipal area?

Participation opportunities are usually presented by mechanisms that facilitate the development of participatory processes. In relation to matters of local government, the primary mechanisms of public participation can be disaggregated into municipal teams, community organizations and non-governmental organizations. Due to the diverse interests of stakeholders it is crucial for mechanisms considered to provide for such diversity.

Rubenstein (1995) points out that "the dominant mechanisms developed in an attempt to enable development planners to get to grips with the views of civil society at a

local level still reflect a perception of civil society interests as somewhat monolithic". Thus, local authorities tend to bring groups together in "single forum type structure", which are charged with achieving consensus around development plans. Rubenstein argues that, this arrangement poses serious a question on the appropriateness of structures and mechanisms for civil society participation in the IDP processes.

A particular critical drawback of citizen participation activities are the time and cost that can accrue (Kweit and Kweit, 1981:483-484). According to them the benefits of any citizen participation activity (such as improvements in society in terms of better roads, better transportation or superior housing) may often only be realized in the long term, while the associated cost (such as meeting attendance and personal contacts, in comparison with the forfeiting of personal pleasure and profits) must be sustained immediately.

This may lead the citizen to reject public participation, not on the basis of its failure to achieve the desired goals, but because the costs incurred in the achievement of the desired goal may be considered too excessive. In essence, it highlights the importance of the opportunity cost effect on issues of social development.

It is therefore very important that all the above cited limitations are addressed in order to have successful IDP that can serve as an effective public participation tool. Huston (2001:95) perceives the fact that participation becomes an end in itself, instead of a means to achieve certain objectives, as one of the most serious limitations of public participation processes.

He argues that most municipalities judge the success of a public participation programme by simply looking at the widespread public participation in the programme. By contrast, it should be argued that a participation programme can only be judged to be effective if the participants, through their participation, "have some influence over any resultant decisions" (Sabula and Reddy, 1996: 5)

2.6 Potential Solutions for Successful Public Participation Processes

As much as the cited benefits seem to be in abundance, most studies have shown low realization thereof by local governments. According to Johnson, due to the pitfalls and hurdles, it is no surprise to discover that, internationally, strong public participation in local development and governance is hardly a norm (Johnson, 2001:88).

A handful of countries serve as example of success: Brazil (Porto Alegre and parts of Rio Grande do Sul state), India (Kerala and West Bengal). In Port Alegre, for example, citizens achieved decision-making powers over public resources through a participatory budget process, which was subsequently replicated in other parts of the country due to tangible benefits of engagements.

By following this approach, virtually all decisions regarding the types of services and upgrading that would occur in different parts of the city are made through that process, which forms part of a wider participatory governing system (Navarro, 1998:56). Studies have shown that, discourse and analysis of the success of public participation can't be conducted outside the frame of the political and political-economic contexts and conditions in which the participatory initiatives are undertaken.

In India the decentralisation was an important factor, the devolution of certain powers, responsibilities and resources created the political space in which marginalized groups could mobilize and pursue pro-poor policies (Hickey and Mohan, 2003:64). Decentralization was driven as part of the broader political project of democratization of state power in pursuit of social justice. The participatory development experiments formed part of wider political projects that sought to challenge the existing power relations- as opposed to circumvent them in a bid to achieve technical efficient, ameliorating "delivery".

The extent to which a community or community groupings are organized to take advantage of public participation is of importance to the realization of a participatory governance system. In both Brazil and India situation, the role of the leftist political parties with "genuine commitment to social equality" and productive links with strong civil society networks was decisive (Mohan and Stokke, 2005:9). According to Heller, a defining feature of both democratic decentralization in India and participatory budgeting in Brazil has been that of "a political project in which an organized political force- and specifically non-Leninist left-of-centre political parties that have strong social movement characteristics- champions decentralization.

In his opinion, he cited certain features as cardinal in the two cases, that is:

> They lay great emphasis on inclusiveness and accountability; they used extensive outreach and created institutional arrangements to enable widespread and intensive public participation; they took special steps to impart skills and build capacity (both among citizens and officials); and they entailed and enabled sustained popular involvement in the prioritizing, planning and monitoring of public projects and investment (Heller, 2001:12).

Learning from the past failures and successes creates capability to prevent failure and promote success through the development of learning curve effects, and thus provide a long term solutions to public participation and IDP processes. Rosener (1978:56) observes that, "the accumulated knowledge about 'successful' and 'unsuccessful' participation remains fragmented and unreliable".

He further argues that this statement holds true for citizen participation in South Africa in particular, since citizen participation activities have traditionally been fraught with racial prejudice and have been subjected to extreme constraints in case of the majority of South Africa's citizens. Access to data and appropriate follow up on them is crucial for successful implementation of IDP.

According to the White Paper in Local Government (1998), in order to produce and develop a credible IDP, the following main steps must be followed:

- An assessment of the current social, economic and environmental reality in the municipal area- the current reality.
- A determination of community needs through close consultation.
- Developing a vision for development in the area.
- An audit of available resources, skills and capacities.
- A prioritization of these needs in order of urgency and long-term importance.
- The development of integrated frameworks and goals within specific time frames.
- The implementation of projects and programmes to achieve key goals.
- The use of monitoring tools to measure impact and performance.

The White Paper (1998: 33) stipulates that "municipal councillors should promote the involvement of citizens and community groups in the design and delivery of municipal programmes." Local politicians are central in the process of public participation. As elected members they can provide an important link to communities, underpin participatory efforts or drive participatory processes (Plummer, 1999:127). Plummer (1999:79) cites evidence from countries such as India and Sri Lanka, where democratic representation is now assured for local government, and clearly shows that political as well as administrative arms of the municipality are primary actors in the development of sustainable participatory processes.

Political commitment, Councillors involvement and Councillor Skills have a significant impact on the capacity of the municipality to implement participatory systems, therefore, in order to establish this commitment and skills, significant levels of awareness and capacity building are necessary. According to Houston (2001:96) the White Paper (1998) provides for public involvement in developmental local government through the following measures:

- Forums initiated from within or outside local government to allow organized formations to initiate policies and/or influence policy formulation, as well as participate in monitoring and evaluation activities;
- Structured stakeholder involvement in certain council committees;
- Participatory budgeting initiatives aimed at linking community priorities to capital investment programmes;
- Focus group participatory action research to generate detailed information about a wide range of specific needs and values; and
- Support for the organizational development of associations, in particular in poor marginalized areas where the skills and resources for participation may be less developed than in better-off areas.

