

**Examining the Role of Community Media in Promoting
Accountability and Good Governance in Local Government: A Case
Study of Chris Hani District Municipality**

By

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DECLARATION

I, Samkelo Gqeba, declare that this mini dissertation hereby submitted by me for the degree in Master of Governance and Political Transformation, titled: Examining the Role of Community Media in Promoting Accountability and Good Governance in Local Government. A Case Study of Chris Hani District Municipality at the University of Free State is my own and has not been submitted previously, and that all sources consulted have been properly acknowledged.

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ABSTRACT

This study focused on the role of community media in promoting accountability in local government with specific reference to Chris Hani District Municipality. The lack of accountability and good governance in municipalities is a major contributing factor in the deterioration of governance. Local citizens especially the poor are the most affected, as they rely on government services. An effective accountability and citizen participation ecosystem is an essential factor that give local communities assurance that local governance and resources are used efficiently and not abused.

This study investigated whether Chris Hani District Municipality is promoting accountability and good governance using community media outlets. The study utilised a desktop approach data collection method in which existing pre-published information from secondary sources, such as municipal reports, local government legislations, community media legislations, relevant books, academic reports, news articles and statutory reports. The findings of the study revealed that Chris Hani District Municipality is utilising community media to communicate and engage local communities on municipal programmes and activities. The findings also revealed that Chris Hani District Municipality's Communication and Public Participation Strategy was not effective in achieving its objective of fostering a culture of transparency and accountability and to promote effective access to information.

The findings further revealed that the strategy lacks coherence as most of the municipal communication activities were reactive and centred around municipal leadership. The findings have shown that Chris Hani District Municipality's public participation and communications programmes are not effective as local community citizens regularly embark on service protests to air their frustration on the mismanagement of the municipality. Lastly the study investigated challenges faced by

community media in Chris Hani District Municipality in their quest to promote accountability and good governance.

It is evident from the literature review that an effective community media can make a meaningful contribution in fostering a culture of good governance to curb corruption and maladministration. However, the study found that Vukani Community Radio Station and The Rep community Newspaper are facing several challenges that hampered their ability to perform their watchdog mandate.

The study concluded that community media outlets are a vital tool that can contribute to increase transparency and accountability in decision-making processes and to communicate the principles of good governance in local government.

Lastly, several recommendations have been made regarding the enhancement of the role of community media in promoting good governance in local government. They range from reviewing local government legislation, community media capacity building mechanisms and revenue generative methods.

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GLOSSARY

Definitions and explanations of terms

SDBIP.....Service Delivery and Budget Implementation Plan

IDP.....Integrated Development Plan

MDDA.....Media Development and Diversity Agency

ICASA.....Independent Communications Authority of South
Africa

AGSA.....The Auditor-General of South Africa

MPAC Municipal Public Accounts Committee

CoGTA..... Department of Cooperative Governance and
Traditional Affairs

GCIS.....Government Communication and Information System

MFMA..... Municipal Finance Management Act

UNESCO.....United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural

R2K.....Right to know.

IBA.....Independent Broadcasting Authority

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Chapter 1

1.1 Motivation and Background

Community media plays a significant role in informing, educating and entertaining local citizens about various developmental issues concerning their areas. During apartheid in South Africa, community media was instrumental in countering government propaganda machinery by providing alternative narrative to citizens. Bozo (2014:28) states that “freedom of expression and the right to information was not a basic human right during the apartheid era. By stifling freedom of expression, the apartheid government wanted to avoid any form of accountability and transparency about its nefarious governance methods.

Under section 16 of the current South African Constitution of 1996, citizen’s right to freedom of speech and expression are protected to redress draconian apartheid laws characterised by censorship and information control. Bozo (2014:28) argue that: “one of the goals of protecting these rights is to promote open, responsive, and accountable governance. She further argues that this right allows everyone to speak and write openly without any government interference and it also acknowledges that everyone’s voice is essential in building a sustainable country. Based on this statement, it is an undisputed fact that community media is a crucial tool for enhancing public accountability and transparency at a local governance level.

The study seeks to examine the role of community media in promoting accountability and good governance in Chris Han District Municipality. The municipality is the fourth biggest district council in the Eastern Cape. The district council comprises of six local municipalities namely, Enoch Mgijima Municipality, Dr AB Xuma Municipality, Inxuba Yethemba Municipality, Emalahleni Municipality,

Sakhisizwe Municipality, and Intsika Yethu Municipality. In the 2021/22 financial year, the district council received a disclaimer audit opinion from the Auditor General. The Auditor General South Africa (2023 n.p) describes a disclaimer as the worst audit opinion issued when an auditor is unable to complete the audit report due to the absence of financial records and insufficient cooperation from management. Sikhakhane and Reddy (2011:85) states that the success of a municipality is largely determined, on the accountability of all key role players and stakeholders in the local governance process. Given its watchdog role, community media plays an important role in keeping citizens engaged on local governance matters by ensuring that government entities are accountable to communities they serve.

It is against this backdrop that the motivation of this study is to assess whether community media is playing the role of enhancing democracy by affording local communities with a platform to ensure that those in power are transparent and accountable. This study will also provide valuable knowledge in the role of community media in promoting accountability and good governance at a municipal level. Sikhakhane and Reddy (2011:99) argued that “effective system of accountability is important so that the local communities are assured that local governance and resources are used effectively and not abused”. Local government is a critical sphere of government at the coalface of service delivery and is mandated by law to deliver basic services such as water, sanitation, and waste removal.

In 2021, the Department of Cooperative Governance reported that 64 municipalities were dysfunctional due to weak institutional capacity, poor financial management, corruption, and political instability. In the 2021/22 financial year the Auditor General Ms Tsakani Maluleke stated that 16% of the country’s 257 municipalities received a clean audit. Motubatse (et al., 2017:93) states that where

there is proper governance, this translates to responsibly spent public funds and the successful delivery of services. He further states that poor governance correlates with wasted or stolen public funds which manifests as non-delivery of basic services to the community.

According to Sikhakhane and Reddy (2011:89) the South African Government introduced legislation to ensure that all the key local role players and stakeholders discharge their respective obligations and responsibilities to facilitate the delivery of quality municipal services. The legislation that compels municipalities to be accountable to citizens include Local Government Municipal Systems Act of 2000, Local Government Municipal Finance Management Act of 2003 and the White Paper on Local Government, 1998. Section 17 of the Municipal Systems Act of 32 of 2000 requires municipalities to put in place systems for communities to participate in the decision making process. The act further states that local communities have the right to contribute to decision making, to submit recommendations and complaints to the municipal council, to be informed of council meetings and decisions, be updated about council affairs, and attend open meetings. Auwal (2018:40) argues that democracy can hardly survive and achieve its goals in any society where there is no accountability, transparency, and the inclusion of most of the people in governance and input into the process of development. He further argues that it is the responsibility of the media to hold government accountable to ensure the overall success of democracy. Chiyamwaka (2007:2) holds the view that journalists should commit themselves to raising public awareness about corruption, human rights violations, and other abuses of power, and to investigate and report these cases in a fair and professional manner.

This study seeks to determine if community media can withstand pressure from external forces particularly from political leadership who may be tempted to interfere

with their editorial independence to drive a message that is favourable to them. The tampering on editorial independence can derail the ability of community media to conduct the work of promoting transparency and accountability without fear or favour. South Africa's Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA) Act of 1993 defines the community media tier as one that is "initiated" and controlled by members of a community of interest, or geographical area. Community media outlets are non-profit entities that are wholly owned by community members and therefore should be free from political, religious, and commercial interests. As a free and easily accessible medium of information, community media provides a platform for poor communities in the township and rural areas to voice their displeasure on matters related to local governance. Auwal (2018:210) argues that in keeping the public informed, educated, and entertained, the mass media sets standards for public conduct thereby making possible the participation of citizens in governance.

Bozo (2014:28) states that community media disseminates information which enable citizens to voice their opinions and hold the government to account. The Print Development Unit (DU) (2002) suggests that they promote diversity, in terms of geographical coverage, language and class in the emerging South African media landscape. Chiyamwaka (2007:2) points out that "news media are an essential factor in good governance, vital to increasing both transparency and accountability in decision-making processes and to communicate the principles of good governance to the citizenry". According to Sebola (2012:407) citizens seem to generally view both the independent print, audio and audio-visual media as watchdogs that keep the politicians on their toes, practise good governance and accelerating the rate of service delivery in the country. Community media is a key player in ensuring the vibrancy and sustainability of South African democracy by affording citizens from diverse

backgrounds with a voice on matters of governance. Community media is not only promoting media diversity by providing local communities with a platform to share their stories, but it also enables them to express their views on how their cities and towns are governed. This study will contribute to the broader role of community media in enhancing accountability and good governance in local municipalities.

1.2 Problem Statement

Community media has great potential for becoming the preferred medium of choice because of its availability to communities which do not have access to mainstream media. However, independent community media displays a lack of developmental drive due perpetual challenges that hampers its ability to perform its mandate. (Mdledle (2019: n.p.) argues that community media have witnessed a lack of credibility and accountability where instead of having community media outlets that promote development and democracy, it has now merely become a tool of generating certain agendas driven by certain elites. Community media's ability serves the low-end market is however, compromised by advertisers' reluctance to invest as well as a lack of resources associated with an economically marginalised sector of society. Sikhanane and Reddy (2011:08) propose that in some rural areas which are populated by illiterate communities, citizen participation, transparency and accountability are non-existent or minimal.

Small media houses seldom have substantial financial reserves, and this can make them vulnerable to pressures from advertisers and sponsorship wishing to compromise their editorial independence. According to Gumede (2014:10) lack of state support for community radio, newspapers and television is one weakness of democracy, and local media is important to deepen democracy, foster development, and diversity and to hold local leaders accountable. To address financial constrains

faced by community media, parliament established Media Development and Diversity Agency (MDDA) in terms of the MDDA Act No. 14 of 2002. The mandate of MDDA is to redress exclusion and marginalisation of disadvantaged communities from access to the media and to encourage the channelling of resources to the community media. The Agency reports to the Department of Communications with a mandate of providing direct financial support to community media outlets to buy equipment and for capacity development. To fund its operations, community media generates its revenue through advertising and the main clients are government departments and municipalities. Mdledle (2021n.p.) argues that since the government is the main contributor towards community media funding, the question that we need to ask ourselves is how can the sector continue its mandate while remaining independent? He further questions the possibility of community media be critical of the government and holding it accountable without the fear of being prejudiced. He argues that the content delivered by some community media thrives on propaganda used as a driving force for political agendas, where political elites are exploiting the space for their own benefit.

When a community media platform becomes a mouthpiece of those in power, it will fail to enhance democracy, transparency, and accountability. For community media to fulfil its essential role in a democratic state Bozo (2014: 29) states that publishers face several challenges which become barriers in their ability to provide information to their communities. Without advertising grassroots community media warns that community media will be unable to serve their communities as most advertising still comes from government adverts (Bozo, 2014: 29).

In 2008, Grocott's Mail, a community newspaper owned by Rhodes University's Journalism Department took Makana Local Municipality to court for unliterary withdrawing advertising from the paper after it exposed maladministration and

corruption in the council. The municipality leadership was accused of using rate payer's resources to silence the newspaper for holding them accountable for poor service delivery. Mail and Gurdian (2023: n.p.) states that a senior councillor admitted publicly that the boycott was based on unhappiness with Grocott's coverage. Mail and Gurdian (2023: n.p.) is of the opinion that the boycott was illegal because it contradicts constitutional rights to freedom of expression, as well as the rights to democratic and accountable government. The matter was settled out of court after the municipality realised that its defence for the boycott was not based on law but on selfish interest of the municipal leadership who doesn't want to be held accountable. With the financial support from its owner Rhodes University, Grocott's Mail was able pursue legal avenues to overturn the advertising boycott. A critical question should be asked if a rural community newspaper with limited or zero resources finds itself in the same predicament as Grocott Mail can be able to defend its mandate of being the voice of the voiceless? UNESCO (2005:6) publication on Media and Good Governance argues that the role of the media is not to cooperate with government but to question and be sceptical, to dig beneath the surface, to take nothing at face value.

This study will be assessing how the community media sector is able to strike a balance between revenue generating goals and editorial independence. For community media to thrive and grow as an independent vehicle for development and democracy, Mdledle (2021: n.p.) argues that government will have to revisit its support towards the sector. This includes funding which will ensure better access to resources and staff training. Chulu (2020:2) warns that where the media fails to act as a civic forum, good governance can be hindered, and even democratic consolidation can be compromised. He further argues that state control and ownership of the media is a critical issue, but threats to media pluralism are also raised by over concentration of

private media ownership. Lack of accountability and transparency lead to deterioration of governance and local citizens especially the poor who rely on government services are the most affected.

Gumede (2014:10) states that local media is important to hold local leaders accountable. This is particularly important because local government is generally seen in South Africa as the weakest tier of the democracy system with high levels of corruption, lack of accountability by officials and slow service delivery. A case in point is the Chris Hani District Municipality, which mainly comprises of small towns and rural villages is under spotlight for maladministration, corruption, and poor governance. In the 2018/19 financial year, the Auditor General issued a disclaimer of opinion report for Chris Hani District Municipality.

The Auditor General South Africa (2023) defines a disclaimer of audit opinion as when an auditee provides insufficient evidence in the form of documentation on which to base an audit opinion. The Auditor General South Africa (2023) further states that lack of sufficient evidence is not confined to specific amounts or represents a substantial portion of the information contained in the financial statements.

Transparency is the bedrock of good governance and once it fails, it gives dishonest public representatives a free pass to erode governance structures with the intention of stealing from the public. In the Eastern Cape, about half of the provinces 39 municipalities are on the brink of financial collapse and are being investigated by the Hawks for corruption as the result of poor governance. Chiyamwaka (2007:02) notes that transparency ensures that information is available that can be used to measure the authority's performance and to guard against any possible misuse of powers. It is common knowledge that community media is an ideal platform to promote transparency and accountability by local authorities but its effectiveness in executing

this role needs to be examined. Sikhhanane and Reddy (2011:97) believes that citizens who are well informed feel more responsible, demand useful information and accountability from their governments. They argue that an informed citizen can contribute to deepen democracy for the sustenance of nation-building and patriotism. In this regard, community media plays a pivotal role in informing and educating local people about various developmental issues concerning their areas.

Williams (2019:4) argue that community media are influencers and agenda setters in local communities in both urban and rural settings with government information forming a part of a rich content mix of community media. According to Bizcommunity (2023:n.p.) South African community newspapers, TV and radio stations are seriously under-funded, under-equipped, lack vision, expertise, and professionalism, have weak structures, and are beset by internal power struggle. Due to these challenges, community media are vulnerable to editorial interference by advertisers and sponsors. A community media platform that surrenders its editorial independence to external forces will not be able to fulfil its obligation of ensuring that those that are entrusted with the responsible of managing state resources are held to account.

1.3 Aim and Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study is to determine the effectiveness of community media in fostering accountability and good governance in Chris Hani District Municipality. In South Africa, local government sector is compelled by law to afford citizens an opportunity to participate in governance process and hold municipal office bearers accountable for their actions. According to Sikhakhane and Reddy (2011:92) the Local Government Municipal Systems Act of 2000 devotes Chapter 7 to community participation and goes further to mandate municipalities to create mechanisms and

procedures and develop strategies to promote it. To promote participatory governance, community media is the most viable platform that citizens can use hold local government accountable because accessibility. The UNESCO (2005) report on Good Governance argues that independent media is essential in ensuring transparency, accountability and participation as fundamental elements of good governance and human rights-based development.

The following are the main objectives of the study.

- To determine how the community media influences accountability and good governance?
- To determine whether Chris Hani District Municipality embraces accountability and good governance?
- To ascertain the impact of programmes or platforms provided by community media to enhance accountability.
- To determine whether community media educates citizens on good governance.
- Identify challenges or obstacles encountered by community media in ensuring that municipal leadership are accountable to the communities they serve.

The research seeks to answer the following questions.

- How is the community media influencing accountability and good governance in the municipality?
- Is the municipality embracing community media as a tool to promote good governance and accountability?
- What is the impact of programmes or platforms provided by community media to enhance accountability?

- What are the challenges or obstacles encountered by community media in ensuring that municipal leadership are accountable to communities they serve?

1.4 Literature study

Weinberg (2011:4) states that community media is independent of the state and private sector and accountable to marginalised communities and has the potential to play an important role in deepening democracy and advancing socio-economic rights. In this context, community media can be a vehicle to provide a platform for communities to have a two-way communication with their elected representatives in a bid to strengthen the democratic system. Weinberg (2011:4) support this view by stating that community media provides citizens an avenue to exercise their constitutional rights to freedom of expression and access to information, as well as serving as a channel to hold elected officials and public servants accountable.

Communication serves as the main matrix for the government-citizen engagements on governance and development, acting as a catalyst in facilitating information flow between people and decision-makers, in promoting dialogue, and facilitating horizontal debates among active citizens, (Weinberg 2011:4). This study seeks to examine the role of community media in promoting accountability and good governance at the local government level. Chulu (2020:9) holds a view that the media should scrutinise the budget of local government and ensure transparency and accountability and offer information regarding the role of civil society organisations in enhancing participation of common people.

For example, Chulu (2020:2) proposes that the community media producers should arrange question and answer programs among local parliament members and local people through community radio. This will aid in making citizens aware of

responsibilities of the state, market, and society by means education. Wanyande (2004) argues that community radio can ensure rural community participation in establishing good governance through policy making discussions with government, existing marketing system, and civils society leaders. Maphiri (2012:73) echoes similar sentiments that community media targets mainly poor rural and urban communities. He assumes that government advertising currently remains the single most important potential revenue source for community media as the sector caters for the poor, the largest constituency of government. In addition to advertising support, government established Media Development and Diversity Agency (MDDA) to support community media outlets with grant funding to sustain their operations. Myers (2011:27) caution on the dangers of government support that it can affect the independence of community radio crippling its ability to hold local and national government to account. Gumede (2014:09) on his research on South Africa's media and the strengthening of democracy says that community media deviates from its role of giving a voice to all the voiceless. He states that sometimes community media may be used in the factional battles of the ANC to destroy critics, and even on other occasions put profit above investing in quality reporting.

1.4.1 Challenges Facing Community Media

As a contribution to good governance Dunu (2013:197) suggests that the media should be editorially independent, free from any pressure and external interference and, reflect the plurality of opinions and perceptions to truly help citizens be informed and understand the issues at stake. To maintain its independence, Gumede (2014:34) suggests that South Africa can explore the Scandinavian model where funds are made available to independent newspapers to ensure that one newspaper group does not dominate an entire province or city which is currently the case in South Africa.

The challenges facing community media are not only confined to financial support but also the skills gap in the newsroom and current affairs teams. The R2K (2011:5) discussion document on community media says the sector has a key role to play in ensuring participatory democracy and the advancement of socio-economic rights. The document claims that community radio stations have assembled functioning studios and remained on the air, many of them in remote locations and with limited technical skills resulting in weak programming and editorial content. The document claims that the skills gap has created dependence on Government Information and Communication Service (GCIS) who provide ready packed news and other content. The document warns that local content that is dominated by narrow-minded stories often with a bias to the concerns and prejudices of rate payers or middle-class sections of the community marginalises the poor especially in the rural areas.

1.4.2 Role of Community Media in Accountability and Good Governance

The UNESCO 2005 report on Media and Good Governance claims that access to information is a guarantee of accountability, and thus an essential part of good governance. According to Nyawo (2017:63) accountability is one of the fundamental requirements for preventing the abuse of power and the misuse of public resources, as well as for ensuring that control is directed towards the achievement of responsiveness, effectiveness, transparency, and efficiency.

Maropo (2014:19) argues that accountability demands that the actions of local government institutions be published to encourage public criticism and debate. He further argues that these debates should be conducted by representative institutions and the news media. Mamokhere (2020:129) points out that the media should work like a watchdog and is responsible for public accountability. Maropo (2014:19) affirms

the notion that public accountability compels municipal officials and councillors to openly debate and justify their actions taken, thereby empowering institutions of legislation to exercise control over public resources on behalf of the citizens.

1.4.3 Role of Local Government in Promoting Accountability and Good

Governance

The Local Government Municipal Systems Act (Act No.32 of 2000) Schedule 1 which outlines the Code of Conduct for Councillors compels councillors to act in the interest of the communities that they serve and that they are accountable for their actions. Nyawo (2017:4) holds a view that it is essential to establish a government that is accountable in addressing the needs of citizens and the public should have the opportunity to monitor and evaluate the performance of government and demand accountability from the representatives. For this to happen, Nyawo (2017:5) argues that local government should publicly display information about the resources available for local service delivery. He claims that the viability of the democratic component of local governance depends on accountability and participation. Nyawo (2017:5) stresses that local government must share the information widely and strategically for participation and accountability to work effectively. Mamokhere (2020:129) holds the view that the media is free to monitor, investigate and criticise the public administration's policies and public officials' actions to uphold good governance. For instance, the Rep Community Newspaper based in Komani exposed the controversial R15 million Lesseyton Sports Field in Komani which made national headlines. It is no doubt that the media's role in ensuring accountability is the cornerstone of promoting good governance at a local level. The media is responsible for ongoing checks and assessments of the activities of government and assist in

bringing public concerns and voices into the open space by providing a platform for discussion (Mamokhere, 2020:129).

Chulu (2020: 37) holds a view that to ensure accountability and transparency, people need to be aware of their fundamental human rights and freedoms as enshrined in the republican constitution. He argues that when people know that they have freedom of speech about issues surrounding governance that affects them they will be able to hold their leaders accountable for the decisions they make concerning the wellbeing of the citizenry. In his research findings on public participation and accountability in local government, Nyawo (2017:10) notes that the level of participation in local government and its ability to account for the actions taken are low. In other words, people do not participate at the policy- and decision-making level as their interaction with the councillors is minimal and they are not interested in holding councillors accountable, (Nyawo 2017:10). He concludes that the public have a limited contribution towards the strengthening of good governance in the local sphere of government. Nyawo (2017:10) recommends that municipalities strengthen their mechanisms for public participation and accountability to ensure that the local communities fully participate in processes, and they should strengthen their communication channels to ensure that the information is communicated widely and effectively to the community.

Dombo (2021:152) sums up the role of the media as civic fora, watchdog, and agenda-setter. Media scholars such as Servaes (2009) and Ali (2005) are unanimous that the watchdog function of the media is rooted in the media accountability role in governance (Dombo 2021:152). Chulu (2020:36) argues that there is need by the radio stations to enhance the airing of good governance programs to inform and educate the communities on public governance participation. According to UNESCO (2005:17)

free and independent media are important development tools. The document identifies media's positive influence on economic and social practices, good governance, the fight against corruption and access to the essential social services as key in sustainable human development. The document states that a significant positive correlation can be seen to exist between the power of the media, the accountability of leaders and the improvements occurring in sustainable human development.

1.4 Layout

Chapter 1: Introduction

This chapter will be covering the introduction, motivation, research statement, aims and objectives of the study. The chapter will conclude with the research methodology focusing on specific techniques to be used to identify, select, process, and analyse information about the study.

Chapter 2: Legislative framework

This chapter will be focusing on Section 16 of Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) that protects freedom of expression and Section 32 that deals with the right of access to any information held by the State. These sections in the constitution are aimed at protecting and promoting individual rights to access information so that they can be able to hold government accountable without any interference. In addition, Section 152 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) states that local government should provide democratic and accountable government for local communities and to encourage the involvement of communities and community organisations in the matters of local government. This chapter will be discussing local government legislation seeking to promote and enforce accountability, transparency, and good governance in municipalities. Section 17 of the Municipal

Systems Act of 32 of 2000 requires municipalities to put in place systems for communities to participate in the decision making process. This chapter will also interrogate Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA) Act and MDDA act.

Chapter 3: Theoretical perspectives

This chapter will highlight theories that are related to municipal accountability and good governance. The role of community media and challenges in promoting accountability, transparency and good governance will be discussed from a theoretical perspective.

Chapter 4: Research Methodology

Chapter four will discuss case study methodology for the study. It will be followed by a discussion on the research design used to generate, collect, and analyse data. The application of empirical data sourcing methods such as case study and documentation will be discussed at length.

Chapter 5: Findings, Conclusion and Recommendations

The final chapter will unpack the findings of the empirical research. This will be followed by conclusions and recommendations and interventions on how community media can enhance its role in promoting accountability and good governance in Chris Hani District Municipality

CHAPTER 2

2.1 Legislative Framework

The chapter begins with a focus on Section 16 of Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) which protects freedom of expression and Section 32 that deals

with the right of access to any information held by the state. These sections in the constitution that are aimed at/ to protect and promote individual rights to access information so that they can hold government accountable without any interference will be fully explained. In addition, Section 152 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) states that local government should provide democratic and accountable government for local communities and to encourage the involvement of communities and community organisations in the matters of local government. Section 17 of the Local Government Municipal Systems Act of 32 of 2000 requires municipalities to put in place systems for communities to participate in the decision-making process. The chapter will explore how municipalities are deepening democracy by giving local citizens a direct say in municipal planning and budgeting to enhance accountability of municipal councils to local citizens. This chapter will discuss legislations that seeks to promote and enforce accountability, transparency, and good governance in municipalities. As local government is the closest government sphere to the citizens, this chapter will delve on how the Local Government Municipal Systems Act and White Paper on Local Government of 1998 compels them to develop a culture of municipal governance by promoting participatory governance.

The chapter will interrogate instruments of legislation that are relevant to the successful functioning of community media in promoting good governance and accountability such as the Act of 1999, Independent Communications Authority of South Africa Act of 2000; and the Access to Information Act of 2000. The Promotion of Access to Information Act of 2000 is currently used by the media to enhance transparency, accountability, and good governance through investigative journalism. In recognition of the need to support and promote a free and diverse media, parliament of South Africa passed the Media Diversity Development Agency Act No. 14 of 2002

established MDDA (the Agency) to help create an enabling environment for media development and diversity that is conducive to public discourse. The objective of the Agency is to ensure that all citizens can access information in a language of their choice and contributing to the transformation of media access, ownership, and control patterns in South Africa MDDA (2022:16). The legislations that protect and encourage the media to play its role of promoting a culture of accountability and good governance are in important in the efforts to strengthened South Africa's democracy.

2.2 Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996)

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) acknowledges the role played by local government as a third sphere of government that is at the core service delivery. The preamble of the constitution of states that an open society in which government is based on the will of the people and every citizen is equally protected by law is sacrosanct. Chapter 7 of the constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) advocates for municipalities advocates to be democratic and accountable, and to encourage the involvement of communities and community organisations in the matters of local government. In South Africa, municipalities are obligated by Section 16 of the Local Government Municipal Systems Act of 2000, to develop a culture of municipal governance with a purpose to enhance community participation in municipal council affairs. The Act requires municipalities to create conditions for participation in relation to the following activities:

- Preparation of the Integrated Development Plan (IDP).
- Establishment, implementation, and review of the Performance Management System.
- Community participation in the Budget Process.
- Strategic decisions relating to the provision of municipal services.

- Building the capacity of local communities to enable effective participation in these areas.
- Councillors and municipal employees to foster a culture of community participation.

As stipulated in the legislative provisions, Sebola (2012:04) states that public involvement in the affairs of government is allowed so that the public and relevant institutions can exercise their constitutional right to be informed and participate. However, Peter (2017:27) argues that municipalities have been wrestling with a multitude of other transformation issues, with the result that very few actively encourage communities to involve themselves in the affairs of the municipality. Peter (2017:28) notes that municipalities need to constantly involve the communities in their planning processes to ensure good governance. He argues that municipalities must be transparent, accountable, and hold regular engagements with the communities.

Burns et al. (2017:37) suggest that citizens need means to engage with government to access relevant and timely information so that they can assess governments performance in the delivery of public services. The Government Communications Policy (RSA Presidency 2018:06) asserts state organs should ensure that information is widely accessible to citizens in a bid to encourage them to participate in shaping government policies and taking up opportunities that affect their lives. The above statements affirm community media's crucial of being a democratic watchdog that is at the heart of accountability, transparency and good governance.

2.3 Promotion of Access to information Act (Republic of South Africa Act 2 of 2000)

In terms of Section 195(1) of the Constitution of 1996, government is compelled to provide members of the public with timely, accessible, and accurate information.

This right is protected by Article 32(1) of the Constitution which states that, “everyone has the right of access to any information held by the state; and be any information that is held by another person and that is required for the exercise or protection of any rights”. Section 32(2) of the Constitution (1996) further provides for the enactment of national legislation to give effect to this fundamental right. In compliance with provisions of Section 32(2) of the Constitution, Parliament of South Africa passed the Promotion of Access to Information Act (PAIA), 2000 (Act No. 2 of 2000) that recognises the right of access to information as a bedrock of effective governance. Thornhill (2015:82) agrees that the public is entitled to information they may require to call a political office-bearer to account for his/her action or inaction. It also implies that any public action should be open to public scrutiny, thus affording citizens the opportunity to establish the justification for the decisions and actions of political office-bearers and officials.

As a signatory to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) (1948) of the United Nations (UN), South Africa is obligated to respect Article 19 that state, “Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers”.

According to (Maphiri 2012:64) through the Bill of Rights (1996), the media is guaranteed access to any information held by the state; and any information that is held by another person and that is required for the exercise or protection of any rights. In South Africa access to state information affords citizens from all walks of life an opportunity to make meaningful input and participation in the national discourse especially on matters related to governance at local level.

Maphiri (2012:64) states that community medias important role is confirmed by the willingness of all three spheres of government to regularly use it as a channel to disseminate information to local communities in rural and township areas. Sebola (2017:30) asserts that the communication tools that fit the circumstances of a country are likely to be effective in making significant contribution in enhancing citizens to participate in public policy formulation and decision-making process.

2.4 Freedom of Expression

Freedom of expression is one of the cornerstones of South African's democratic dispensation which recognises the importance of a free media environment. Section 16 of the Constitution (1996) includes freedom of the press and other media and to receive and the right to receive information and unrestricted ideas. The main goal of these rights is to protect is to promote open, responsive, and accountable governance. The Government Communications Policy (RSA Presidency 2018:07), the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Act 108 of 1996) provides the framework for communication within the South African environment and regards freedom of expression and the public's right to information as fundamental rights. It further states that government communication is driven by democratic principles of openness and participation, and is guided by the basic principles of transparency, accountability and consultation.

South African Litigation Centre (2023:n.p) points out that for individuals to receive information and ideas, a free press is and believes that the role of the mass media is therefore central in allowing the right to freedom of expression to contribute fully to democracy, transparency, and accountability. In contextualising the role of media, South African Litigation Centre (2023:n.p) referred to the South African Constitutional Court comment, "In considering the comprehensive quality of the right,

one also cannot neglect the vital role of a healthy press in the functioning of a democratic society.” In reference to the function of the press as a watchdog, South African Litigation Centre (2023:n.p) acknowledges the remarks made by the South African High Court that:

“It is the function of the press to ferret out corruption, dishonesty, and graft wherever it may occur and to expose the perpetrators. The press must reveal dishonest mal and inept administration. It must also contribute to the exchange of ideas already alluded to. It must advance communication between the governed and those who govern. The press must act as the watchdog of the governed.”

As indicated by the above-mentioned judgement from South African High Court, the function of the community media as watchdog is protected and encouraged by law to expose corruption and malfeasance in government. A UNESCO Report (2006) on good governance state that when there is a free, strong, and independent space for the press, every aspect of good governance is respected. Moreover, the report further states that it is only when the press is open to observe, dissect, investigate, and criticise the government and the public administrations, that good governance is upheld. The gains made under freedom of expression are being threatened by the Protection of State Information Bill (2020) that remains unsigned for several years after it was passed by South African Parliament to replace the Public Information Act of 1982. Thomas and Sookrajowa (2017:45) argue that the Bill is perceived as jeopardising media freedom by inhibiting free speech and investigative journalism. Thomas and Sookrajowa (2017:45) claim that since 1994, the media has been open to criticize and denounce bad governance, but the Bill threatens the medias function of checks and balances, its status as a source of information of ideas and its role influencing public agenda.

2.5 White Paper on Local Government 1998

According to the White Paper on Local Government (RSA DPLG 1997:08), local government has a critical role to play in rebuilding local communities and environments, as the basis for a democratic, integrated, prosperous and truly non-racial society. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) mandates local government to:

- Provide democratic and accountable government for local communities.
- Ensure the provision of services to communities in a sustainable manner.
- Promote social and economic development.
- Promote a safe and healthy environment.
- Encourage the involvement of communities and community organisations in the matters of local government.

Peter (2017:29) holds a view that the White Paper on Local Government, 1998, is the focal point for a developmental local government system by obtaining cooperation with the citizens and to their service delivery needs. Section B of the White Paper on Local Government, 1998 defines developmental local government as local government committed to working with citizens and groups within the community to find sustainable ways to meet their social, economic, and material needs and improve the quality of their lives. The White Paper (RSA 1998:33) suggests that municipalities to develop mechanisms to ensure citizen participation in policy initiation, formulation, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of programmes.

Municipalities need to be aware of the divisions within local communities and seek to promote the participation of marginalised and excluded groups in community processes, White Paper (RSA 1998:34). The White Paper (RSA 1998:34) articulates that adopting inclusive approaches, fostering community participation can encourage

the participation of marginalised groups in the local community. It is evident that the White Paper on Local Government compels municipalities to develop public participation programmes to enhance local participatory governance.