2.7 Conclusion

An attempt is made by the researcher to draw a relation between IDP as a tool meant to promote and encourage public participation on matters of local government and various developmental scholars' interpretation of public participation, its perceived benefits, common limitations and potential solutions to identified limitations. Bodies of literature were used in support of the arguments. In the same chapter, provisions for public participation during IDP processes were outlined**.**

In defining what public participation is, the writer has demonstrated that public participation is central and crucial to any successful democratization process. What has clearly emerged from the above literature is that in order to enhance the usage of IDP's as an effective and efficient public participation tool, there is a need to identify and comprehend the limitations and draw-backs that lead to failure of IDP processes, learn from them and act upon those by way of giving support. The need to create credible and functional IDP processes to promote participatory democracy at local government level is a crucial remedy for sustainable public participation programme.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter caters for an elaboration on the methodology that have been employed to obtain the presented findings and the approaches applied to collect data

3.2 Research Methodology

The research design is a qualitative case study because it allowed the researcher to shed some light on questions about the complex nature of IDP processes when used as a tool to enhance public participation on matters of Ditsobotla Local Municipality. The qualitative research is typically used to answer questions about the complex nature of phenomena (Leedy and Ormord, 2001:101).

The study was informed by the socio-economic development theory which advocates that government authorities should "promote greater development of individuals and group support, institute measures perceived as beneficial to communities" (Jacobs and Cleveland, 1999:11) with an aim to assist Ditsobotla municipality to curb on IDP processes failures and promote the notion of participatory democracy.

The qualitative method allows one to "gather large amount of information and get more details on the case being examined" (Neuman, 1991:331). It is flexible and is concerned with a process of understanding, generating new concepts out of given information than with testing the existing ones (Neuman, 1997:211).This method allowed the researcher to gain extensive insights and clarity from various stakeholders as opposed to testing particular hypothesis on issues that need further explanations.

Analysis of public participation constraints was drawn from all areas and most sectors of the jurisdiction of Ditsobotla Municipality. This was done by collecting data from three separate sources

- Semi-structured questionnaires were sent to all respondents
- In-depth interviews were held with various respondents

Relevant and updated documentation from National, Provincial, District and Local spheres of government was studied and analysed. Relevant referenced literature and both published, and unpublished research was used to illuminate on points argued through this work. The World Wide Web was surfed for further elaboration. Appropriate and updated documentation on IDP and legislation from National, Provincial spheres of government, as well as from Ditsobotla Local Municipality was sourced, studied and analysed.

. Politicians in the form of ward councillors, municipal officials, ward committees; sectors leadership and CDW's involved in the IDP process answered these questionnaires and were interviewed to gain detailed information on how the IDP enhances public participation on matters of Ditsobotla Municipality.

Questionnaire and interviews were administered, the researcher arranged for questionnaires to be handed in during interview sessions and this provided an opportunity for further probing questions. Interviews were conducted at various places within the jurisdiction of the municipality to allow for respondents convenience. Purposive sampling was used, because it accorded the researcher an opportunity to choose people relevant for the purpose of this study and enabled the researcher to select individuals who gave the most relevant information useful for the study. Within all the five areas of Ditsobotla, purposive sampling of 4 people per area was done. This included a ward councillor, CDW, Ward committee member and any sector representative in that area. In order to obtain broader strategic perspective, the following key role-players were also considered: Executive Mayor, Speaker, Provincial IDP unit head, Municipal Manager. The foregoing approach allowed for diverse perspective on this issue.

Much information emerged from the Manager IDP, and Head of Public Participation Unit, as they are more operational and directly involved. Through the study, one was able to understand constraints of Municipal IDP as one of the key public participation` tools used by the South Africa's government to tackle its challenges as a developmental state.

3.3 Data Collection

For the sake of comprehensive data gathering, the researcher has opted to utilize both primary and secondary data collection methods.

3.3.1 Primary Data Collection

In the researcher's effort to ensure that the description and understanding of the IDP process is done from the participant's point of view, the primary data (views and perceptions) were collated from the respondents directly involved in the process. This was done through the questionnaire and interviews designed to obtain the input of both the political and administrative role players and community groups participating in the IDP process of the Ditsobotla municipality.

A structured questionnaire was used as a fore-runner which was followed up with in depth interviews of key actors. The identified participants assisted in ensuring that they serve as data sources "who can best shed light" (Leedy and Ormord, 2001:102) to resolve the research problem of how IDP serves as a tool for participatory democracy.

The collection of data informed the researcher to understand participation opportunities provided by the IDP process and the effectiveness of IDP as a participatory democracy tool. The primary data appear to be more valid and "undistorted" as one gets to hear from the respondents themselves.

In order to address some of necessary interpersonal considerations, all respondents were first informed of the nature of the study and also requested to participate in the study. . The Executive Mayor and the Speaker gave a broad overview of the mechanisms of public participation in the IDP process and the inherent problems of public participation.

. The Municipal Manager shed light on broader administrative issues in as far as public participation and IDP is concern. The Manager IDP was, primarily because he heads the section that is administering IDP issues. The Head of public participation was interviewed as the leader of a section that interfaces with stakeholders at all times. Five ward councillor and five ward committee members from five different areas of the municipal jurisdiction were interviewed. They were drawn from town (former white only) and township (former black only).

To cover both informal and formal areas in the township, the researcher interviewed one ward committee member from each area. The interviews expanded the data gathering process and also allowed for gathering of information that was not available through a questionnaire. With such interviews, follow-up questions were made.

3.3.2 Secondary Data Collection

Secondary sources of data such as municipal documents were used to try and understand the kind of public participation opportunities as provided for by Ditsobotla municipality's IDP. Local newspapers and information available on the internet were collected and integrated with the primary data obtained to get a sense of how IDP serves as participatory democracy tool in the said municipality. The researcher used some of the available literature to "demonstrate the underlying assumptions behind the general research questions" (Marshall & Ross man, 1989, 105) this l allowed him to test the research findings with available assumptions.

The researcher took cognizance of the various viewpoints opposing IDP as one of the instruments used by the South African government to enhance the notion of participatory democracy. Attention was given to these viewpoints both from an academic perspective and those of the marginalized engaged in a continues struggle to gain full access to matters of local government, in order to gain an understanding of the motives and arguments currently opposing public participation in matters of local government. The documentary sources was not e taken at a face value, but was objectively compared with primary data to add value.

Although secondary data is needed, the researcher was cautious and kept in mind some "exaggerated claims" (Leedy & Ormord, 2001:97) that might be baseless and without proof to avoid unwarranted conclusions.

3.4 Conclusion

The researcher has made a good attempt to present the methodology and data collection approaches employed. Relevant sources were utilized to gain an overview. In conclusion, the chapter gives a highlight on how primary and secondary data complement each other on such a study.

CHAPTER 4
RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

The study aimed at understanding the challenges and constraints facing Ditsobotla Local Municipality in utilization of the legislated provisions of the Integrated Development Planning to realize the notion of public participation. In line with this aim several variables were identified as contributing to the enhanced public participation in the integrated development planning, these include the following:

i. Cultural and socio-economic draw backs and factors,
ii. Technicalities in contemporary government,
iii. Scope of knowledge and skills within the community,
iv. Lack of information on participation and government issues, problems and strategies,
v. Varying competency of participating parties,
vi. Lack of variety on participation mechanisms,
vii. Time and cost factor and
viii. Treating participation as an end in itself instead of a means to achieve certain objectives.

The results presented emanate from interviews with local government practitioners (these are specifically the mayor, speaker, councillors, municipal manager, manager IDP, Community Liaison Officer and ward committee members of Ditsobotla Local Municipality).

To enrich the research the following additional role players were involved; North West provincial office of IDP, Ngaka Modiri Molema district office of IDP, traditional leader and Community Development Workers.

The emerging issues have been grouped into seven categories of implementation processes of IDP; IDP consultation forums; Citizens participatory levels; Residents and Community groups competence levels; Councillors and municipal officials competence levels; Resources for public participation processes and Role of other stakeholders. Specific details are outlined in sections 4.2 to 4.4.

4.2 Overview of Public Participation in Ditsobotla IDP

This section discusses the status of public participation and existing support mechanism in Ditsobotla IDP.

4.2.1 Status of public participation in Ditsobotla IDP

The interviews revealed that Ditsobotla local municipality has no structured participation processes. This is evidenced by the fact that there are no clear rules and procedures outlining how public participation is conducted in the municipality IDP processes. To a larger extent public participation is confined to IDP and Budget review process usually done on the eve of adoption for the sake of compliance and formality. This betrays lack of conducive environment needed to encourage and promote public participation.

The broader community interests are treated as somewhat monolithic, the municipality tend to bring community and different community groups together in "single forum type structure" as a result they fail to provide for diversity for different participation styles and cultures.

The Human resource capacity of the municipality to effectively deal with issues of public participation leaves a lot to be desired. Lack of financial resources generally impact negatively on the realisation of public participation and it cut across all avenues of public participation.

Current performance management systems do not accord the community a clear provision for participating in it, making it almost impossible to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the IDP as the strategic plan of the municipality. Furthermore, awareness on the municipal policies and programmes is dismally lacking.

The fact that IDP was introduced just recently as part of the broader transitional interventions indicates that most municipality are still grappling with how best can they get it working for all stakeholders, Ditsobotla is not an exception.

4.2.2 Existing Support

Ditsobotla like any other municipality in South Africa is entitled to various support mechanisms in as far as IDP and public participation is concern. Ngaka Modiri Molema as district in which Ditsobotla is situated is expected to ensure that Ditsobotla as a poorly capacitated municipality is supported accordingly and its IDP is aligned to the district. North West provincial department of local government and traditional affairs through its coordinated training programme must ensure that Ditsobotla municipality is properly skilled to tackle issues of IDP and public participation. The provincial department is further expected to ensure the following:

- Financial support,
- Compliance with general IDP guidelines,
- Alignment of Ditsobotla IDP with sector department's policies, programmes and budgets and
- Assessment of the overall effectiveness of Ditsobotla IDP.

The IDP guide pack developed jointly by department of provincial and local government (DPLG) and the German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ) serves as a fully fledged support system. This is in consideration of the fact that it provides for a tested planning and IDP implementation management approach meant to be put in practice by Ditsobotla local municipality.

The South African Local Government Association (SALGA) has initiated accredited academic programmes focusing on IDP with reputable institutions of higher learning. University such as North West, Witwatersrand, Pretoria and Free State are currently running focused programmes in IDP.

4.3 Main Research Themes

This section discusses the main research themes emanating from the interviews conducted.

4.3.1 Accountability for IDP Processes

To ascertain whether IDP processes were conducted in an accountable and transparent manner, the researcher asked respondent to give their view about how accountable and transparent is the IDP processes in Ditsobotla Municipality. Responses varied largely according to each member's responsibility in the council. Only two of the respondents strongly agreed that by holding community meetings provide an ample opportunity to ensure that the community is taken on board about IDP issues.

The community meetings were in the form of mayoral *izimbizo*, ward general meetings by ward councillors and ward committee meetings. In addition these respondents believed that the community meetings ensured increased accountability by the municipality.

Nine respondents argued that the current approach does not cater fully for aspects of transparency and accountability. In their opinion, the meetings were only effective in the first phase of IDP process when the municipality needs are solicited from some members of the community through ward meetings and mayoral *Izimbiso*. Regarding the modalities of development of plans and strategies, this category of respondents

were of the opinion that it is mainly driven by administration internally. They further cited that IDP linked projects implementation, monitoring and evaluation is only confined to areas where such projects are being executed. This denied the broader constituency the opportunity to participate. It is their submission that this area needs some improvement.

The time allocated to this important process emerged as a key area of concern to seven respondents who felt that IDP processes are usually done on the eve of their approval. The seven respondents did not agree that they are transparent and accountable. They strongly feel that they are merely done to meet the legislative requirement at the expense of appropriate public participation.