2.6 Independent Communications Authority of South Africa Act (Republic of South Africa Act 2000)

Independent Broadcasting Authority Act (IBA 153 of 1993) defines community media as one of the forces that is entrusted with the task of keeping communities engaged on many different aspects of life, due to its nature and mandate. The statutory body responsible for broadcast regulation is the Independent Communication Authority of South Africa (ICASA), which serves as a licensing authority and is also mandated to monitor license conditions regarding local content and other issues. ICASA is mandated by the constitution for the regulation of broadcasting in the national interest and to ensure fairness and a diversity of views and was established by the Independent Communications Authority of South Africa Act of 2000 (amended in 2006). The Independent Broadcasting Authority Act (No. 4 of 1999) states that community radio stations have to comply with several requirements that includes programming that is aimed at the community in question, reflects the language of their audience and devoting 20% of music broadcast to music of South African origin. In an effort to ensure to ensure inclusivity and diversity in the sector, Wasserman (2020:459) states an important intervention in the post-apartheid media landscape of creating a three-tier broadcasting system, consisting of a public broadcaster, the commercial broadcasters and community broadcasters. According to Wasserman (2020:459) the regulation and licensing of the latter tier was done to provide a counterbalance to the dominance of commercial broadcasters. More than 100 community radio stations were licensed during the early democratic period to give disadvantaged communities a

voice as well as the opportunity to produce their own media, in their own languages Wasserman (2020:459).

According to the Independent Communications Authority of South Africa Act of 2000 (amended in 2006) community broadcasting licence allows for a non-profit organisation to serve the broadcasting needs of a community for a maximum of four years and it is renewable on condition that all requirements set out by the licensing authority are met. Mahlase (2019: n.p.) differs and notes that the Independent Communications Authority of South Africa Act of 2000 intention of shutting down validly operating community broadcasting service licensees that are allegedly non-compliant. She believes that the community media sector plays a critical role in society as it generally services marginalized and under-served communities. This is because it plays a critical role in ensuring the free flow of a diversity of news, information, and education information across South Africa.

2.7 Media Diversity Development Agency (MDDA) Act No. 14 of 2002

The Media Diversity Development Agency Act (RSA 2002:04) defines MDDA as a statutory development agency that is mandated to provide finance and support to community and small commercial media to promote media development and diversity in in South Africa. The agency's mandate is encapsulated in Section 3 of the MDDA Act of 2002, from Section 16 and 32 of the Constitution Act No. 108 of 1996, thereby providing for freedom of expression and access to information. The agency was established after government made a committed to setup a development fund that would drive the growth of the community media sector and provide for alternative voices. The MDDA Act (RSA 2002:04) defines media as all forms of mass communication, such as printed publications, radio, television, and new electronic platforms for delivering content. The goal of the agency is to provide support and

encourage the participation of historically disadvantaged communities and persons in the media industry as owners, managers, producers, and consumers of media. The objectives of the agency are to:

- Encourage ownership and control of, and access to, media by historically disadvantaged communities and historically diminished indigenous language and cultural groups.
- Encourage the development of human resources and training, and capacity building, within the media industry, especially among historically disadvantaged groups.
- Encourage the channelling of resources to the community media and small commercial media sectors.
- Support initiatives which promote literacy and a culture of reading.
- Encourage the research of media development and diversity.

In the study titled *Freeing the Airwaves, Building our Democracy*, Pather (2019:07) acknowledges that the founders of South African democracy envisaged a free and vibrant media sector would enable and advance freedom of expression and access to information as cornerstones of our democracy. Pather (2019:07), affirms that a healthy democracy needs an informed citizenry, and the media plays a crucial role in the following ways:

- As a public watchdog to keep politicians and public officials in check.
- As a catalyst for democracy and development by promoting transparency and accountability and making citizens aware of economic, cultural, social, and political developments.
- As a platform for dialogue and debate.

- As a detective in society through in-depth, long-term investigative journalism to uncover corruption, maladministration, and abuse by the rich and powerful in society.
- As an advocate for democracy, rule of law and good governance by reporting on election broadcasting in support of free and fair elections and educating voters about how government is run. Well-informed voters in a democratic society are vital in ensuring an accountable and responsive government. The media also exposes loopholes in the democratic system.

The MDDA Act seeks to create a conducive environment for media diversity and development to enable citizens to be part of public discourse. The MDDA plays a critical role in deepening democracy, freedom of expression as well as language and culture.

2.8 Local Government Municipal Systems Act (Republic of South Africa Act of 2000)

The Local Government Municipal System Act (RSA 2000:30) states that a municipality must setup mechanisms, processes, and procedures to encourage and facilitate community participation about the rights and duties of members of the local community on municipal governance, management, and development. When communicating with the citizens, the Local Government Municipal System Act (RSA 2000:30) highlights that a municipality must consider a language preferences and usage in the municipality; and the special needs of people who cannot read or write. In terms of section 20 (1) of the Local Government Municipal Systems Act (2000:31) states that a municipality must give notice to the public, in a manner determined by the municipal council, of the time, date and venue of every ordinary meeting of the council; and special or urgent meetings of the council, except when time constraints

make this impossible. The Act point out that the municipal council meetings and committees are open to members of the including the media. According to the Local Government Municipal System Act (RSA 2000:34) members of the public and the media can be excluded from council meetings if it is reasonable to do so having regard to the nature of the business being transacted; and a by-law or a resolution of the council specifying the circumstances in which a meeting maybe closed. The Local Government Municipal System Act (RSA 2000:34) states municipal council may not exclude the public including the media, when considering or voting on any of the following matters:

- A budget tabled in the council.
- The municipality's draft integrated development plan, or any amendment of the plan, tabled in the council.
- A draft by-law tabled in the council.
- The municipality's draft performance management system
- The decision to enter into a service delivery agreement.

The above-mentioned municipal key decisions must be published or broadcast through local newspaper circulating in the area and radio broadcasts covering the municipal area. The community media outlets are recognised by the Local Government Municipal Systems Act of (2000) as the most valuable channel in connecting the municipality and citizens in relations to council decisions. The community media is the most viable tool that local government can use to reach citizens in their local languages and this in turn strengthen local participatory governance.

2.9 Local Government Municipal Finance Management Act (Republic of South Africa Act 56 of 2003)

In terms of Section 7 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) a municipal council must conduct its business in an open manner. The Local Government Municipal Finance Management Act (2003) Circular No 32, compels municipal councils to establish Municipal Public Accounts Committee (MPACs) as a platform to promote good governance, transparency, and accountability on the use of municipal resources. MPACs are key in accountability, good governance, and oversight over the obligations of councils to hold the executive and entities to account, and to ensure the efficient and effective use of municipal resource. The Circular 32 of the Local Government Municipal Finance Management Act (2003) further states that Municipal Public Accounts Committee aims to assist municipal council in holding executive and municipal administrations to account, and to ensure the effective and efficient utilisation of municipal resources. Nyathela *et al.* (2012:05) claim that the rationale for establishing MPACs at all municipalities arose due to the following, weak monitoring, evaluation, and enforcement of compliance by municipalities; inadequate accountability systems, poor service delivery to the people, and bad financial management at the municipalities.

Section 129(4)(a) of the Municipal Finance Management Act (Act 56 of 2003) states that when Municipal Councils are considering adopting annual reports, they should conduct public hearings. Section 121(1) of the Municipal Finance Management Act 56 of 2003 (MFMA) stipulates that every municipality and municipal entity must for each financial year prepare an annual report in accordance with its guidelines, while section 127(5)(a)(ii) of the Municipal Finance Management Act, No.56 of 2003, point out that the Accounting Officer of the municipality must invite the local community to

submit representations in connection with the annual report. The annual report provides detailed account on council performance against the budget for the financial year reported on, and to promote accountability to the local community for the decisions made throughout the year. According to the MFMA of 2003, an annual report should include:

- The annual financial statements of the Municipality, and consolidated annual financial statements, submitted to the Auditor-General for audit in terms of section 126 (1) of the MFMA.
- The Auditor-Generals audit.
- The annual performance report of the Municipality.
- An assessment of the Municipality's performance against the measurable performance objectives referred to in Section 17 (3)(b) of the MFMA for revenue collection from each revenue source and for each vote in the Municipality's approved budget for the financial year.
- Recommendations of the Municipality's Audit Committee.

Community media play a very important role as a channel that publicise MPACs public hearings and encouraging members of the public to inspect and made comments on the draft annual report. As a watchdog that keep municipal executive accountable to local citizens, the community media interrogates the draft annual report to give citizens a better understanding of the workings of their councils. Nyathela *et al.* (2012:26) suggest that the function of MPACs is to promote effective management of municipal finances, promote effective service delivery and good governance.

2.10 Local Government Service Delivery and Budget Implementation Plan

According to Local Government Municipal Finance Management Act, (MFMA) (Act No. 56 of 2003), municipal councils should develop, implement, and monitor their Annual Service Delivery and Budget Implementation Plan (SDBIP). Khumalo (2015:61) defines SDBIP as the management and implementation tool which sets in-year information, e.g., quarterly service delivery and monthly budget targets, and links each service delivery output to the budget of the Municipality. Khumalo (2015:61) states that SDBIP provides credible management information and a detailed plan how the municipality will provide services, and which inputs and financial resources should be used. The SDBIP outline service delivery targets and performance indicators for each quarter linked to the performance agreements of executive management. Khumalo (2015:61) argue that the SDBIP therefore facilitates oversight over financial and non-financial performance of the municipality. The SDBIP is an important instrument that assists municipal councils and the community including community media to play their oversight responsibilities as it is an implementation and monitoring tool.

2.11 Local Government Integrated Development Plan

According to the Local Government Transition Act Second Amendment Act 1996 (LGTA), the adoption Integrated Development Plans (IDPs) became a legal requirement in South Africa for local councils. Asha and Makhalela (2020:4) states that the IDP is the strategic and participatory process through which municipalities develop their Integrated Development Plan. The IDP is the outcome of the planning process which guides all developmental activities in a municipality (Asha & Makhalela 2020:4). The Local Government Municipal Systems Act, 2000 (Act 32 of 2000) lays down some

processes of IDP, which comprise of phases that the municipality undertakes, to formulate the plan. The IDP is referred as municipal guiding document that informs all planning, budgeting, management, and decision-making to enhance service delivery. Asha and Makhalela (2020:4) assert that the IDP contributes positively to enhancing service delivery by the municipalities, as it identifies key developmental objectives which are translated into programmes and projects that reduce the underlying causes and symptoms of service delivery backlogs and delays.

The Local Government Municipal Systems Act 2000 (Act 32 of 2000) stipulates that municipalities should create conditions for local community to participate in the IDP to ensure that beneficiaries of the municipality are involved in the municipal processes. Mathane (2013:107) state that the White Paper on Local Government (1998) state that municipalities should shape local democracy by enhancing participatory planning by constantly involving citizens, community organisations and corporate businesses. Van der Watt and Marais (2021:03) affirm that community participation is necessary for drafting the IDP as the document covers issues that affect them. The involvement of citizens improves accountability and transparency and guarantees them a high degree of responsiveness to their needs and issues by municipal councils. Molale (2019:69) argues that some community members are unaware of the advantages that empowers them to participate through the IDP process bring change in their lives. He suggests that communication efforts on IDP process with communities need to improve by involving the media to prevent IDP meetings from being plagued by unrelated service delivery issues. Molale (2019:69) argues that local radio stations are the most effective communication method used to communicate with the communities about the IDP hearing and engagements. He believes that community radio makes it easy for citizens to listen and engage voice

out their complaints without being identified. It is evident that the municipalities should use local newspapers and radio stations to inform the community of the progress of their IDP process.

2.12 Municipal Bylaws

The Chapter 7 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) compels municipalities to create and administer local legislation that will assist in regulating activities that fall within their competence. Moses (2018:34) argues that the proper administration of these matters ensures that local government can provide services to communities in a sustainable manner. Most municipalities especially in the urban and semi-urban use municipal property rates known as property rates as one of their main sources of income. Moses (2018:36) asserts that municipal council must consult with the community about the draft bylaws by publishing it for public comment. According to Moses (2018:37) local government cannot turn a blind eye on the views of the people that may be affected by a draft by-law. Municipal councils cannot ignore public concerns about the consequences that might be brought about by that law. Before passing the by-law, the Local Government Municipal Systems Act, 2000 (Act 32 of 2000) emphasises that municipal councils should be transparent and accountable by ensuring the following: notices are published in local newspapers and radio stations of the area or by other appropriate means of communication; the promulgated by-law is then uploaded to the municipal website for easy access by the public.

The Local Government Municipal Systems Act, 2000 (Act 32 of 2000) requires that a municipal by-law may be enforced only after it has been published in the official provincial government gazette of the on request of the local municipality. Local governments compulsion to provide information to citizens about the government

programmes and introduction of new legislations is essential in ensuring that they are accountable to them. Community media therefore provides a convenient communication platform for municipalities, and it should be used for public participation to invigorate citizens enthusiasm and the spirit of a listening, and responsive government.

2.13 The Local Government Municipal Property Rates Act (Republic of South Africa Act 6 of 2004)

The Local Government Municipal Property Rates Act 6 of 2004 regulates the power of a municipality to impose rates on property. According to the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA) (RSA 2020:1) municipal property rates are a cent amount in the rand rate levied on the market value of property. The Local Government Municipal Property Rates Act 6 of 2004 states that municipalities should be transparent and fair when developing their property rate policies. The COGTA (RSA 2020:4) asserts that municipal property rates policy should be subjected to a community participation process before it is passed. Section 50(3) of the Municipal Property Rates Act 6 of 2004 compels municipalities to inform and involve citizens through local newspapers and radio to enable them to understand their rights and responsibilities in relation to the property policy.

2.14 The Local Government Municipal Demarcation Board Act (Republic of South Africa Act 27 of 1998)

The Municipal Demarcation Board (MDB) is an independent institution established in terms of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996. In terms of Section 21 of the Local Government Municipal Demarcation Act, 1998, the demarcation board determines a municipal boundary on request by a municipality with

the concurrence of any other municipality affected by the proposed determination. According to sections 155(3) of the Constitution of South Africa, 1996 the board is mandated to determine and redetermine municipal boundaries, consider the capacity of district and local municipalities to perform their function and to exercise their powers, delimit wards independently. The constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) Section 157(4)(a) states that any legislation should incorporate public participation framework to address any impediments that can hinder participation of local citizens. Michels and De Graaf (2010:480) is of the opinion that when citizens are involved in public decision process, it makes them feel that they are part of government. Reddy and Sabelo (1997:13) agree that the local population should actively participate in affairs directly affecting them. Reddy and Sabelo (1997:13) point out the functions of local government as:

- Involving citizens in the performance of local public duties.
- Strengthening the restrictions and controls of political power, which are indispensable to a democracy.
- Widening the basis of political participation.
- Safeguarding pluralism at various levels and different local administrative units.
- facilitating problem-oriented grassroots approaches which citizens appreciate.

Tommasoli (2013:37) asserts that development goals are most often achieved when democratic institutions provide opportunities for all citizens to express their demands and to hold elected officials to account for their actions. It is evident that participatory governance and transparency as discussed is the key component of public participation in the municipal demarcation process. Section 26 of the Municipal

Demarcation Act (1998), states that the board should publish a notice about its intention in the local media circulating in the area and invite members of the public to submit their views and representations in writing. Kleynhans (2023:n.p) contend that it is extremely important that citizens participate in the process of the board to gather sufficient information through a meaningful public participation process to make informed decisions.

2.15 Conclusion

This chapter dealt with local government legislative instruments that should be complied with in relation to accountability and transparency. As reflected in this chapter, the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996), places onus on local municipal councils to promote and encourage accountability as the centre of local governance as it promotes community involvement and participation. The Constitution of South Africa envisages a local government system that is democratic and accountable to local communities. This chapter discussed the importance for municipal councils to create conditions for participation in relation to the key municipal programmes such as IDPs, performance management and budgets. Each local government legislation discussed compels municipalities to create mechanism that seeks to promote accountability and good governance in local councils. Legislative interventions such as Local Government Municipal Systems Act of 2000 compels local council to promote a culture of municipal participatory governance with a view of enhancing community participation in municipal council affairs.

In the context of local government, community medias function is to disseminate accurate, unbiased, and reliable information regarding the situation of a municipal council and to hold municipal executives accountable. Community media has been identified by various local government legislations as a key communication

channel that should be utilised to encourage citizen participation in key decisions and programmes of municipal councils. For example, if a municipality is introducing a new bylaw, passing a budget and an annual report, it is required to use local media circulating or broadcasting in the area. The Access to Information Act of 2000, has been used by local media outlets to access council documents to conduct their investigative journalism of unearthing corruption and maladministration. The absence of such legislations would have hampered the medias' ability to do its work and advancing the country's democratic principles as enshrined in the constitution. The Freedom of Expression as enshrined in the Bill of Rights (1996) have allowed the media to do its job without hinderance and intimidation. Freedom of expression does not only enable dialogue and increases public knowledge, but it also enables the media to play its watchdog role of questioning government, which helps to keep it accountable.

Community media is a key instrument that gives a voice to citizens not only as a watchdog that report on council matters but can assist local councils to communicate and interact with interested stakeholders. It is an important mechanism for public information but faces impediments that make it difficult to undertake investigative journalism to ensure accountability. This chapter discussed existing legislative frameworks that seeks to regulate and capacitate community media in South Africa. The dawn of democracy heralded the enactment of legislations that created opportunities for the community media to express their views openly and freely without any hindrances. The introduction of MDDA created mechanisms aimed at sustaining the community media because of the recognition of its pivotal role in the promotion of democracy, open discourse, and access to information. Community media encourages plurality of voices in society and in response government established MDDA to allow

community media to carry out its function in a conducive environment by availing adequate financial resources to ensure their sustainability.