Two respondents strongly disagreed that IDP processes are handled in a transparent and accountable manner, they argue that what is happening is not the prescribed way of doing things as a result the whole processes are nullified and void. In their opinion the current public participation mechanisms indicate that the municipality is not encouraging intense public participation as expected in the legislation and relevant regulations. They further argue that non attendance of majority of Ditsobotla people is attributed to lack of diversified public participation initiatives, leading to the few taking decisions for many.

4.3.2 Consultative Fora

The issue of IDP consultation fora was viewed broadly as an attempt to entrench the existing consultation platforms used by the municipality. This was with an understanding that it would ensure the community and all stakeholders are engaged on matters of IDP. Twelve (12) respondents argued that the municipality does not hold IDP Representative Forum frequently as required.

They further alleged that the forum is nonexistent because its last meeting was held in 2007/8 financial year. Six of the respondents submitted that the IDP Forum is

convened sometimes. The remaining two respondents felt strongly that the IDP Forum is regularly organised, they however pointed out that non attendance by various stakeholders was a problem.

Serving as a liaison between the ward constituency and the municipality, Ward Committees become a central public participation mechanism. Fourteen of the respondents argued that these committees do not meet regularly as prescribed by legislation. This was attributed to lack of financial resources required to travel in most of these vast spread wards. Four respondents agreed that the ward committees met regularly as expected. However, they admitted that the major problem was lack of feedback on issues presented by these committees to the council through the Speaker's office. Two of the respondents felt strongly that these committees were not functional and members could not articulate on IDP processes.

In addition to the normal ward committees meeting, it is expected that general or public meetings are convened to accord the ward based and broader Ditsobotla constituency and opportunity to participate on matters of local IDP. Fifteen respondents argued that these meetings were not regularly and consistently held, instead they are held when there is a need to comply with legislation or a major outcry from the community about a certain IDP related project. Only three respondents agreed that these meetings were regularly, they however cited low attendance and disruptive tendencies displayed during such meetings by some disgruntled community members.

Two respondents indicated that the public meetings were not held at all and whenever attempted, such gatherings were often hijacked or disrupted by unruly elements within the community. Keeping community informed of the municipal policies and programmes is of importance to a successful public participation. Road shows on specific policies and programmes like IDP are usually conducted for such a purpose. Fourteen of the respondents argued that the municipality never conducting road shows on IDP.

Five respondents indicated that road shows were only held in reaction to service delivery problems, the example cited was the recently launched *Indigents registration campaign*. They argued that this road show is only executed because there is a major problem around the accuracy of the municipality *indigent register* leading to adverse consequences on aspects of provision of basic services and financial management. Only one respondent agreed that road shows were held regularly.

As part of ensuring constant flow of information it is of importance for all stakeholders to be engaged through meetings tuned to their respective sector. According to eleven respondents this is not regularly done by the municipality, instead stakeholders only met when they had something to lobby the municipality for. Eight respondents indicated that it is not done at all. Only one respondent agreed that it is done regularly.

Budget consultation activities accord stakeholders an opportunity to confirm financial allocation for IDP identified projects. Twelve respondents argued that such consultations were frequently done by the Mayor's office. Six submitted that this exercise was not conducted regularly as expected instead it was only done sometimes when there was need for legislative compliance. They further argued that when it is done not enough time is given to participants to dissect the process. Two argued that there is no consultation on matters of budget; the municipality arbitrarily runs with such process.

Individual community member consultation encourages public to take part on matters of IDP. Thirteen respondents felt that the current public participation mechanisms do not provide for such a platform. Five respondents argued that such consultation are not structured and happens mainly at the insistence of individual community members who usually have a pressing issue to be addressed by the municipality. Ironically only two agreed that such engagements happen.

4.3.3 Citizens Participatory Levels

The level of lobby group influence is a good measure for gauging how independent and free individual residents can participate on matters of IDP. Twelve respondents were of the opinion that residents participated freely during IDP meetings mainly because most civil society groupings are not well organised to influence others. Five respondents indicated that depending on issues on the table, groupings usually exert influence on issues linked to their interests. Three of the respondents argued that residents were mainly influenced by groupings that at times become very violent such that there is no provision for presenting a different view.

Information collated from the community and various stakeholders must be used to shape the municipality decision on priority projects. Thirteen respondents argued that the municipality does not consider their inputs when taking decision on IDP priorities. In their opinion, the case of Itsoseng water problem exemplified this aspect, it was revealed that various submissions have been made from both the ward committees and community development workers all these was in vain. Four respondents argued that the municipality is considering residents input before taking IDP related decisions.

They cited various projects that were executed as a result of inputs from the broader community. Three respondents submitted that such occurrences could be experienced at times. This was attributed mainly to the action of the provincial and or national government departments. A school project undertaken by the provincial department in ward four was cited as a good example of such a practice. During this project, the provincial department of education built a school without engaging either the local authority or residents.

Ideally the IDP representative forum is meant to be a vehicle through which community representatives take part on matters of IDP and constant monitoring and evaluation of the realisation of IDP objectives and targets. The community representatives are expected to be democratically elected and possessing certain

powers within such a structure. Sixteen respondents felt that representatives seating in IDP processes are usually not democratically elected but were instead hand-picked and lack substantial powers.

Three of the respondents argued that community representatives are democratically elected to serve on various committees and do have powers to decide in those structures. Establishment of IDP capital projects steering committees was cited as a good example. Community elect representatives to serve in the project steering committee, these representatives report regularly to the broader community about project implementation progress. They further submitted that this is the practice in all capital project executed in Ditsobotla. One respondent argued that this practice happened sometime is not a common feature.

4.3.4 Residents and Community Groups Competence Levels

Citizens and community groups competence is an important factor for effective participation in IDP. Fifteen respondents argued that this area is the weakest link of all constraints on public participation on matters of IDP. They attribute it to lack of knowledge as to how IDP and other government systems operate. In their opinion the level of awareness on issues of public participation is very low.

Inter alia they attributed this to the usage of English as the only language on the municipal documents, the local news paper “noordweester” is predominantly Afrikaans and not accessible to residents in most farming areas and to compound matters they cited that most ward committee members do not understand systems of local government therefore unable to educate or impart appropriate knowledge to their constituents, a blatant failure to realise a legislative requirement.