CHAPTER 3

3.1 Theoretical Frameworks: Governance and Media Theories

The theoretical framework in this study is used with the aim of providing a systematic and structured hypothetical argument upon which the research is justified. The chapter discusses operational governance such as administrative, political, civic, economic, and systemic governance that are in practice. It will look at key pillars of good governance such as accountability, public participation, and transparency as they play an important role in sustaining a democratic state. The UNESCO Report (2005) on Media and Good Governance emphasises the role of the media in bolstering good governance around the world. Asemah (2013:03) asserts that the media has a crucial role to play in good governance through information dissemination. Since governance is the process of decision-making and the process by which decisions are implemented, the chapter will define governance theories and concepts, pillars of good governance, and principles of democracy. Concepts such as participation, accountability, transparency, responsiveness, effectiveness and efficiency and the rule of law as the cornerstone of good governance will be explained. In this context, the media plays a key role in assuring that corruption is minimised, the views of citizens are considered and that the voices of citizens are heard in decision-making. The governance theory framework of Stoker (1998:18) is premised on five propositions that are focused on styles of governing.

Lastly, the chapter provides an analysis on the normative media theories on how relationship between media and the government propagate the promotion of accountability and good governance. Community media enables communities to have a voice in the public discourse. According to Asemah (2013:03) the media is often referred to as the watch dog of the society because of its willingness to provide an

oversight when something is arising. The media have a crucial function as the sector of the society that is most able to promote vigilance towards the rule of law by fostering investigative journalism and promoting openness UNESCO (2005:33).

3.2 Governance Concepts

According to Maropa (2014:02) governance refers to the procedures of value, policies, and institutions by which society manages its economic, political, and societal affairs. The UNPD (1997:11) defines governance as “an exercise of economic, political, and administrative authority to manage national or local government affairs”. The United Nations (UN) (2023:n.p) states that governance refers to the activities of all political and administrative authorities to govern their country. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) defines governance as a concept in which a country is managed, including economic, policy, and legal aspects. Abas (2019:3) is of the opinion that governance is the process of governing a city, an organization, or system where the decision-making process is involved by which the decisions are implemented or not implemented. Smith (2007) asserts that governance is perceived as government focuses on the management of the public sector and the legal and administrative capacity. Whereas governance including politics focuses on the way power and authority are exercised the management of a country’s affairs, the relationships between rulers and ruled, how interests are articulated, and rights exercised Smith (2007).

Maropa (2014:02) is of the view that governance is about the implementation of laws, the actual provision of services and products to citizens of the country by government. Those government programmes should and ought to contribute towards an enhanced quality of life for all the people of the country. The concept of governance is viewed by the World Bank (1997) as the use of political authority and exercise of

control in a society in relation to the management of its resources for social and economic development. James (2014) argues that governance advocates for the separation of the three traditional powers where legislature and the judiciary are allowed to exercise their prerogatives side by side with the executive branch. He further argues that the person at the top does not enjoy unlimited power but governs for the good of the majority rather than for a faithful few. Van der Waldt (2017:98) states local governance refers to how power is exercised, shared, and checked through mechanisms of participation, accountability, transparency, rule of law and a responsive public sector at the local level of government.

The UNESCO Report on Communication for Development (2008) agrees with the above-mentioned statement that the governance requires the separation of powers, participation, transparency, accountability, the rule of law, efficacy, equity, and consensus along with political, trade-union and media pluralism. In context of this study, citizens, media, and corporates have a role to play in influencing the decision-making process in local governance. Maropa (2014:02) suggests that governance is about the implementation of laws, the actual provision of services and products to citizens of the country by government. Abas (2019:4) affirms governance laws have been changing from dealing with economic growth to concentrating on poverty reduction and human welfare. In a modernisation governance framework, development is concerned about the process of transforming traditional societies into rich and modern societies. Therefore, the governance approaches emphasise on democracy, equality, redistribution, gender, participation, and empowerment have emerged Abas (2019:4). Van der Waldt (2017:97) sees local governance as an all-encompassing system of values and policies that govern behaviour at the local level, and they entail interactions and relationships between public officials and citizens at

the local level of government. Governance at the local level is also concerned with the provision of basic services to meet the needs of local communities. In general, it is on the local levels of governance where sustainable development programmes are executed via service delivery projects and where people acutely experience the level of goodness of governance Van der Waldt (2017:97).

Botha (2004: 20) argues that better governance and public policy has widened the policy process to include the participation of and communications with wide range stakeholders. He further argues in democratic societies, participation and communications has opened the political process to formulate and implement more transparent and responsive public policies. Olowu and Sako (2002:2) illustrates this inclusive approach has resulted in participation of key role players such as legislators, political parties, interest groups, research organisations and to a degree, even local government in the policy process. In its 1992 governance report, The World Bank recognises that there are differences between governance as an analytic framework and governance as an operational framework in the attainment of better governance and public policy. It argues that this has led to the identification of three aspects of governance, and they are:

- The form of the political regime.
- The process by which authority is exercised in the management of economic and social resources for the overall development of a country.
- The capacity of government to design, formulate and implement policies and discharge functions.

Taking the operational framework of governance as contemplated by the World Bank (1992), Botha (2004:20) argues that these three aspects of governance

mentioned above can be applied in identification of the causes for the wide-spread poverty in Africa. He further argues by taking them into consideration becomes clear that the problem of poverty and the ravaging epidemic can directly be related to, the incorrect way authority is exercised and the in-ability of governments to design, formulate and implement policies that will have a positive effect on the economic and social development of their respective countries. Cilliers (2003:70) affirms that the lack of development in Africa, as well as hunger, poverty and the have been identified as political and governance issues. Cilliers (2003:70) supports this and say “Kofi Annan, the Secretary General of the United Nations in his speech at the United Nations’s General assembly in 2002 identified good governance as the single most important factor in eradicating poverty and promoting development”.

Rotberg (2002:13) states that are well governed, government delivers high levels of security, maintains strong adherence to the rule of law and respects political freedoms and human rights. “Furthermore, governments that are effective, nurture strong institutions, provide quality educational and health services, strengthen and regulate effective infrastructure, bolster an economic framework conducive to growth and prosperity, offer an atmosphere in which civil society can flourish, and regulate the environment for the benefit of all its citizens” Botha (2004:20). According to Olowu and Sako (2002) there are six well-known criteria that can be made operational, and which are also to be found in many successful public and social policy intervention: these criteria are as follows:

- Effectiveness, the actual achievement of goals and objectives of policy (outcomes). This is indicated by the contribution policy outputs make to the realisation of policy objectives.

- Efficiency, realisation of policy objectives in less time and with less cost. This is indicated by the amount of output to input.
- Responsiveness, the degree to which policy design is responsive to the legitimate interests of different groups affected by the policy. This can be seen in all aspects of the policy design and the process.
- Innovation creativity and innovation in policy design, mainly in the pursuit of realising the first three criteria. In practice this is a difficult criterion to attain in bureaucratic environments.
- Political feasibility is the degree of acceptance of policy-by-policy makers, political executives, legislature, and interest groups.
- Administrative feasibility is the willingness, capacity and ability of implementing agencies and target groups to realise policy objectives within stated time and cost parameters.

Botha (2004:22) adds additional criteria such as equity, adequacy, efficacy, transparency, and accountability, can be placed under one or the other of the above-mentioned criteria. He asserts that equity is part of responsiveness, adequacy and efficacy are covered under effectiveness and efficiency, and accountability is covered both by political feasibility and responsiveness. The role of governance is a matter of increasing importance in the National, Provincial and Local Government. Lekala (2019:26) suggests the term governance needs to be divided and outlined further for one to better understand it. He identifies five operational governance fields, namely, administrative, political, civic, economic, and systemic governance.

3.3 Political Governance

Mohiddin (2002:2) states that political governance is concerned with the participation, or lack thereof, of the citizens in the decision-making processes that indirectly and directly impact on their livelihood. Swilling (1997:08) argues that governance involves active cooperation and on-going engagement in the process of policy formulation and implementation between politicians, senior management, frontline workers, and citizens. In context of local government, political governance is the process of decision-making that involves the formulation policies, local by-laws, service delivery plans and budgets.

3.4 Administrative Governance

Mohiddin (2002:2) affirms that while political governance deals with the process of decision making, administrative governance is concerned with the execution of decisions in general, the skill sets and knowledge of public servants; the material resources necessary for execution for such roles. Kaufmann *et al.* (2005:215) asserts that government that works in terms of having a solid administrative capacity to deliver basic public services is more likely to earn the respect of the citizens and more likely to be responsive to changing needs than a government with weak administrative capacity. In the context of local governance, the ability to implement service delivery programmes to communities will critically depend upon the ability to strengthen municipal administrative capacity. The poor quality of public service delivery can be attributed to the inadequate capacity of the civil service as well as to the regulatory burden of many inappropriate policies, rules, and procedures Kaufmann *et al.* (2005:217).

3.5 Economic Governance

Mohiddin (2002:2) indicates that economic governance is more concerned with the allocation and utilisation of economic resources so that sustainable use of resources in the public sector is promoted. To achieve this objective, local government needs to create an enabling environment for the use of municipal resources prudently for the betterment of its citizens. A strong fiscal governance ensures the effective use of resources to address the increased needs of citizens in a sustainable manner.

3.6 Civic Governance

Mohammadi *et al.* (2011: 211) states that civic governance is about how citizens form and shape their collective actions with other institutions at the national and local levels, and with also non-governmental actors, and public sectors, and how they articulate their priorities and exercise their interests. It is through various platforms such as the media, civic engagement that provide a platform for citizens to express their voices and to contribute to the political functioning of their society. Civic governance and engagement contribute immensely to the well-functioning democracies as it shapes local government engagement with citizens. Chapter 4 of the Municipal Systems Act of 2000 compels municipalities to involve communities in municipal decision-making processes and keep them informed of about municipal affairs, including finances.

3.7 Systemic Governance

In the South African public service context, Naidoo (2004:178) believes that effective governance should be based on efficient systems and structures within and outside government to promote a sustainable public service for effective service delivery. He argues that there is a need to ensure that all government structures are

geared towards achieving the efficient and effective rendering of public service. Meyer (2006:23) suggest that when governance processes are well designed, they coordinate every aspect of an organisation that include financial and non-financial resources in concert toward the strategic objectives of the firm. However, Meyer (2006:23) claims that when they are poorly designed, governance processes can be counterproductive.

3.8 Theories of Governance

Hjern and Porter (1981:213) view governance as comprehensive, functionally uniform, hierarchical organisations that are governed by strong leaders who are democratically responsible and staffed by neutrally competent civil servants who deliver services to citizens are no longer existence. They claim that they have been replaced by organisational society in which many important services are provided through multi-organisational programs, interconnected by clusters of firms, governments, and associations which come together within the framework of these programmes. In reference to new process of governing, Rhodes (1996:652) holds a view that the meaning of governance has been replaced by government, a new method by which society is governed, “governance is ultimately concerned with creating the conditions for ordered rule and collective action”, then which means, it’s output it does not differ with that of governance. the difference between the two – (governance & government) is they are differentiated by processes which they us, and which is done differently on both”.

Stoker (1998:17) states that the implementation of these structures operates within a notion of governance about which a surprising level of consensus has been reached. Schwella *et al.* (2015:43) is of the opinion that governance theories can be formulated in the form of a series of models that constitute the building blocks of the theory. Kickert

et al. (1997:67) argues that in governance theory there are arrangements that involve others who have a say in matters of governance, and/or to accept decisions and responsibilities collectively. Stoker (1999:42) defines governance theory as the “theoretical work of governance that reflects the interest of social science community in the shifting pattern in styles of governing”. He argues that they are structured around five propositions which are discussed below.

Governance is concerned with a set of institutions and actors drawn from, but also beyond government.

Dacu (2002:6) states that this perspective draws attention to the increased involvement of the private and voluntary sectors in service delivery and strategic decision-making. Responsibilities that were previously the near exclusive responsibility of government have been shared. In the context of local government in South Africa, there has been a rise in outsourcing of critical services such as refuse collection and maintenance of municipal critical infrastructure. This shows an increased involvement of private and voluntary sectors in strategic decision-making for service delivery. Hence, the outsourcing of services or public-private partnership is part of the public service reality and decision-making in many countries in this century (Bevir 2007:59). Dacu (2002:6) argue that the public demonstrated a strong preference for organisation and control of local services to be in the hands of an elected council as against appointed bodies or private sector providers. COSATU (2023: n.p) believes that state control is necessary to ensure adequate, quality provision of services to the poor, and to initiate strategic investments to restructure the economy.

Governance identifies the blurring of boundaries and responsibilities for tackling social and economic issues.

This brings attention to a shift in responsibility and stepping back of the state and pushing responsibilities to the private and voluntary sectors. Putman (1993) suggests that governance is concern about social capital and the social underpinnings necessary to effective economic and political performance. He further points out that to effect economic and political performance, governance needs to be associated to social and underpinning resources or capital.

Governance identifies the power dependence involved in the relationships between institutions involved in collective action.

Keping (2018:2) hold a view that governance identifies the power dependence involved in relationships between institutions involved in collective action. He argues that every organisation devoted to collective action must depend on other organisations; to achieve its purpose. Keping (2018:2) asserts it has to exchange resources and negotiate a common goal with others and the outcome of the exchange on the resources of each actor. In tackling social and economic issues confronting their communities local councils, Dacu (2002:6) notes that the inevitably to draw on the resources of other actors in the private and voluntary sectors will require partnerships with higher levels of government. He asserts that local councils could demand the resources to become a significant player, an attractive partner, but they cannot demand autonomy.

Governance is about autonomous self-governing networks of actors, which moves us into the territory of partnership working, one of the key elements of governance.

It allows the development of informal, yet stable and ultimately very powerful partnerships of actors and organisations with access to enhanced resources. Under governance the ultimate partnership activity is the formation of self-governing

networks. The establishment of a viable regime is the ultimate act of power in the context of an emerging system of governance (Dacu 2002:7).

Governance recognises the capacity to get things done which does not rest on the power of government to command.

According to Van Vliet (1993:66), the tasks of government in governance can be classified in the following ways: decomposition and co-ordination, calibration and steering, integration and regulation. Stewart (1996) argues that the first task involves defining a situation, identifying key stakeholders, and then developing effective linkages between the relevant parties. The second, is concerned with asserting influence and steering relationships to achieve desired outcomes. The third is about what others call system management. Dacu (2002:8) suggests the need to think beyond the retooling of government to a broader concern with the institutions and social and economic fabric beyond government. The concept of governance failure is crucial to understanding the new world of governing. Mafunisa (2002:200) is of the opinion that the media should safeguard governance by exposing scandals, mismanagement and corruption committed by political office-bearers and public officials in the public sector.

3.9 Good Governance

According to Rothstain (2013:148) the World Bank Research Institute defines good governance as the traditions and institutions through which authority in a country is exercised. This includes: the process by which governments are selected, monitored, and replaced, the capacity of the government to effectively formulate and implement bound policies and the respect of citizens and the state institutions that govern economic and social interactions among them.

According to Keping (2017:6) good governance is the active and productive cooperation between the state and citizens, and the key to its success lies in the powers participating in political administration. Only when citizens have sufficient political power to participate in elections, policymaking, administration, and supervision can they prompt the state and join hands with it to build public authority and order. The International Union of Local Authorities (IULA) (2023: n.p) believes that good governance aims to minimize corruption, consider the opinions of minorities, listen to the voices of the oppressed people in the decision-making process, and respond actively to the needs of the community now and in the future. Asemah (2013:5) agrees with the above assertion that good governance accomplishes this in a manner essentially free of abuse and corruption and due regard for the rule of law. The principle of democracy and sustainable development will be incomplete without the instrument of good governance. Ali (2017:3) believes that good governance implies present of rule of law, safeguarding of human rights, and existence of honest and efficient government, accountability, transparency, predictability, and openness. Kraai (2016:13) contends that the objective of government is to ensure that democracy subsists within a specific government system so that the rule of law can be applied as well as provide services to the communities. The United Nations Development Programme describes characteristics of good governance in the table below.

Table 1: Characteristics of Good Governance

Governance Principles	Description/Standard
Participation: Legitimacy and Voice	All men and women should have a voice in decision-making, either directly or through legitimate intermediate institutions that represent their interests. Such broad participation is built on freedom of association and speech, as well as capacities to participate constructively.
Strategic vision: Direction	Leaders and the public have a broad and long-term perspective on good governance and human development, along with a sense of what is needed for such development. There is also an understanding of the historical, cultural and social complexities in which that perspective is grounded.
Effectiveness and efficiency: Performance	institutions and processes try to serve all stakeholders.
Accountability	Decision-makers in government, the private sector and civil society organizations are accountable to the public, as well as to institutional stakeholders. This accountability differs depending on the organization and whether the decision is internal or external to an organization.
Fairness and the rule of law	Legal frameworks should be fair and enforced impartially, particularly the laws on human rights.