The current composition of ward committees is viewed as not sector based as a result most community groups are not represented and denied an opportunity to improve their competence level on IDP related issues.

Five respondents informed that there is an unsatisfactory level of competence within residents and community groups, especially in urban areas and the towns of Lichtenburg and Coligny. They argued that this competency is not that helpful because majority of the competent residents are often absent during normal public participation processes. These respondents strongly argued that most of the people displaying high competency levels do not prioritise IDP processes at the expense of their own commitments. Some felt that attending such processes was a waste of time hence the preference not to sacrifice participation in their daily engagements. The respondents further argued that community groups engage the municipality only on issues relevant to their cause, lobbying for their own interests.

4.3.5 Councillors and Municipal Officials Competence Levels

Central to the strategic management and effectiveness of the IDP is the role played by councillors as elected public representatives and municipal officials charged with the responsibility of ensuring that IDP is efficiently implemented. The competence of the two important role players is a must have requirement. Fifteen of the respondents argued that the competency level of the two key role players needs a lot of improvement.

They submitted that in most instances some councillors and officials are unable to articulate on issues related to IDP hence some councillors can't convene meetings in their ward without any back up from the municipality, and some officials fail to attend IDP related meetings, convened internally and externally with communities and other role players.

Four respondents indicated that the current competency levels were shaky and required urgent intervention. One respondent was of the opinion that the competency level for both role players was good. In his opinion the municipality was performing well because it complied with IDP and budget related time frames.

4.3.6 Resources for Public Participation Processes

All respondents cited lack of resources as a major hindrance to public participation on matters of IDP. This problem manifested itself in the form of human resource and financial capacity. On human resource capacity, two offices charged with the responsibility of public participation and IDP had a staff complement that is far from complete. According to the adopted organisational structure, the office of the Speaker was supposed to be having a fully-fledged unit focusing mainly on public participation.

That unit was manned by a person who served as a community liaison officer. The same organisational structure approved that there must be an IDP unit headed by IDP manager accountable to the Municipal Manager on day to day responsibilities of the IDP process. Only the IDP manager was appointed to deal with all important responsibilities of the IDP.

Lack of a strong revenue base also made it impossible for Ditsobotla municipality to fund public participation processes, as a result there are no dedicated resources to conduct basic public participation aspects like loud hailing and sustenance of payment of ward committee's stipend. Respondents indicated that for IDP meetings to be convened at ward level, ward councillors had to hire vehicles and struggle to get loud hailing facilities.

All respondents indicated that it takes more than four months in some instances for ward committee members to be paid their R200 per seating stipend. According to them it was a tall order even to start thinking of other advance methods of encouraging public participation (the other alternative methods could be print and electronic advertisements).

4.3.7 Role of Other Role Players

Respondents identified the following role players as currently existing but not taking part on matters of IDP:

i. Community Development Workers (CDW)

ii. Business Chamber

iii. Taxi Association

iv. Ministers Fraternal

v. Traditional Leadership

Fifteen respondents argued that there was no structured provision for these stakeholders to participate on matters of IDP. The absence of IDP forum was cited as one example of non-existence of participation platforms for other role players. Traditional leadership felt that their role as tribal authority is undermined by councillors and by not inviting them to participate on IDP forum and IDP related processes.

According to respondents information on service delivery challenges collected and submitted to the municipality by CDW's is not processed or given attention. Five respondents were of the opinion that the cited role players have not shown broader interest on matters of IDP, they have instead been keen to engage the municipality only on matters beneficial to their cause.

The hosting of the annual diamond festival was mentioned as a typical example of such a tendency. These respondents argued that this event is one of the few things that brought the business chamber closer to the municipality.

4.4 Conclusion

This chapter presented data as collated from various role players in the Ditsobotla Municipality through a user friendly questionnaire and more probing interviews. To a larger extent the data presented substantiate the literature referred to in Chapter 2, adequately answer the research question outlined in Chapter 4.

Solicited responses from both the questionnaires and the interviews have clearly illustrated that there are serious constraints encountered by the municipality in its effort to comply with the legislative requirement of ensuring that public participate in the IDP processes. It was mainly during the interviews that it dawn to the researcher that it takes more that enacting pieces of legislation to practically realise the noble principle of public participation in motion. The dominant message alluded to by all respondents is the lack of resource experienced by cash strapped municipality of Ditsobotla and a desperate call to adequately plough resources on public participation processes.

Results also support the view that lack of basic public participation resources had been a crucial factor in the success of public participation on matters of IDP. It extremely apparent from collated data that, with the prevailing resources problem of Ditsobotla municipality, the problem of public participation in the IDP processes will not be appropriately addressed.

CHAPTER 5
DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents analysis of the research findings. This process sheds light on serious challenges facing public participation process in the IDP of Ditsobotla municipality. Emerging issues are topically explained. Conclusions are presented in the last section of the chapter.

5.2 Accountability and Transparency of IDP Processes

Out of all responses obtained on accountability and transparency of Ditsobotla municipality on matters of IDP, it was concretely deduced that the following practices are a norm during the unfolding of IDP processes in the municipality:

- Public meetings are the only platform accorded for public participation, this is done despite the diverseness of this constituents. Meetings referred to are in the form of ward committee meeting; ward general meetings or mayoral *izimbisos*.
- These meetings are only prioritised when community needs are collated (analysis phase) and during the annual IDP and budget reviewable process, denying stakeholders and opportunity to take part on issues of strategy development, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of IDP related projects. The only time some community representatives are allowed to take part on this matter is when there is a capital project executed in their ward.
- Cited meetings are normally convened on the eve of either IDP or Budget approval by the municipality, giving less time to stakeholders to dissect the process hence a submission that suggests that these meetings are mainly for compliance and not really about creating a platform for public to participate on matters of IDP.

- ❖ In all these meetings attendance is always low, that is less than 50% of the population in a given ward or clustered areas at any given time.
- ❖ These meetings are not held consistently as prescribed by legislation.

This implies that the IDP processes are undemocratic if Heymans and Totemeyer (1988:19) observation that accountability and democracy are inseparable is to hold sway. To remedy the situation, the suggestion of Kendall (1991:13-14) that decision making processes should always be kept as close as possible to the people must be followed.