Equity	All men and women have opportunities to improve or maintain their well-being.
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(Source: UNDP, 1997: 38)

Asemah (2013:5) affirms that good governance prevails when government manages public institutions in an efficient, transparent, and responsive manner and when an informed citizenry participates and is engaged with the government in the pursuit of better life for all. Ndirangu (2012:9) states that good governance can simply mean the effectiveness with which a government performs its work and promotes the public good. The public good is largely defined as enforcement of law and order, revenue collection, allocation of resources to meet specific demands, provision of infrastructure and promotion of human rights. Liu (2017:15) believes that good governance is beneficial to a state's political development, while poor governance is among the most important causes of state failure and underdevelopment.

Research done by Sutcliffe (2020:17) on exploring factors that affect local government institutions, states that good governance is a pre-requisite for achieving the constitutional objectives for local government. He asserts that good governance is internationally recognised as essential at all levels for promoting stability, ensuring progress, and creating sustainable communities. Liu (2017:15) contends that the world is encountering challenges in promoting governance, democracy, transparency, press freedom and economic development. The Economist Index (2022:16) revealed that democratisation suffered more reversals in 2021, with the percentage of people living in a democracy falling to well below 50% and authoritarian regimes gaining ground. Biljohn (2023: n.p) state that good governance in local government has declined as the sector is characterised by poor service delivery, insufficient revenue generation, the non-achievement of service-delivery priorities. Liu (2017:15) is of the view that

good governance is essential for a nation's long-term and sustainable development and the media, as an important information source, play a crucial role in shaping a healthy democracy and bolstering good governance.

Ndirangu (2012:21) postulate that for the media to contribute to good governance, it should be editorially independent, free from any pressure and external interferences, and reflect the plurality of opinions and perceptions to truly help citizens to be informed. He further argues that the media themselves must be credible examples of good governance by upholding professional ethical rules set up through self-regulation, and constantly enhance professionalism, be accountable to the public. Since the 1990s, it has been argued convincingly that the various good governance elements can contribute significantly to the strengthening of public administration capacity and to the achievement of developmental goals in general. Hence, a major development in public sector reform internationally has been governments' commitment to adopt the principles associated with good governance (World Bank, 2000; African Development Report, 2001:50). Various studies in good governance are highlighting it as an important issue because it implies a focus on accountability for performance and results in local government. UN ESCAP (2009:02) states that good governance characteristics comprise of participatory, consensus oriented, accountable, transparent, responsive, effective, and efficient, and followed by the rule of law.

3.10 Participation

Participation by both men and women is a key cornerstone of good governance. Participation could be either direct or through legitimate intermediate institutions or representatives (UNESCO 2005:15). Participation can be seen as a process through which public communities may contribute directly and influence policymaking and

decision-making. As a result, participation in municipalities can be fostered through the preparation, implementation, and the review of a municipal Integrated Development Plan (IDP) in accordance with the section 16 of the Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000. Research done by UNESCO (2005:15) on media and good governance found that the participation of the population in governance is the necessary ingredients for enhancing accountability and transparency. All of these qualities require the action of free, independent, and vigorous information media. Dunu (2013: 188) states that the media enables citizen participation in two ways as a facilitator providing platforms for the citizens to have accurate information that help citizens make informed decisions and take the right course of action beneficial to them. He asserts that the media provide the means for the citizens to register their feelings and express their assent and dissent concerning issues.

3.11 Rule of Law

Good governance requires fair legal frameworks that are enforced impartially. It further requires full protection of human rights, particularly those of minorities. Impartial enforcement of laws requires an independent judiciary and an impartial and incorruptible police force. The Constitution of Republic of South Africa, 1996 Chapter 7 states that, a municipality has the right to govern, on its own initiative, the local government affairs of its community, subject to national and provincial legislation, as provided for in the Constitution. Kibire (2017:n.p) notes that the media helps to disseminate education for citizens to educate them on various issues including national matters, legislative, constitutional rights, political rights, economic issues, cultural and policies issues. He argues that by educating citizens to gain information

and communication on violation of human rights and democratic oppression, the media helps to promote the rule of law.

3.12 Transparency

Transparency means that decisions taken, and their enforcement are done in a manner that follows rules and regulations. When community members are provided with information and asked for their opinions and given the opportunity to make recommendations, this will lead to better decision-making. Section 75 of the Local Government Municipal Finance Management Act of 2003 requires that the municipalities to place key documents and information on their website, including the IDP, annual report, the annual budget, adjustments budgets and budget related documents and policies.

Williams (2009:48) suggests that transparency can assist local government in meeting its legislative responsibilities and significantly provides governance which has an ethical basis. Access to information in an easy and understandable forms and media is key in enhancing transparency in local governance. Chowdhury (2004) notes that when government is more transparent, the less corrupt it is likely to be at an institutional level. Numerous studies conducted by world bodies such as UNESCO (2022) and Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism (2021) suggest that there is a significant relationship between press freedom and less corruption in several countries. For example, Switzerland is consistently ranks among the least corrupt countries due to its robust judicial system and unrestrained press. Dunu (2013:188) points out the root to transparency is provision of adequate information since transparency implies sharing of information in an open manner. He argues that access

to information by the media and subsequently the public is guaranteed by free and independent media.

The media can play a key role in increasing government accountability to the public by explaining government policies and actions in this manner; what is to be done, how and why an action must take place, who is involved and by what standards decisions are made (Dunu 2013:188). He claims in this way government actions and inactions are exposed to the scrutiny of the public.

3.13 Responsiveness

Good governance requires that institutions and processes try to serve all stakeholders within a reasonable timeframe. In the context of local government Abidin *et al.* (2018:3) believes that local responsiveness is a practical idea for the administrators to be open, able, and willing to respond to unexpected and unpredictable demand by the community. In essence, listening helps to become a practice to promote responsiveness that supports the administrators to turn themselves in a humble way and develop modesty to comprehend capacities. The advantage to promote listening helps the administrators to be opened to understand and construct possibilities as facilitators appreciating harmony between them (Abidin *et al.*, 2018:3). In context of local government, community media can play role as a platform that affords citizen an opportunity to raise their service delivery concerns so that they attended by the local municipal council. Gumede (2014:3) argues that the media is an early warning and a force to pressure government into action against coming social, political, and economic disasters.

3.14 Efficient and Effective Government

Buthelezi (2009) suggests that ineffective government is caused by bad governance. While a good government is to effectively rule set on delivering positive results for communities. Rizkallah (2021:13) believes that a real democracy is based on the concept of participation in the management of the state and dependent on representation for all groups of society and adopts the basis of accountability for any government. Dunu (2013:190) argues that the media can help keep the different institutions and administrators on their toes by readily and regularly reporting cases of inefficiency and other related vices in the system. This way inefficiency in public institutions, organizations and government will be greatly reduced. The media through development of media campaigns, documentaries, editorial comments, and other platforms of criticism can spotlight institutions and practices that are inefficient and unproductive Dunu (2013:190).

3.15 Accountability

Gibbon *et al.* (2008:356) sees accountability as a key requirement of good governance both in governmental institutions and the private sector organisations to ensure they are accountable to the public and to their institutional stakeholders. Mncwango (2015:14) adds that it is compulsory for all stakeholders to be held accountable in the way it performs, to take responsibility for their actions. Perego and Verbeeten (2015:345) argues that accountability is known to be one of the pillars of good governance that pledges that performance and decisions made by the officials be subject to oversight and that the stated objectives are met. The World Bank 2015 report on Accountability in Governance is of the opinion that legislatures play a key role in ensuring accountability based on two distinctive stages which is answerability and enforcement: being answerable is when it is compulsory for the government, the

organisations, and the public officials to give information and reasons about decision and performance to the public and those bodies of accountability that are tasked to provide oversight and enforcement suggests that the organisation or the public that oversees accountability can permit the aberrant party or enhance the contravening behaviour. Hence, different bodies of accountability may oversee either or both stages (namely answerable and enforcement).

Gibbon *et al.* (2008) points out that it is imperative to evaluate the ongoing efficiency of public officials to ensure they provide value for money in the provision of public services and instilling confidence in the government and being responsive to the community they are meant to be serving. The parliament of the Republic of South Africa (2022:8) states that the growing interest in civic engagement, social accountability has emerged, in which ordinary citizens, civil society organisations and the media rise to improve accountability.

3.15.1 Character of Accountability

Khotami (2017:32) asserts that in the administration of government, accountability cannot be known by the people without the government notify him in connection with information related to the collection of resources and sources of public funds and their use. He claims that when accountability is seen from a functional perspective, it has five different stages, starting from a stage that requires more objective measures to a stage that requires a subjective measure. Khotami (2017:32) defines and outline the stages as follows:

- Probability and legality accountability that is the accountability of the use of funds in accordance with the approved budget and in accordance with applicable legislation.

- Process accountability that is accountability that uses processes, procedures, and measures in carrying out the specified activities.
- Performance accountability is to see whether the activities performed are efficient.
- Accountability program that highlights the determination and achievement of goals that have been set.
- Policy accountability is the stage of selection of various policies that will be applied or not.

Khotami (2017:33) believes that adherence to democracy and accountability is in the hands of the people that gives legitimacy to government to run and regulate people's lives through the rules using the public funds. Jabbra and Dwivedi (1988:273) views accountability in the context of public service as methods by which a public official fulfils its duties and obligations, and the process by which it is required to account for such actions. Jabbra and Dwivedi (1988:273) claims that in the context of public policy and administration, accountability in their view, should include at least five elements such as:

Organisational Accountability

Organisational accountability is s the traditional hierarchical accountability within the organisation, as laid down in the classical Weberian bureaucratic form of administration. Nabavi (2014:105) defines Webers Bureaucracy as "one of the forms of organising human activities to answer a certain need. Bureaucratic administration means domination by the force of knowing that is its fundamental character, specifically rational" (Cruz, 1995: 689).

Legal Accountability

Legal accountability relates actions in the public domain to the established legislative and judicial process. Khosla (2021:1) states that legal accountability relates to legislative or judicial responses to violations of human rights. He claims that these can range from individual cases to strategic and public interest litigation within national legal systems to uphold affirmative rights and entitlements or to provide a remedy in the case of a violation.

Professional Accountability

Hammond (2014:86) states that all professions are required to be accountable in various ways for the quality of the service they render to their clients, to the public and to their fellow professionals. Hammond (2014:86) argues that professionalism depends on the affirmation of three principles in the conduct and governance of an occupation:

- Knowledge is the basis for permission to practise and for decisions that are made with respect to the unique needs of clients.
- The practitioner pledges his first concern to the welfare of the client.
- The profession assumes collective responsibility for the definition, transmittal, and enforcement of professional standards of practice and ethics.

Political Accountability

Political accountability is concerned with the legitimacy of any public program and even the survival of the involved organisation. Walsh (2020:1) refers to political accountability constraint on executive power and comprises the mechanisms for holding an agent accountable and the means to apply sanctions when a principal citizens transfers decision making power to an agent (the government).

Moral Accountability

Jabbara and Dwivedi (1988:273) views moral accountability is at the core of public administration, "It is more than obedience to laws and bureaucratic norms. A moral public official is the one who "strives for a moral government". As instances of administrative and political corruption become more and more widespread, the demand for moral accountability in the management of public affairs gets articulated more and more in different forums such as the media, the legislature, and the judiciary" Jabbara and Dwivedi (1988:273). In context of local government accountability, Devas (2003) recommend three aspects of accountability which are:

- Horizontal accountability of local government officials to elected representatives,
- Downward accountability of elected representatives (and officials) to local citizens,
- Upward accountability of local governments to central government. All three aspects depend on the availability of information, which is not readily available in many countries.

Augusto Doin *et al.* (2012:56) defines horizontal accountability as the capability of state institutions to monitor abuses by other public agencies and branches of government. On the other hand, he states that vertical accountability is the channel through which citizens, mass media and civil society seek to enforce standards of good performance on officials. For effective accountability to happen, citizens must have accurate and accessible information about local government. Claasen (2022:n.p) argues that the condition of South Africa municipal governance on accountability has seriously redressed in most municipal councils as stated in the Auditor General Report South Africa (AGSA) of 2020/21 financial year. In local government the most significant accountability mechanism is the municipal council oversight mandate is the

consideration of annual report, auditor reports and IDP's and budgets. In order to have an in-depth understanding of these reports and be able to make meaningful and impactful contribution. it is important for municipal councils to understand the contents of what is reported. The Auditor General South Africa report attributes the poor audit outcomes and inadequate service delivery by many municipalities were the result of a pattern of behaviour and conduct by leaders and officials that led to a local government culture in which performance, accountability, transparency, and integrity was not prevalent.

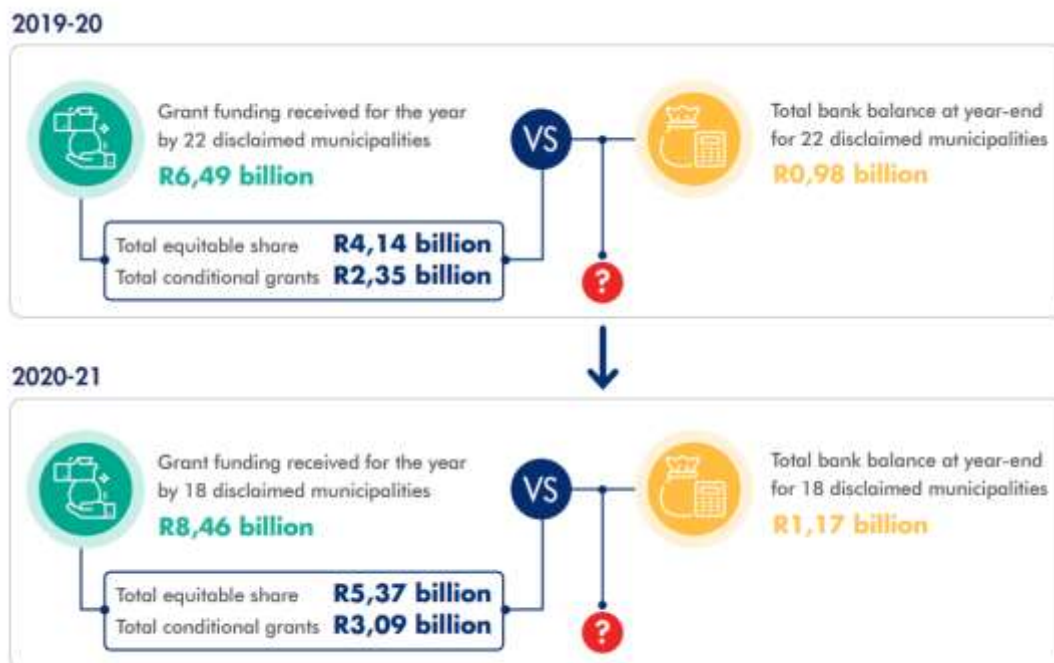


Figure 1: Disclaimed municipalities that received funding from national government grants. 2019/20. (Source: Adapted from Auditor General South Africa, 2022)

The report asserts that municipal political leadership, speakers and mayors, and members of the municipal public account committees should pay attention to the following. Enable and insist on credible financial and performance reports for in-year monitoring and decision making as well as transparency and accountability on the

finances and performance of the municipality. Stabilise and capacitate the administration – recruit, retain and continually develop appropriately skilled and experienced officials in key positions. Maintain a robust financial management culture which includes ensuring effective revenue collection, prudent spending, and prevention and speedy recovery of financial loss and wastage. Lead by example and ensure that consequences for accountability failures are affected swiftly, bravely, and consistently. The report suggest that the municipal managers should report to the council on a quarterly basis on material irregularities identified and the progress made in resolving them and be held to account for any unreasonable delays. It further suggests that municipal councils should implement accountability ecosystem to support and capacitate councils and municipal administrations to implement these systems.



Figure 2: Public Accountability Ecosystem (Source: Adapted from Corruption Watch, 2021)

In reference to AGSA Report Claasen (2022: n.p) is of the opinion that local newspapers and community media have become vital role-players in informing taxpayers about mismanagement and illegal activities by local government councillors and officials. Corruption Watch (2021:n.p) contends that effective accountability requires a sound accountability ecosystem that also involves non-state oversight institutions such as the media, civil society, and ordinary citizens. The 2019-20 audit general report by Auditor General of South Africa, indicates that municipalities were mismanaging funding they received from national government through equitable share and conditional grants. The report claims that the lack of proper records makes it difficult for Auditor General of South Africa to confirm what had been done with this money between receipt and what was left in the bank account at year-end.

Busari (2022:15) believes that Information is power and the more people who possess it, the more power is distributed. The degree to which a media is independent is the degree to which it can perform an effective public watchdog function of public affairs. For the media to play its roles of promoting accountability in governance, media professionals must be abreast of the four fundamental questions about accountability Pope (2000:119) suggests asking who has an obligation? what commitments or standards are supposed to be met? what will show whether the commitments and standards have been met? what are the consequences for misconduct or poor performance? Pope (2000:119) is of the opinion that the degree to which the media is independent is the degree to which it can perform an effective public watchdog function over the conduct of public officials. "The Legislature should keep the Executive under day-to-day scrutiny, so should the media keep both the Legislature and the Executive (along with all others whose posts impinge on the public domain), carefully monitored. As the former editor-in-chief of Time Inc., Henry Grunwald, noted, "even a

democratically elected and benign government can easily be corrupted when its power is not held in check by an independent press” (Pope 2000:119).

3.16 Democracy

Donnelly *et al.* (2023: n.p) defines democracy as popular sovereignty in Abraham Lincoln’s words, “government of the people, by the people, for the people”. At its heart is the concept of the population choosing a government through regular, free, and fair elections. Liberal democracy provides a mechanism for some form of rule by proportionate representation, with citizens empowered to bring about change through participation and persuade the powerful to act for the greater good (Donnelly *et al.* 2023). Donnelly *et al.* (2023) (2020: n.p) defines South Africa as a constitutional democracy since the end of apartheid in 1994. It has been regarded globally as a proponent of human rights and a leader on the African continent. The Parliament of Republic of South Africa (2023: n.p) states that the Constitution of South Africa 1996 states there are three spheres of government: national, provincial, and local.

The citizens choose their representatives in elections for national government (parliament), provincial government (the nine provincial legislatures), and local government. Gildenhuis *et al.* (1991:124) contends that local government is the third level of government which was created to bring government to the grass-roots population. It gives the people at the grassroots a sense of involvement in the political processes that control their daily lives. Reddy and Sabelo (1997) indicates that democracy is a political system in which the eligible people participate actively not only in determining who governs them, but also in shaping the policy output of their government. The composition of a government is usually determined in free and fair elections supervised by an impartial body. Gildenhuis *et al.* (1991:125) is of the opinion that there are specific democratic values that can serve as guiding principles

for local government management and development. In almost all forms of democratic local government, an elected council, serves as a representative and deliberative body with responsibility for approving local laws, ordinances, or regulations, for scrutinizing the local executive and for approving budgets Bulmer (2015:23).

In the assessment of the state of democracy in South Africa, Teichmann (2020:n.p) suggests there may be a significant divergence between the formal requirements for democracy and the actual quality of democracy as it is experienced by the people. The formal requirements include regular free and fair elections, public consultation, the assurance of basic human rights and liberties, and the separation of powers. Teichmann (2020:n.p) maintains that South Africa ticks all the boxes when it comes to the formal requirements for democracy as it is regularly rated as a free democracy by reputable organisations. In 2023, the study by Democracy Index placed South Africa amongst the top 10 democratic countries in Africa. However, he warns that the voter turnout has dropped from 86.7% in 1994 to only 65.9% in the 2019 national elections when considering the number of South Africans who were eligible to vote but did not register, the figure is even lower and becomes more worrying. The significant decline points to the fact that citizens are slowly losing confidence in the country's democratic process. Growing apathy, a loss of trust in politicians and institutions, as well as increasing frustration with poor living conditions, exacerbated by a high unemployment rate of 33.9% (Q2, 2022) and a record high inflation rate of 7.8% (August 2022) might all be contributing factors for citizens to opt out of formal democratic processes Teichmann (2020:n.p). In the local governance context, the 2021 Local Government Elections (LGE) recorded the lowest voter turnout since the dawn of democracy with a national turnout just under 46%.

In his study on Polarisation in South Africa Toward Democratic Deepening or Democratic Decay, Southall (2019) questions whether South Africa is moving towards democratic deepening or democratic decay. Brooks (2017:105) is of the view that participatory elements of the democratic development process in South Africa are largely a failure. He notes that the lack of development, government service delivery failures and reluctance by political office-bearers to be accountable has undermined South African's democratic dispensation. Quak (2019:24), claims that democratic backsliding maybe on the rise in South Africa. Karlsson (2021:89) suggests that the government in South Africa has not managed to tackle the question of corruption. These past years have revealed major corruption scandals allegedly committed by the ruling party. The situation has also made the public lose trust in their politicians and the system overall as the vast majority of South Africans believe that most politicians are corrupt, and that the corruption is getting worse. While these scandals have been unfolded, unemployment has increased considerably in 2008 and is today over 30%, which is something that is upsetting the nation, Karlsson (2021:78)

In South Africa, Quak (2019:25) further recognises that democratic backsliding may not always be as evident as many may believe but eventually it degrades citizens' rights and their engagement with the state. Gumede (2014:7) claims that South Africa is a constitutional democracy, which is both representative and participatory, not just an electoral democracy where voters only have power during elections every five year. Before one can assess the role of the media, Gumede (2014:7) provides a definition of the role of the media should is to play in consolidating South Africa's democracy. South Africa is not just an electoral democracy where voters only have power during elections every five years but also a constitutional democracy that is both representative and participatory. The media has a protective function in a democracy,

by giving voice to the vulnerable, and on disadvantaged and neglected issues Gumede (2014:7). Ullah (2009:3) believes its sympathy will affect the balance of power in a public debate and essentially represent resources that can be mobilised to demote or promote democracy by the way the media frame the issues. Ullah (2009:5) maintains that the media in a stable democracy contribute to the public sphere by providing citizens with information about their world by fostering debate about various issues and encouraging diverse positions and opinions are heard. These all contribute to public debate and the media are also expected to act as watchdogs on government and industry. The above statements indicate that the media is at the heart of the effective and functioning democracy. The local governance needs to constantly involve the communities in municipal processes to ensure effective governance. Local councils are required by law to be transparent, accountable, and regular engagement with the communities. “Modern democracies rest on a combination of two ideas: that those who rule should do so in the public interest or in response to the public will; and that they will be more likely to do so when they are, in some way, representative of, and/or accountable to those they rule” (Philp 2009:28).

In conclusion, Ukka (2019:235) reiterates that democracy is the opportunity for the aspirations and voices of the people in influencing a decision. Democracy also required the participation of the people, arising from political awareness to participate and share in the system of government. Kibore (2017: n.p) contends that a democracy without media is like a vehicle without wheels. He further contends that the media exposes the loopholes in the democratic system, which ultimately helps the government to fill the vacuums of these loopholes and to make the system more accountable, responsive and citizen friendly.

3.17 Normative Media Theories

According to Fourie (2005:163), normative theory of the media provides a yardstick against which media performance, accountability and quality could be measured and if need be, controlled. In the context of the above statement, normative theory is concerned with the roles that media ought to play in society. This study discusses four normative media theories namely, democratic participation theory, authoritarianism theory and development theory and social responsibility theory. Saqib (2023: n.p) suggest that normative theories are more focused in the relationship between press and the government than press and the audience.

These theories are more concern about the ownership of the media and who controls the press or media in the country. Ugangu (2012:39) claims that normative theory is concerned with the roles that media ought to play in society. Skjerdal (2001:33) argues that each normative press theory is linked to a certain political system or a political ideology. For instance, the social responsibility theory is related to Western social democratic ideals, whereas the libertarian press theory is related to classic liberalism. For example, Siebert *et al.* (1956:70) suggest that the libertarian theory advocates that the press should be a marketplace of ideas where diverse views can be aired without fear of suppression or oppression. Proponents of this theory argue that the press should be autonomous and free from every form of state regulation because a state-regulated press cannot call the government to account. Ogbemor (2020:12) disagree with state-regulated press because he argues that it has the potential to hamper efforts to expose the corrupt and equipping the public with the information they need to contribute intelligently to public debates and make informed decisions on other areas of life.

While the media have stood firm on the right to freedom of expression, Wasserman (2020:461) notes its critics especially South African's the ruling African National Congress have accused the media of not having contributed enough to the restoration of citizens' right to human dignity and the healing of South African society. Wasserman (2020:461) articulates this tension in the following questions:

- What role should the media play in the South African democratic dispensation?
- What responsibility, if any, does the South African media have to contribute to development and the eradication of social inequalities in South Africa?
- What, if any, are the limits to the freedom of speech enshrined in the Constitution, and how should that freedom be balanced with the Constitutional value of human dignity?
- How can the public's participation in media regulation be encouraged and ensured?

While these questions continue to be debated in society, Wasserman (2020:461) is of the opinion that the media often served as a political playball for different parties and social and economic interest. Despite these concerns, Wasserman (2020:464) holds a view that South African media have contributed to a culture of democratic debate while playing a watchdog role to keep political power to account through investigative reporting into corruption and malfeasance. In South Africa, normative self-regulatory policy has evolved to be responsive to serve the needs of the developing society. Christian *et al.* (2014) adds that normative theories such as the authoritarian, libertarian, social responsibility, and soviet communist concepts dictates what the press should be and do. They argued that the theories reflect the system of social control whereby the relations of individuals and institutions are adjusted. Later the development theory was formulated to accommodate conditions in developing

countries. Democratic participant theory was introduced after development theory to account on a media-government-public relationship which has in recent years developed in reaction to deficiencies such as corruption and abuse of power in traditional democratic free market societies (Fourie, 2011:191). Ogbebor (2020:4) suggests that normative theories are concerned with restrictions on the media in various situations and how these impacts on the functioning in the society.

Authoritarianism theory is applicable to the nations where there is authoritarian control by the government. The authoritarian media theory dates back to the 16th century. According to Omolola (2020:29) authoritarian media theory applies to early pre- democratic practices of society and to contemporary undemocratic or autocratic military systems. The media existed basically as the mouthpiece of the government of the day. Authoritarian media theory applies to early pre- democratic practices of society and to contemporary undemocratic or autocratic military systems (Omolola 2020:29). For example, authoritarianism theory still exists in undemocratic countries like North Korea, China, Russia, Zimbabwe and across many African Arab countries. Omolola (2020:29) states that the mechanisms of control were hefty taxation, suppressive laws, and control of media employees, embargo on printing materials, shutting of media, killing and imprisonment of journalists under harsh laws. The UNESCO's 2023 media report revealed that journalists were killed during 2022. The report revealed that 90% of the journalists killed were covering local issues, human rights violations, corruption, environmental problems and the perpetrators of this violence are not only state actors, but they are also organised crime, drug lords, environmental criminals. The emphasis of this theory is on the control of the press to ensure the promotion of the interest of those who are in power (Siebert, 1963).

McQuail (1987) states development media theory solicits media support for government and its initiatives to bring about socio-economic development. The theory argues that until a country is well established and its social-economic development in progress, media must be helpful. Baran and Davis (2012:149) postulate that developmental media theory advocates media support for an existing political regime and its effort to bring about national economic development. They both suggest that the theory emphasised that the media must play a supportive role to government policy and programmes rather than being critical of governments, its programmes and personnel. Omolola (2020:36) claims that this theory advocates for the interest of development and that the state has the right to intervene in media operations using censorship policies, especially when the activities of the press are not in line with the development objectives of the government. Rather than holding government accountable, Omolola (2020:36) argues that the theory suggests that the media should help them in implementing their policies in the interest of development and the state has the right to intervene in media operations if they stray from this mandate.

Democratic participant theory is a modification of social responsibility theory. Baran and Davis (2012:150) assume that democratic-participant theory advocates for media support for cultural pluralism at grassroots levels. Media are used to stimulate and empower pluralistic groups. Most Scandinavian countries practice some form of democratic-participant theory. The theory proposes that the media must advocate for the views and opinions of individuals in respect of governance and stewardship of leaders in public governance. Government is required to identify, train and fund small media outfits. The South African government practices some form of democratic participant theory by funding community media through the Media Development and Diversity Agency funding scheme.

The social responsibility theory is premised on the inkling that media can be free but also have a moral duty to humanity to deliver satisfactory information for people to make informed decisions (Omolola 2020:35). The theory ideology is in-between both authoritarian theory and libertarian theory because it gives room for media freedom on one hand but with need for external controls on the other hand.

Omolola (2020:35) argues that the basic assumption of the theory holds that the press must be free but with a responsibility to serve the public good whether by way of state regulation or self-censorship. The theory balances the outcry for press freedom with the need for responsibility. In line with the ideology of the social responsibility theory, the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996, Section 16 to freedom of the press and other media and to receive or impart information. Siebert *et al.* (1956) concurs that social responsibility theory suggest that the government must not merely allow freedom, but it must actively promote and act to protect the freedom of its citizens.

3.18 Conclusion

This chapter covers various concepts and theories of governance that political and administrative authorities need to consider when they perform their governance duties. Key aspects of governance such as administrative, political, civic, economic, and systemic governance's significance towards the achievement of effective governance was discussed. This chapter analysed Stoker's five governance theories that provide an organising framework for understanding the changing processes of governing. Good governance is arguable one of the most important elements of governance as it is essential to the success of any institution regardless of whether it is a public or private organisation.

In the context of local government, poor governance has led to poor service delivery and disadvantaged communities bears the brunt of maladministration and corruption as the results of lack of good governance. Good governance comprises of public participation, accountability, transparency, responsiveness, effectiveness, efficiency, and rule of law in the provision of services by government. Out of these good governance characteristics, accountability stand out as the most critical one because its absence can have a negative impact in the provision of services at a local government level. One of the key channels that contribute to enhance accountability and good governance is community media. The platform plays a vital role-player in ensuring that local government are held accountable for poor governance and corruption. Abraham (2021:4) argues that democracy requires that people should have the right to know the activities of the government, especially the decision of the government and that information is important for people to make choices regarding their participation in the State.

"One of the objects of a newspaper is to understand the popular feeling and give expression to it, another is to arouse among the people certain desirable sentiments; the third is fearlessly to expose popular defects"- Mahatma Gandhi

In interrogating the concept of South African constitutional democratic process, this chapter identified democratic backsliding as the threat to democracy due to lack of good governance manifested by poor service delivery and unemployment. Lastly, the chapter interrogated normative media theories that are concern with the way a media system is controlled and operated by the government, authority, leader and public.

CHAPTER 4

4.1 Research Methodology

The following chapter discusses methods employed to collect data. It outlines key elements such as research design, data sources utilised, collection methods and data analysis, and the rationale for choosing and utilising specific methods. According to Kothari (2004:25) research methodology is a way to systematically solve the research problem. The research methodology focuses on various steps that are generally adopted by a researcher in studying the research problem along with the logic behind the choice. Burns and Grove (2001:223) define research methodology as the total strategy, from the identification of the problem to the final plans for data gathering and analysis. In this study, the research methodology was key in acquiring information that seeks to address research questions and objectives raised about the role of community media in promoting accountability and good governance in Chris Hani District Municipality. The study also aimed to fill the existing gaps that exist regarding the role of media in promoting accountability and good governance. In achieving the objective mentioned above, this study will use a descriptive qualitative research design that explores the characteristics of the role of media in promoting accountability and good governance. This design was chosen as it gives the researcher flexibility to seek new understandings, ask questions and assess the subject in a new light (Yin, 1994).

In a bid to answer the research question, the study must employ either quantitative or qualitative research methodology to yield valid and reliable results that address the nature of the study, problem, and the aim of the study. According to Creswell and Poth (2016) qualitative researchers use words to communicate individuals' experiences, whereas quantitative research use numbers, such as means

and correlations to communicate their findings. For this study, qualitative research has been identified as an ideal research methodology because it is more flexible than quantitative methodology. The advantage of using qualitative research methods is that results are based on flexible research design which tends to yield to valid and reliable findings. Du Plooy (2002:83) believes that qualitative design is appropriate when the researcher intends to examine the properties, values, needs or characteristics that distinguish individuals, groups, communities, organisations, events, settings, or messages. Furthermore, the approach is appropriate in the description of behaviours, themes, trends, attitudes, needs or relations that are applicable to units being analysed (Du Plooy 2002:83). Qualitative research techniques will be adopted because it is compatible with the kind of data to be collected.

This study will use a qualitative case study methodology because of its phenomenological nature, that will conceptualise the role of community media in promoting accountability and good governance. This justifies the use of descriptive research tools such as perusal of archival records which the study will employ in the data collection process. As mentioned above, the research methodology of this study is descriptive, and information was obtained from relevant texts books, journal articles, previous research, the internet, industry publications, legislations, and government policies, reports, and industry related publications. Malelu (2010:16) believes that if an in-depth understanding of the research topic is gained, the researcher will be able to use his judgment and experience to select preferred information.

4.3 Research Design

According to Babbie and Mouton (2001:74) a research design is a plan or blueprint of how the researcher intends to conduct his/her research. A case study will be utilised as a source of data focusing on the behaviour and attitudes of community

media outlets in Chris Hani District Municipality towards the importance of accountability and good governance. According to Molapo (2000:21) a case study can be used to establish the validity of the subject under investigation rather than a variable, through which the researcher gains an understanding of a broader phenomenon. Lapan and Armfield (2009:166) assert that a case study provides a microscopic approach where intensive examination of the 'particular' is emphasised; this is what some call 'peeling the onion' to carefully view each layer of identified case related program activity.'

Yin (2003:10) argues that the case study approach makes use of multiple methods of data collection such as interviews, document reviews, archival records and direct participant observation and subsequently thick descriptions of the phenomena under study. In this study, community media outlets such as The Rep Community Newspaper and Vukani Community Radio are the cases used to get insights on how they promote accountability and good governance in Chris Hani District Municipality

4.4 Population

Polit and Hungler (1999:37) define population as an aggregate or totality of all the objects, subjects or members that conform to a set of specifications. In this study the population was Chris Hani District Municipality, Vukani Community Radio Station, and The Rep Community Newspaper.