Confining public participation to only one mechanism, which is public meetings, does not accommodate various role players in any give community, some role players find it uncomfortable to take part in such gathering and this can serve as one of the causal factors of poor attendance. Possible consequences are ill-informed perceptions about the municipality and residents being easily swayed against the municipality.

Community must have full ownership and confidence in the IDP; it must be a process that empowers them to take part on broader issues of municipal performance. Prioritizing meeting mainly during the analysis phase of the IDP limit their understanding of details related to this strategically important process and consequently discourage participation on matters of IDP it does not expose them to technical skills required. Stakeholders easily conclude that IDP is a technical process meant for municipal officials only.

IDP is a detailed strategic plan guiding municipalities performance and alignment of such performance to that of other spheres of government, it requires serious effort to take various stakeholders through, doing this on the eve of approval or for the sake of approval is counter the spirit of the process itself. Poor attendance of IDP meetings does not augur well for our new democracy, views of the majority are lost in the process and it places the legitimacy and credibility of the IDP as a strategic approach on shaky grounds.

Failure to hold IDP meetings in a consistent manner has the potential of discouraging future participation more so amongst role players who have emerged as regulars.

5.3 IDP Consultation Forums

Participation platforms are usually presented by mechanisms that facilitate the development of participatory processes. As data presented in the previous chapter illustrated, the existence and the functionality of forums meant for serving as platforms of public participation on matters of IDP is a serious area of concern. The fact that an IDP representative's forum last held a meeting more than a year ago is an indication of the intensity of this problem. Lack of diversification on methods used to engage stakeholders as well as financial resources constraints emerged as main factors affecting the success of IDP forum.

Calling all stakeholders to one meeting as if their interests are monolithic is not encouraging or promoting a conducive environment for participation of all stakeholders. Obviously doing it in a diversified fashion will need commitment of financial resources which is one of the major challenges facing Ditsobotla municipality, its revenue base is very low.

Collated data clearly indicated that most of the ward committees are not functional; most members fail to attend their meetings mainly because they do not have money to travel to meetings. Failure by the municipality to sustain payment of meeting attendance stipend leads to low moral within ward committee members and this is further compounded by the fact that community development workers (CDW's), members of the new government initiative doing the same work done by ward committee members are consistently remunerated by government.

In few areas where ward committee are functional lack of feedback on matters raised with the municipality is outstanding as a challenge. Lack of clear systems to process submitted issues is not helping this noble cause as a result ward committee members

do not have a sense of their work being recognised as required by legislation. This unfortunate conclusion lead to members not taking ward committees business serious hence poor and non- attendance of committee meetings. Competency level of most ward committee members is also a problem leading to committee members not being at ease or conversant with IDP related issues. Consequently these members do not own up to ward committee positions because in most instances they can't articulate to their respective constituencies on IDP related issues.

Convening public meeting on the eve of either IDP or budget approval does not accord the public an opportunity to thoroughly interrogate the details of such technical processes as a result most view this as a gesture for compliance instead of real platform for them to participate on matters of IDP. Majority of community members and groups don't attend these meeting because of this unfortunate view. The usage of IDP related public meetings by some to advance issues less related to developmental matters usually lead to unnecessary disruption of this valuable meetings and this tendency discourages participants from continuing to attend such meetings.

The absence of a focused road show programme denies the general public and organised formations and opportunity to be educated on various policies and programmes championed by the municipality, consequently most of these role players do not attach any essence on taking part on IDP processes. Possible result is IDP becoming a technical administration issue with less participation by legislatively prescribed stakeholders.

Convening all stakeholders under one roof creates a sense of discomfort to some of the stakeholders, more especially those with specific technical skills to contribute to IDP processes. These meeting do not provide a platform for such detailed contributions. This has a potential of marginalising organised formations from IDP processes depriving a democratic process valuable inputs from the constituents.

Municipal budget processes are the lifeline of performance management system through which the municipality is expected to guard against any deviation from agreed financial allocations and targets. Failure to create a constant process of allowing the public to participate on budget related matters lead to stakeholders not knowing if their inputs are considered during the municipality decision making processes hence some strongly argue that it is not relevant to take part in IDP processes which are meant to guide municipal budgeting.

Failure by the municipality to establish clear systems on how to handle IDP related issues raised by individual community members leaves most members not knowing where to present issues that might have not been accommodated in any other public participation platform, as a result the level of dissatisfaction amongst the general public gets boosted by this failure. Dissatisfaction leads to rejection of municipal programmes and ultimately to community revolt against the municipality.

This must however be corrected taken that in places where the consultative processes are active like Kerala and Port Alegre virtually all decisions regarding the types of services and upgrading that would occur in different parts of the city are made through that process, which forms part of a wider participatory governing system (Navarro, 1998).

5.4 Citizens Participatory Levels

Citizens participatory levels , which is a catalyst for robust public participation, proved to be not encouraged and seriously lacking in the broader constituency of Ditsobotla. The absence of strong lobby groups within the community creates a high level of disorganisation around issues of citizens participatory levels, as a result less resourced individuals continue to take part on IDP issues leading to dominance on technical issues by municipal officials.

Engaging community on the execution of IDP related problems create a perception of such projects being impose from above and this is mainly driven by Provincial Departments. The building of a school in ward 4 without engaging the community lead to serious resistance from the affected ward and this impacted negatively on service delivery.

Although there was a range of responses in regard to community being engaged on project steering committees, it has appeared that this is only confined to the benefiting ward at the expense of other wards; this practice has the potential of denying community members from other wards to learn from best practices as displayed by other wards.

5.5 Residents and Community Groups Competency Levels

Competency levels of both the residents and community groups are critical to ensure that they have an impact on participatory process. It has been presented that in Ditsobotla majority of stakeholders are not competent on issues of IDP a matter mainly attributed to lack of education on municipal policies and programmes. This may lead to a situation of capacity disparity between municipal officials and community representatives and causing community groups only to engage the municipality on issues of their expertise. Care should however be taken to ensure that the observation by Rubenstein (1995) of the dominant mechanisms which are pro-civil society are not a given.