4.5 Sampling Methods

Due to the qualitative nature of the study, non-probability sampling techniques were utilised. Semasinghe (2019:2) defines non-probability sampling as the sampling method used to select the units being studied based on personal judgment. In this method, he argues that personal knowledge and opinion are used to identify the

individuals/items from the population. According to Semasinghe (2019:10) the objective of taking purposive sample is to produce a sample that can be logically assumed to be representative of the population. The sampling method was beneficial in selecting data to meet the research objectives and questions of the study.

4.6 Data Collection

Burnett (2009:154) proclaims that various approaches can be utilised to collect data in case studies, such as interviews, observations, visual material, and documentation that would assist in answering the research question. For this study, community media legislations, reports, local government laws, and academic research papers will be utilised. The study will also review applicable periodicals, theses, published and unpublished academic material, newspaper articles, and other key municipal documents, as well as internet searches on the role of community media in promoting governance in local government. Blanche, et al (2006:316) state that documentary sources such as letters, newspaper articles, official documents, and books can be useful in all forms of qualitative research. Chukwuemeka *et al.* (2011:101) defines secondary data as data collected by a party not related to the research study but collected for some other purposes and at different time in the past. Chukwuemeka *et al.* (2011:101) further argues that secondary data can play a substantial role in the exploratory phase of the research when the task at hand is to define the research problem and generate hypotheses. The technological advancement in the past three decades enables data collected to be archived and available on online platforms. This study will not only confine to local data sources, but it will also expand its reach by consulting international reading related to the topic. The reason for choosing qualitative research method is to ensure that the accuracy and validity of data to be collected through the literature review and desktop analysis

approach. Peter (2017:13) claims that when research is about understanding trends in the body of scientific knowledge, studying the ideas and writings of other scholars, requires no empirical survey on human subjects. It is against this background that this study employed a desktop analysis approach without human participants and this approach is grounded in the qualitative research paradigm. Lastly, the reliability and authenticity of documents to be consulted will be checked to ensure that they are sourced from reputable individuals and institutions. Bowen (2009:22) is of the opinion that consistency is the main measure of reliability in research.

4.7 Data Analysis

Liba (2008:55) defines data analysis as the procedure to analyse data techniques for interpreting the results, ways of planning the gathering of data to make it easier, more accurate, and to use all the machinery and results. Qualitative design is deemed necessary for its ability to produce descriptive non-numerical information appropriate for the analysis of people's individual and collective social actions, thoughts and perceptions as asserted by Miles and Huberman (1994:6). This will enable the researcher an opportunity to gain more insight into the understanding and description of the nature and characteristics of the role of community media in promoting accountability. Non-numeric data will be used in the study, whereby manual analyses will be used this will be done according to six phases of thematic analysis which includes producing the report, searching for themes, reviewing themes, and defining and naming themes. The study data analysis will be guided by the research questions with the aim of providing in-depth knowledge of the research objective (Braun & Clarke 2006:78).

4.8 Document Analysis

Document analysis is a valuable research method that has been used for many years. This method consists of analysing various types of documents including books, newspaper articles, academic journal articles, and institutional reports. Any document containing text is a potential source for qualitative analysis (Morgan 2022:64). Morgan (2022) defines a document as a term used to refer to a wide variety of material including visual sources, such as photographs, video, and film. Like documents consisting of texts, those that consist of visual material can be a source for qualitative analysis. Furthermore, Burnett (2009:15) adds that a document is something that can be read and that relates to some aspect of the social world. He further states that document analysis is a form of qualitative research in which documents are interpreted by the researcher to give voice and meaning around an assessment of the issue. This study analysed official and academic documents to determine the important role of community media in promoting accountability and good governance in Chris Hani District Municipality. Payne and Payne (2004:61) describe the document method as a technique used to categorise, investigate, interpret and identify the limitations of physical sources.

In this study, documents were scrutinised to determine whether Chris Hani District Municipality embrace community media as a tool to promote good governance. Documents analysed were municipal annual reports, integrated development plans, communications strategy, service delivery and budget implementation plan, municipal bylaws to ascertain if the council is complying provisions of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 and various local government legislations. These documents were interrogated extensively since they give legislative provision that compels municipalities to use community media as a tool to enhance citizen

participation in municipal governance. To supplement these documents, several publications including books and research studies related to the role of municipalities in promoting accountability, transparency and good governance were consulted as bases for the theoretical framework. Merriam & Tisdell (2016) believes that when analysing documents, such as books and journal articles can be beneficial because of the stability of the data. They add that researchers may influence the participants during interviews or observations but when they conduct a document analysis with pre-existing texts, the data are unaffected.

To establish the impact of programmes provided by community media to enhance accountability and educate the citizens on good governance, news reports and updates were reviewed to gain more insights on this matter. To achieve this, a search was undertaken on the district's biggest community media outlets, Vukani Community Radio Station, and the Rep Community Newspaper websites and social media channels. As community radio stations are obliged by their license conditions to incorporate community participation in their programmes, ICASA's annual compliance report for Vukani Community Radio was reviewed to check they promote accountability and citizen participation in local governance matters. Furthermore, challenges that has a potential to comprise community medias impartially in holding municipal leadership accountable such as financial sustainability were interrogated. For an example, MDDA's financial support report for Vukani Community radio station was analysed to determine its effectiveness. Document analysis is a process of extracting useful information from the given data series that will allow one to observe patterns and formulate explanations in trying to unlock the hypothetical problems of the research Bowen (2009:27).

According to Huberman, Matthew and Miles (2002:309), data analysis follows the collection of information and precedes its interpretation and application. In this study, data was collected and analysed to recognise and explore the challenges faced by community media in promoting accountability and good governance in local government. This process of data analysis and interpretation involved classifying and tabulating the information, which require performing qualitative analyses in accordance with data collection. To identify existing gaps in the study, qualitative analysis methods were employed to assess data sourced from documents.

4.9 Validity and Reliability

To ensure the validity and reliability, numerous data sources were consulted to ensure the credibility of the findings. The study utilised a literature and desktop review approach, and the reliability and authenticity of the documents were checked to ascertain the credibility of the data sources. Hove (2021:28) argues that the reliability and validity of the research should be substantiated through the researcher's in-depth break-down and analysis of the following: description and analysis of the type of research utilised, how data was collected or selected, how data was analysed and the rationale for choosing and utilising specific methods.

4.10 Ethical Considerations

Resnik (2011:1) believes that every effort should be made to maintain ethical standards while conducting research. The study did not disregard plagiarism rules as referencing, citation, and acknowledgement of sources from other research. In relation to ethics, in this study, they were no harm to participants as no human subjects was involved in the study. Due to the desktop nature of the study, anonymity and confidentiality was not required.

4.11 Delimitation of Study

As the first limitation, the study is confined only to the Chris Hani District Municipality. Therefore, the findings of this study cannot be generalised but are specific to the area. The role of community media in promoting good governance is a national and international phenomenon. Another limitation is that the study solely utilised theoretical and a desktop analysis approach. The study focuses on legacy community media outlets while digital community media outlets are not part of the analysis.

4.12 Conclusion

This chapter discussed and explained the study's research methodology and method research process. The discussion centred around justifying the significance of the methods applied in meeting the research objective and answering research questions. The chapter emphasised the importance of utilising a qualitative research approach. In this chapter document analysis was interrogated as a data collection method. The chapter also discussed sample method such as non-probability sampling.

CHAPTER 5

5.1 Findings, Conclusion and Recommendations

This chapter will unpack the findings and interpretations of the data analysis to answer the research questions and objectives presented in chapter one. This chapter focuses on the findings, analysis, interpretation of data collected in connection to the role of community media in promoting accountability and good governance in local government, in the case of Chris Hani District Municipality. The study solely used qualitative method documentation analysis to collect data and present the findings. The analysis is based on data gathered from official documents, reports, books news articles and findings from academic publications and dissertations. The data gathered from legal statutory documents form the basis that defines the role of community media as a tool to enhance accountability and good governance.

5.2 Summary of Research Chapters

Chapter one of the study provided the motivation, aims and objective of the study. The section also provided an overview of the research design and literature review. Chapter two dealt with the legislative instruments that compels local government to enhance good governance and citizens participation in governance matters. Furthermore, the relevant legislation that promote participation and support community media was discussed and outlined. Chapter three focused mainly on governance theoretical perspective and concepts on the role of community media and challenges in promoting accountability, transparency, and good governance. The chapter also discussed normative media theories that are concern with ownership and the environment in which the media operates and how it ensures that local government is held accountable. Chapter four provided an overview of the research methodology

that was utilised to collect, analyse, and interpret data. This study used qualitative desktop analysis approach. This is the final chapter of this study, and it examines research findings to explore solutions to the identified research problem.

5.3 Brief Description of the Data

The study mainly focused on official documents, reports, internet searches, social media, books, academic literature to collect data relevant on the role of community media in promoting accountability and good governance in local government. Bowen (2009:36) state that a researcher as an analyst should determine the relevance of documents to the research problem and purpose. Also, he states that the researcher should ascertain whether the content of the documents fits the conceptual framework of the study. It is within this context that the following legislation framework documents were consulted: IDP document, SDBIP, annual reports, local government legislation. While reports and policies from MDDA, ICASA, and GCIS were consulted on the mandate, operations, and sustainability of community media in their quest to strengthen accountability and participatory local governance.

As explained in the research methodology chapter, the study adopted qualitative documentation analysis as data collection approach. Bowen (2009) asserts that analysing documents incorporates coding content into themes similar to how focus group or interview transcripts are analysed. In line with the objectives of the study, data was coded and presented in the following manner:

- Chris Hani District Municipality embraces accountability, good governance, and role of community media.
- Impact of programmes or platforms provided by community media to enhance accountability.

- Challenges facing Community media in promoting good governance.

5.3.1 Theme 1: Chris Hani District Municipality Embraces Accountability, Good Governance, and the Role of Community Media

Chris Hani District Municipality 2022-27 IDP and Budget Document

As mentioned in chapter two, the Constitution of RSA, 1996 section 7 compels municipalities to provide democratic and accountable government for local communities and encourage the involvement of communities in the matters of local government. The findings from the desktop analysis revealed that Chris Hani District Municipality 2022-2027 IDP and Budget document (2022:74) views good governance as a core stone of all the programmes and projects. The document further revealed that the municipality commits to conduct its business in an open, transparent, and accountable manner. The findings revealed that section 16 of the Local Government Municipal System Act, 2000 requires municipal council to develop a culture of municipal governance that promotes formal representative government with a system of participatory government. Furthermore, municipalities should create conditions for the local community to participate in the affairs of the municipality, including in the preparation, implementation and review of the municipalities integrated development plan, and the municipality's performance.

The Chris Hani District Municipality's 2022-2027 IDP and Budget document (2022:74) revealed that community participation and engagement is essential hence the municipality developed mechanism to liaise and interact with communities through its public participation and communication strategy. The Chris Hani District Municipality the 2022-2027 IDP and budget (2022:78) have shown that the council have taken measures to set up appropriate structures that are a fundamental requirement of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996), the Municipal

Systems Act (2006), the Municipal Finance Management Act (2003) and all other legislation that are applicable to local government in South Africa. In this regard, the findings revealed that the municipality has institutionalised community participation mechanisms in its affairs to afford communities an opportunity to participate in the decision-making processes of the council. It is evident that municipalities should establish structures that will facilitate the meaningful participation of all stakeholders in the development of the system, consistent with the legislation.

The 2022-2027 IDP and budget (2022:79) have shown that the IDP technical committees, political leadership, external stakeholders and IDP forums were established to partake in the design and execution of plan. The White Paper on Local Government (1998:38), revealed that municipalities should place an emphasis on local government as a sphere of government that is committed to be in partnership with communities to find sustainable ways to meet their social, economic, and basic needs to improve the quality of their lives. This view is shared in the Section 17 of the Local Government Municipal System Act, 2000 requires that municipalities to establish appropriate mechanism, processes, and procedures to enable the local community to participate in the affairs of the municipality. It has been proven in the 2022-2027 IDP and budget (2022:81) that the municipality has utilised IDP/Budget steering committees, IDP Representation Forum and the media as channels to engage with local citizens. The 2022-2027 IDP and budget (2022:77) has shown that the municipality embraces the establishment of a caring environment not only put emphases on community participation, but also on customer care and responsiveness. It was a testament when the municipality revived its Batho Pele Campaign by the municipality to complement customer care efforts and galvanising the culture of putting people first.

Peter (2017:9) sees both the 1996 Constitution and Act 117 of 1998 as prescriptive on what is required to be done by municipalities in respect to citizen involvement in governance leaving this to the discretion of municipalities. He adds that in many cases, community consultation and involvement processes are still in their infancy, and numerous municipalities are often not fulfilling their legislative obligations. However, he holds a view that the communities themselves have often not involved themselves sufficiently in the affairs of their municipality, choosing to become involved only when things have gone severely wrong. The Chris Hani District Municipality's 2022-2027 IDP and budget document (2022:80), have proven that the council have met its obligations of ensuring that it was accountable to its citizens through legislated activities such as 2022-2027 IDP and budget hearing, annual report public hearings and SDBIP engagements. The document revealed that the municipality has undertaken 2022-2027 IDP and Budget roadshows, public knowledge sharing days on health issues, hygiene, water, and sanitation usage, on an annual basis in all towns under its jurisdiction. According to the document this was in line with the municipal key strategic objective of promoting good governance and create an efficient, effective, accountable, and performance-oriented administration. In addition to these platforms, it was revealed that the municipality's office of the Speaker has led public participation programs to engage citizens on:

- The Moral Regeneration Movement, whose aim is to influence the society towards the charter of positive moral values.
- The District Initiation Forum led by traditional leaders to respond to, prevent and intervene on the scourge of deaths of initiates in the circumcision program.
- The Women's Caucus which seeks to strengthen women representation, capacity, and voice of women in political and administrative offices and the civic

education program which seeks to educate the electorate on various issues of governance and social programs.

Masango (2002:60) point out that citizen participation will not happen without mechanisms being put in place to ensure governance in which citizens can express themselves and claim some of their rights. However, Barnes (2011:45) contends that in South Africa, when municipalities promote civic education, their focus is only how local government operates instead of how it affects them and how they can engage with them in an accessible way. Ngamlana (2015:24) hold the view that municipalities only emphasis voting as a main form of participation as a result, public participation in the IDP process is compromised, as the citizens are not well informed about public participation in the IDP process. Matlhoahela (2022:86) contends that public participation in local government in South Africa is mainly confined to methods of informing and consultation, in the absence of the guarantee that the community input would be considered in decision-making. Due to the technical nature of municipal budget information, he asserts that they are unreadable to ordinary citizen, and this can make a meaningful contribution hence cannot engage constructively.

Matlhoahela (2022:86) add that participatory local governance in South Africa is weak and is not working optimally due to weak and inefficient public engagement channels in the local sphere. He attributes this to the electoral system, political interference, lack of a good performance monitoring and the hierarchical character of the state and the culture of patronage and nepotism. Claasen (2020: n.p) is of the view that the community media have role in averting ghastly condition of South African municipal governance and the serious neglect of sound and accountable as in the re revealed in the 2020/21 AGSA report. Claasen (2020:n.p) argue that community media should inform taxpayers about mismanagement and illegal activities by municipal

officials and councillors. To promote good governance in local government, Matlhoahela (2022:86) believes that there's a need for reforms in terms of representation, participation, and accountability, to enable it to be more responsive to the needs of local communities.

Chris Hani District Municipality Service Delivery and Budget Implementation Plan

According to Wright (2021:4) Service Delivery and Budget Implementation Plan (SDBIP) is a detailed annual financial plan for implementing services using the approved budget. The SDBIP serves as a contract between the municipality and the community on the services that the municipality commits to deliver over the twelve (12) months. It also helps to hold the municipality and its management accountable for the performance on the mentioned programmes and projects Wright (2021:4). The Chris Hani District Municipality 203/2024 SDBIP (2023:01) has shown that the document was used by Mayoral Committee and Council to play an oversight on the performance of the municipality and to report councils performance to the community and all interested stakeholders. The provisions of Section 53(3) of the Municipal Finance Management Act revealed that Mayors should publicize the SDBIP, the organizational scorecard and the Municipal Manager's Performance Agreement to members of the public for input and comment. Chris Hani District Municipality 203/2024 SDBIP (2023:01) have shown that the municipality was using local stations, print and electronic media as platforms to publicise its SDBIP in line with communications policy adopted by council.