5.6 Councillors and Municipal Officials Competency Levels

Councillors and municipal officials competency is central to a user friendly IDP system. Failure to meet the standard leads to misinformation and confusion. Community will always depend on informed leaders to clarify issues. Ditsobotla is

faced with a challenge of most of its leaders both Councillors and Officials are not fully competent on matters of IDP. It emerged that some can't facilitate IDP meetings on their own and others are not available for some IDP related meetings. This has the potential of lowering the quality and credibility of public participation on matters of IDP.

5.7 Resources for Public Participation Processes

Availability of basic public participation resources are of pivotal importance for the success of such a process. Indications are such that the low revenue base realised by Ditsobotla municipality makes it even impossible for the municipality to procure mere loudhailers to be used to call a public meeting. This supports observations by Kweit and Kweit (1981:483-484) that time and costs particularly hamper citizen participation activities.

IDP and public participation units are not adequately resourced leading to processing of IDP related issues to be a nightmare for the institution.

5.8 Other Role players

The existence of other stakeholders has been confirmed, the biggest problem facing the municipality is how to create meaningful platform allowing them to take part on matters of IDP. Non-functionality of IDP forum compound matters because it denies such role players an opportunity to make inputs on IDP related matters. Traditional leaders and CDW feel that their being is not taken advantage of in order to strengthen public participation process.

If role players are not clear on how to take part on matters of public participation IDP as a strategic planning tool will never realise its objective of serving as a public tool

guiding municipality and other spheres of government performance in the area of Ditsobotla.

The failure to process and give feedback on issues raised by other role-players has led to a situation where some stop attending IDP meetings convened by the municipality. Sight must not be lost on the fact that lack or disparities in competency levels among different role players is a major hindrance to public participation as observed by Hanekom (1987: 94).

5.9 Conclusion

This chapter has explained constraints and challenges inhibiting public participation in Ditsobotla municipality. The arising issues from the chapter have been topically discussed. This has been in line with the objective of evaluating public participation constraints as realised in the IDP processes of Ditsobotla Local Municipality.

In conclusion, the municipality is faced with the constraints of low levels of transparency and accountability of the IDP processes, poor IDP consultation forums, low citizen's participatory levels, inconsistencies in residents and community group's competency levels, as well as councillors and municipal official's competency levels and inadequate resources for public participation processes as well as participation provision for other stakeholders.

The analysis uncovered that public participation will continue to be a tall order for the municipality which can't even generate basic public participation resources like loudhailers to convene meetings. The existence of low revenue base gives less hope of overcoming this challenge in the near future.

CHAPTER 6
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

Both the data and analysis presented on Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 respectively have succinctly attested to the fact that public participation in Ditsobotla Municipality IDP processes is faced with assortment of constraints. Existing public participation mechanism of holding meetings is not adequate to deal with diverse sectors in the community. Non-functionality of IDP forum is also inhibiting participation of sector representatives on matters of IDP. Lack of clear systems of processing IDP related issues is another constraint.

Low level of awareness on the municipal policies and programmes amongst residents leave community vulnerable to dominance on IDP issues by municipal officials. Competence level of community representatives in the form of councillors and ward committee members is at its lowest. Council officials are also not an exception in as far as the problem of low competence levels is concern.

Lack of role clarification and recognition of other stakeholders like CDW's and Traditional Leaders hamper introduction of alternative public participation approaches. The constraint that is conspicuously evident is the lack of basic public participation capacity in the form human and financial resources capacity.

After thorough analysis and observation of the public participation situation in Ditsobotla Municipality, some recommendations can be presented on how public participation in the municipality's IDP can be enhanced.

6.2 Recommendations

Ditsobotla local municipality must elevate its efforts of creating better conditions for public participation and must also be ceased with the process of encouraging it. To

change the current public participation approach which had reduced public participation to a process of mass meetings, the municipality must develop and adopt a public participation policy which will serve as a binding regulatory framework. This will help to ensure that public participation is an institutionalised process allowing all stakeholders to equally participate on matters of IDP. As part of institutionalising process the municipality must be able to define requirements for public participation procedures in order to guide participation of all stakeholders.

Guided by public participation policy, the municipality working together with the community and community groups must establish a structured stakeholder participation approach in IDP related issues. The structured approach must be developed in such a way that it enables the municipality to accommodate majority if not all of its constituents in the IDP processes. It must define rules and procedures outlining who is to participate or to be consulted, on whose behalf, for which issues, using which organisational provisions, what will be their impact and the timing of such. This will allow the municipality to do away with the problems of convening meetings on the eve of approval of either IDP or Budget; as well as the inconsistent convening of meetings.

The municipality must make sure that as part of structuring and institutionalising participation it accord ample provision for diversified participation styles and cultures and this will need more time and resources allocation. Diversified participation styles must be identified jointly with targeted stakeholders; it must not be the sole responsibility of the municipality. Better participation styles can be learnt from stakeholders like traditional leaders who have their conventional public participation system still intact and functional.

The municipality must establish sector based forums which will be able to pay attention to issue-specific policies without having to be clouded by all municipal IDP related issues. This will create a sense of belonging and recognition on the side of stakeholders and ultimately it will get them motivated to take part in the broader IDP

representatives forum were all stakeholders are expected to be represented as part of monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the IDP as a strategic planning tool.

Ditsobotla IDP committee which appeared to be an official only affair must include representatives from ward committees and resourced members from community groups; this will ensure technical skills transfer to the broader community, as well as effective monitoring of performance of the municipality. The municipality must consider establishing farm-based association among communities in the marginalised farm areas of its area of jurisdiction; this will go far in ensuring that the marginalised farming communities benefit from this democratic process.

Ward committees should be properly capacitated and individual capacity should be developed. National and provincial government must consider the introduction of accredited training programmes for ward committee members. During this training more emphasis must be placed on understanding the IDP and its related processes, public address techniques, inter-personal relation and conflict resolution. The current ward committee election system to be reinforced by strict election compliance procedures with specific focus on sector based representation and this must be capture in municipal public participation policy.

Since ward committees are the organisational framework through which communities in geographical areas are legally entitled to participate in the planning process, it is high time that the National government consider making it compulsory for the Independent Electoral Commission to officiate over ward committees elections.

National government must review the current Community Development Worker's (CDW's) model with a specific bias to the ward committee system. CDW's must be phased out and the current human resources and financial capacity be availed to strengthen ward committees system. Institutionalised public participation process must be able to clarify the procedure of how submitted IDP related issues are processed and feedback provided to those who raised such issues.

In order to address the problem of low levels of understanding IDP process, the provincial IDP unity working together with the district municipality must kick start a robust public participation awareness campaign in the municipality and this must be correctly aligned with the municipality IDP cycle. This process has the potential of eliminating the tendency of using IDP processes to raise issues not related to the IDP.

Councillors as participants on the IDP forum as well as council meetings should be able to report to ward committees and their respective ward constituents on IDP related projects happening in other wards, this goes to stakeholders seating in IDP forum and IDP committee, and they must report such projects progress to their structures.

IDP steering committee must be used as a tool to constantly monitor official's performance on IDP assigned tasks this will help to identify any performance gap including competency related problems of individual officials. The municipality must strengthen the current performance management system by making sure that IDP set objectives and targets in the form of key performance indicators are central in the development of a fully fledged performance management system which must be fully implemented.

It is advisable that the Councillors cease to treat IDP processes as a once off process only talked about during needs analysis and IDP as well as budget reviewable phases, they must present IDP implementation report during all their monthly meetings. This approach will help to ensure that their constituencies are not given bulk information in one meeting. Councillors to be introduced to a comprehensive training on IDP and this should be followed by thorough monitoring and mentoring programme. All these must be championed by the provincial IDP office.

The municipality must consider accommodating public participation as one of its many budget priorities. In order to deal with inherent low revenue base, National treasury must consider the introduction of a dedicated public participation fund to help municipalities of Ditsobotla's calibre.

6.3 Conclusion

The recent legislative enactments have reintroduced very crucial aspects in our local government planning system, the centrality of communities and groups in those communities on matters of governance. Community and community group's participation in what is expected to be an integrated development planning process had proven to be a very complex process without many clearly prescribed procedures. In the main municipalities are expected to devise and institutionalise their own public participation procedures. Capacity of municipalities differs from one municipality to the other, leading to complete different participating styles per municipality.

Although various constraints have been indentified in Ditsobotla IDP public participation processes, it remains clear that the current baseline status of the municipality serves as an appropriate platform for a rejuvenated approach to matters of public participation in the IDP process. Ditsobotla municipality had over the years transformed and improved both structurally and administratively, it is a given fact that over time they will begin to perfect their constitutional mandate of ensuring that their beloved constituents take part on matters of IDP. There is a light at the end of the tunnel.

Public participation on matters of governance and IDP is a huge function that cannot be left to Ditsobotla alone, national government, provincial government and district municipality must begin to be seriously ceased with the task of supporting this municipality, more especially with financial resources meant for public participation related issues.

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APPENDIX

QUESTIONNAIRE:

Constraints of Public Participation in Integrated Development Planning in Ditsobotla Municipality

Introduction

This survey is conducted to collect research report data as part of the requirements for award of Masters Degree at the School of Public Development and Management, University of the Witwatersrand. Due consideration has been taken to ensure confidentiality and the results will be used for academic purposes only.

Consent

I ……..(Sign) voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

Preliminary

Sex:

Male ☐ Female ☐

Race:

Indian ☐ Black ☐ White ☐ Coloured ☐

Age: ……..

Effectiveness and efficiency

1. The IDP processes undertaken in Ditsobotla Local Municipality are done in accountable manner (Tick/Mark where appropriate).

Strongly Agree	
Agree	
Disagree	
Strongly Disagree	

2. Ditsobotla Local Municipality consults with their residents, communities and others in the performance of their tasks.

Strongly Agree	
Agree	
Disagree	
Strongly Disagree	

3. IDP Consultations framework in Ditsobotla Local Municipality (Kindly tick where appropriate.)

Statement	**Sometimes**	**False**	**True**
Ditsobotla Local Municipality always organize regular IDP forums			
Ditsobotla Local Municipality regularly organize ward committee meetings			
Ditsobotla Local Municipality regularly organize public meetings			
Ditsobotla Local Municipality regularly organize road shows			
Ditsobotla Local Municipality regularly engages with community members through stakeholders meetings			
Ditsobotla Local Municipality often undertake budget consultations			
Ditsobotla Local Municipality often make consultations with individual community members			

4. Citizens Participatory levels **(Mark where appropriate)**

Statement	**Sometimes**	**False**	**True**
Ditsobotla Local Municipality residents participate independently without support of organisation and structures in development processes/community makes decision			
Ditsobotla Local Municipality residents participate in joint analysis, development of action plans and formation or strengthening of local institutions			
Ditsobotla Local Municipality residents participate in projects by forming groups to meet predetermined objectives related to the project in exchange of mutual benefits.			
During project planning Ditsobotla Local Municipality community members are asked for advice and token changes are made			
During project planning Ditsobotla Local Municipality community members are asked about their opinions but these are not necessarily implemented or taken into account			
In Ditsobotla Local Municipality residents ad stakeholders participate by being told what has been decided or has already happened.			
At Ditsobotla Local Municipality participation in development processes is simply pretence, and "people's" representatives on official boards are not elected and have no power?			

5. Give an overall assessment of civil societies' participation in policies and programmes in Ditsobotla Local Municipality (Tick where appropriate)

1. Unsatisfactory	
2. Needs Improvement	
3. Good	
4. Excellent	

Constraints

6. Give an overall assessment of residents and community groups competence in participation in planning and programmes at Ditsobotla Local Municipality.

1. Unsatisfactory	
2. Needs Improvement	
3. Good	
4. Excellent	

7. Give an overall assessment of the competence of officials involved in development planning and formulation of policies/programmes at Ditsobotla Local Municipality in participation in planning and programmes.

1. Unsatisfactory	
2. Needs Improvement	
3. Good	
4. Excellent	

8. The public are always aware and well informed of policies, programmes and development planning at Ditsobotla Local Municipality?

Strongly Agree	
Agree	
Disagree	
Strongly Disagree	

9. Residents' participation activities in programmes at Ditsobotla Local Municipality is hampered by lack of resources (time and money)

Strongly Agree	
Agree	
Disagree	
Strongly Disagree	

10. What are some of the civil societies which are active at Ditsobotla Local Municipality?

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