Wright (2021:6) argue that SDBIP as a management, implementation, and monitoring governance tool should be communicated with local citizens and affected

stakeholders. He further argues that it is important to ensure that information is circulated to monitor the execution of the budget, performance of senior management and the achievement of council objectives. Chris Hani District Municipality 203/2024 SDBIP (2023:30) revealed that the municipality has developed communications strategy to promote citizen participation, transparency, and good governance. The strategy entailed facilitation of media engagement activities such as radio talk shows, interviews, radio advertisements, social media, press releases to inform communities about municipal programmes and activities. Ndirangu (2014:13) suggests that the direct involvement of citizens in government decision-making process should be prioritise by the State. In support the statement mentioned above, the Promotion of Access to Information Act 2 of 2000 revealed municipalities are compelled to afford communities to have a right to access accurate information and that is a non-negotiable mandate. The Chris Hani District Municipality 203/2024 SDBIP (2023:231) have shown the following key performance areas that the council was expected to achieve:

- Media Engagement
- Receive and respond to media inquiries.
- Media Releases
- Awareness campaigns and stakeholder engagements
- Compile a communication plan
- Drawing a media plan

Msibi and Penzhorn (2010:10) argues that the involvement of the people within initiatives that aim to bring development cannot be possible without proper communication. However, Langa (2018:57) sees the state of local governance in South Africa as grappling with issues related to governance, transparency, accountability,

and the delivery of services which stem from poor communication. The findings on the Strategic Plan (2015/16-2019/20) of the Western Cape Local Government Department revealed that poor communication between its municipalities and the communities it serves has put in place systems that will deepen its support to municipalities to ensure that communities are at the centre of their communication.

2023 Annual Performance Report

According to Chris Hani District Municipality 2022/23 Annual Performance Report (2023:3) the purpose of the annual report is to provide a record of the activities for the current year and to report on performance against the budget of the municipality. The report states that the “annual report which in many ways reflect our service delivery and developmental achievements and challenges, is presented in recognition of our legislative obligation to be an accountable and transparent organisation” Chris Hani District Municipality (2022/23). Boyne and Law (1991), attest to the statement above that the annual reporting process enables municipalities to demonstrate accountability to both internal and external users, allowing these users to assess the municipality's performance.

Section 46 of the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, 32 of 2000 states the annual report must reflect the performance of the municipality and each of the external service providers engaged by the municipality. It further states that the performances reflected above must be compared with performances for the previous financial year and include measures to improve performance where underperformance was recorded. The Chris Hani District Municipality Annual Performance Report (2022/23-3) revealed that the municipality adopted a “pro-poor” budget which gives effect to the strategic priorities of the municipality. The Chris Hani District Municipality Annual Performance Report (2022/23-5) has shown that after the

report was adopted by council, the municipality adhered to legislation imperatives that the report be made public. The document has showed that the public were frequently informed of the municipality's performance through municipal website, newsletters and local radio programmes and Ward Committee meetings. As public feedback, the report reveals that the municipality utilises toll-free lines, feedback boxes, the municipality's contact centres, radio interview and social media platforms.

The Chris Hani District Municipality Annual Performance Report (2022/23-3) has shown that the Municipal Public Accounts Committee held public hearings to report to communities on municipal performance and engage communities in a review of past performance and the identification of future priorities. According to Mhlanga (2021:10) Municipal Public Accounts Committees role is to ensure accountability and oversight in municipal financial management. Amongst other things, he claims that the committee seeks to promote good governance, transparency, accountability in managing public funds or municipal budget. However, the Chris Hani District Municipality Annual Performance Report (2022/23-165) have shown that the planned training and capacity building programmes for Municipal Public Accounts Committee were not achieve and this impede its ability to conduct its oversight mandate. The Chris Hani Municipality (2020/2021-2021:9) oversight report on the annual report revealed that the public hearing meetings were not widely publicised by the local media and as the results citizens did not partake in the process. The document state that the Municipal Public Accounts Committee has made a commitment to rectify the problem. Liu (2017:5) affirms that the media play a critical role in connecting the state and citizens via debates and discussions about major political issues as well as informing the public about the stand of their leaders on such issues.

Utilisation of Community Media in Promoting Accountability and Good Governance

The Chris Hani District Municipality area is dominated by two community media outlets, namely, The Rep Community media and Vukani Community Radio Station. The Rep Community Media is an Arena Holdings' community titles based in Komani. The paper is mainly published in English and was established in 1859. It is one South Africa's oldest community newspapers. According to The Rep reporter (2023: n.p) revealed that it is available for free of charge with a total of 28 500 copies printed every week. The paper is mainly distributed in Komani and some of towns in the Chris Hani District Municipality. The Rep reporter (2023:n.p) revealed that in its reporting, the paper prioritises hard news and politics followed by entertainment, features, investigative stories, and lifestyle-oriented content. The Chris Hani District Municipality Annual Performance Report 2022/23-103) and The IDP and Budget (2022:65) have shown that the municipality utilises the paper for advertising and publicly purposes. In assessing the paper's previous from January- September 2023 electronic editions or E-editions have shown that the municipality used the paper to advert tenders, legal notice, events, and vacancies. The paper has also covered municipal events, campaigns, press briefings and media releases. For example, the recent of the announcement of the newly elected mayor and municipal smart water meter installation and council meetings. In stressing the importance of community media in local government, Classen (2022:n.p) point out that they closer to the communities than big news organisations. While Maphiri (2013:12) asserts that the distribution and broadcast of community media provided an accessible platform for local communities, often the target of government campaigns.

Mbombo (2018:6) reveals Vukani Community Radio is one of the longest operating stations which was established in rural community of Cala way back in 1996.

The station prides itself with a listenership of 60 000 and is broadcast 24 hours a day on 99.9FM. She adds that Vukani Community Media is based in one of the most deprived parts of the former Transkei with a coverage stretches over the Chris Hani District Municipality. The station special emphasis is placed on previously disadvantaged communities by airing programmes feature local entertainment and highlight relevant information and education in the region Mbombo (2018:6). Due to rural nature of Chris Hani District Municipality and high illiteracy rate, community radio is most useful tool to communicate and engage with communities on governance matters.

Gasana (2023:130) point out that community radio provides access to the media to communities and groups that have previously not had such access. Nafiz (2012: 15) state that rural communities are totally deprived of getting the opportunity in information sharing and communications, which is a deprivation of their rights to access information. Fombad (2019:50) study on the role of community radios in information dissemination revealed that community radios affordability and accessibility in terms of money, infrastructure, and skills makes it an ideal information platform for rural communities. Therefore, he believes that community radio generally becomes a tool for disseminating information to poor, illiterate people who live deep in rural areas. The Chris Hani District Municipality in its annual performance report (2022/23-103), Communications strategy and The IDP and budget (2022:65) have shown that the municipality that it has invested heavily on Vukan Radio Community Station due its accessibility and reach to a wide audience.

In 2011, Alberts study on the role of external communications on service delivery in Mangaung Municipality revealed that community radio live broadcasting of a budget speech delivered by the executive mayor was an effective way to

communicate the intentions of the municipality on how to accelerate service delivery to the community Alberts (2011:44). As indicated below, the municipality leadership has utilised the platform to engage on array issues including service delivery and municipal priorities.



Figure 3: Municipal Leadership (Source: Chris Hani District Municipality Facebook page)

Msibi and Penzhorn (2010:58), hold a view that the use of radio advertising or announcements especially through community radio stations is perceived as an accessible and effective communication medium with an ability to attract a wide listenership using indigenous languages which are easily understood by local citizens. The Chris Hani District Municipality’s 2022-2027 IDP and Budget (2022:74) revealed that good governance and public participation is one of the institutional key performance areas. The document shows that the municipality is making some inroads following areas:

- The districts’ risk management instruments remain strong in ensuring adherence to a clean administration and accountable governance.

- Various initiatives were undertaken during the year under review to improve risks associated with fraud and corruption.
- The municipality continues to excel in implementing mechanisms to strengthen the public participation function using both physical and virtual platforms.
- The implementation of the Integrated Marketing and Communication strategy of the district immensely paved the way for effective engagement with all relevant stakeholders across the district.

However, in its annual performance report (2022/23-201) as indicated in the table below revealed that the municipality has regress in all its key performance areas compared to previous financial years.

KPA	Overall Performance Percentage (2018/2019 FY)	Overall Performance Percentage (2019/2020 FY)	Overall Performance Percentage (2020/2021 FY)	Overall Performance Percentage (2021/2022 FY)	Overall Performance Percentage (2022/2023 FY)
Municipal Transformation and Organizational Development	67%	48%	100%	88%	88%
Basic service delivery and infrastructure Development	53%	64%	28.6%	21%	27%
Local Economic Development	84%	70%	62.5%	63%	63%
Financial Management and Viability	17%	32%	90.9%	91%	80%
Good Governance and Public Participation	84%	79%	75%	100%	75%
Overall Institutional Performance	64%	63%	61.5%	53%	51%

Figure 4: Comparison summary from 2018/2019 to 2022/2023 financial years

(Source: Chris Hani District Municipality APR-2023 FY)

Malesele (2023: n.p) revealed that during the presidential imbizo held in Chris Hani District communities have called on government to speed up the delivery of basic services in the area. She says the community were complaining about bad roads and a lack of access to clean drinking water are among the service delivery woes they face. The 2021/22 AGSA Audit Report (2022:106) audit report revealed that in Chris Hani District Municipality's municipal manager did not act on a material irregularity relating to an unjustifiable R20 million payments for a variation order. The AGSA report state that the matter was referred the matter to the Special Investigating Unit for further investigation. The report states that lack of accountability local government is the main cause of community protest for better service delivery. The Chris Hani District Municipality 2022/23 Annual Rep attributes some of the failures to meet its target to community unrests emanating from infrastructure backlogs the municipality is currently faced with. In her news report for Capetalk Radio on service protest in Komani, Kema (2023: n.p) state that community members from various parts of Koman in the Chris Hani District Municipality shut down the N6 entry route from Johannesburg to East London in a protest poor service delivery in Komani.

Steyn (2015:7) revealed that from time-to-time communities use protests as a communication channel to display their dissatisfaction when they feel that the municipalities are unresponsive to their needs. Similar sentiments were shared by Botes (2018: 246) in that the protests occurs largely as the results of growing unresponsiveness of government and lack of accountability of those in key positions (both bureaucrats and politicians) in local government. The study on community protects in municipalities South African Local Government Association (2015:18)

communities lack information because they are not participating. The finding of the report attributes this to the multiple platforms available to communities provided by multiple governance spheres which is rendering their participation complex. The study of South African Local Government Association (2015:49) recommended that existing local governance structures should address this issue and provide the foundation for a complete feedback loop to communities and into council structures from national and provincial spheres.

Botes (2018: 246) argue that his main concern has been that service delivery provided through a top-down approach is not acceptable. Instead, he believes that residents are interested in public service that meaningful incorporates citizens' choices and aspirations from "the-bottom". The finding on government communications policy (RSA GCIS 2018:7) revealed that government is compelled to engage citizens in conversation around critical issues and to empower citizens to participate in not only shaping government policies but also in taking up opportunities that affect their lives. Langa (2018:32) holds a different view of that local government may adhere to all the legislation and follow best practice governing communication but their communication efforts may be dampened by various factors that could affect the effectiveness of communication. A case in point is the Chris Hani District Municipality's Annual Performance Report (2022/23-201) have shown that the municipality met all its communications and citizens engagement targets, but service delivery protects are persisting. Langa (2018:36) contends that communication efforts may be hampered when the jobs of communication officials are dependent on political power. In his view this could also be the case when local officials are aligned to political parties, and they end up using the resources of the municipality to benefit their specific political party. This could result in communication professionals acting as professionals of political

marketing or strategic communication neglecting their task of empowering citizens with information (Heinze *et al.*, 2013). The government communications policy (RSA GCIS 2018:16) revealed that the President, Ministers, Premiers, Mayors, and councillors to take responsibility for government communication and use it to account to the public on government policy, objectives, report back on deliverables and interact with the public to solicit views and input into government activities. The findings from desktop analysis revealed that that most of Chris Hani District Municipality's 2022/23 media and public engagements are centred around the mayor not on municipality programmes and activities. Diligent (2022:n.p) is of the opinion that building trust will in turn help inspire citizens to become more engaged and more involved as the relationship builds between governments and citizens, over time, community members will come to realize that their concerns matter.

5.3.2 Theme 2: Impact of Programmes or Platforms Provided by Community Media to Enhance Accountability and Good Governance

It is worth to note that citizens participation in local government and holding municipal leadership accountable cannot be achieved if community media doesn't make space and initiatives for such engagement platforms. Research on community media contribution to citizen's participation sees community media organisations as platforms that give voice to groups, ideas, and cultures not always represented in mainstream media (Peissl 2022:14). Claasen (2022: n.p) concur with this assertion that community media and their journalist are much closer to their communities than big news organisation. One of the key objectives of the was to ascertain the impact of

Vukani Community Radio and The Rep community newspaper platforms and programmes in enhancing accountability and good governance.

The findings from the desktop analysis revealed that the Rep Community Newspaper is playing its watchdog role of ensuring that municipal leadership and officials are held accountable for their actions. The findings have shown that in its website, the Rep has a page that is dedicated to local government news reporting. The findings of the study have shown that the paper is covering local government robustly with a dedicated journalist that is focusing on politics and municipal news. The newspaper was at the forefront in exposing the R15 million Lesseyton Stadium saga that made national headlines ahead of the local government election in 2021. The exorbitant cost of the building stadium compared to the below par and shoddy final product caused an uproar in South Africa. This prompted ordinary and opposition political leaders to condemn this, as the abuse of public funds and corruption by the Enoch Mgijima Municipality which falls under Chris Hani District Municipal Council. This article led to multi-disciplinary investigation by the Hawks, Office of the Public Protector, and the Eastern Cape Provincial Department of Cooperative Governance.

Despite the success in unearthing stadium saga, the findings have revealed that the paper was not interrogating the council's performance as per 2022/23 annual report and 2022-27 IDP and budget instead it relies on press statements to generate news stories. For example, the paper did not report extensively on the municipal dismal spending on its 2022/23 annual budget allocation on infrastructure development. The findings revealed that it has lost its senior journalists to its bigger sister papers in the province, the Daily Dispatch and The Herald Newspaper. South African Editors Forum's (2010: n,p) report on skills audit reveals that the skills required for

professional and quality news pieces are slowly disintegrating, with the juniorisation of newsrooms leading to a 'double burden' on the fragile, fourth pillar of our democracy. The report highlighted that development of story ideas, poor consideration of relevant issues, succumbing to deadline pressure, insufficient background research, problems of factual accuracy, poor interaction with sources affecting new entrants in the sector. The UNODC module series on anti-corruption (2019:15) states that the media has an important role in the fight against corruption as it can demand accountability and transparency from the public and private sectors. In its research on combating corruption, African Union (2022:n.p) notes that the media remain a practical and effective tool to foster awareness on corruption, as well as voices that demand accountability and transparency from the public and private sectors. Through investigative journalism, media outlets have been key whistleblowers as well as holding government accountable in management of the public affairs African Union (2022: n.p).

The Vukani Community Radio Station license conditions have shown that the station is obligated to ensure that its programmes remain relevant by involving the community in its content production. The findings from ICASA's Annual Compliance Audit Report (2022:4) have shown that Vukani Community Radio was compliant regarding Clause 5.1 of the licence conditions that deals with local news content. The clause state that the station shall broadcast news a total 50 minutes per day, 30 minutes shall be local, 15 minutes national and 5 minutes international news. The findings from ICASA monitoring exercise reveals that the station broadcast approximately 20 minutes of news per day during the week, and no news over the weekend. The news bulletins are all broadcast in isiXhosa, and they cover local and national news. The National Association Broadcasters (2022:25) research on future

proofing of community radio revealed that a common misunderstanding among community stations about what ICASA 'local' means that there is a perception that local news or music means anything South African. However, the report reveals that this not the case of community radio, for them local means from the actual coverage area and local music and news should come mainly from the local area and not national or provincial. Another concerning issue revealed in the report is that community radio stations broadcast news mostly lifted from newspapers and websites due to lack of qualified editorial staff members. The findings on Vukani Community Radio revealed that the station doesn't have a dedicated accountability and public participation programmes that seeks to hold leadership accountable. The findings revealed that the station depends on radio interviews and talk shows that are initiated by the municipality. For example, the station hosted ad hoc a live interview where the mayor talked about IDP and budget and municipal performance and answered questions from listeners. The findings and interpretations on desktop analysis have shown that some community radio stations in the Eastern Cape have dedicated citizens participation radio programmes aimed promoting accountability at a local level. A case in point is the Alfred Nzo Community Radio's weekly programme called "Talk to Your Councillor" that enables communities to engage and access their local municipal leadership. The findings revealed that In Buffalo City, Kumkani FM hosts "Masithethe, a current affairs programme aimed at educating listeners about how the municipality operates including IDP and budgeting process. In Gqeberha, Nkqubela FM, hosts a "State of the Ward" programme where councillors invited to unpack service delivery plans and answer questions from listeners. Makhuthu (2021:11) sees these programmes as bridges that closes the gap between citizens and their elected representatives to strengthen local governance. Mbombo (2018:10) indicates that

community radio provides a diversity of programmes in a variety of formats and styles. For example, roundtable discussions, interviews, talks, call-in programmes, live broadcast of meetings in the community.

5.3.3 Theme 3: Challenges Facing Community Media in Promoting Accountability and Good Governance

The findings focussed on the challenges facing Vukani Community Radio Station in promoting good governance and they are related to compliance, lack of skills operational and financial sustainability.

Lack Skills and Experience

The findings from literature have revealed that community media suffers from chronic lack of skills and experience in their editorial departments. In assessing Vukani Community Radios editorial team, the findings reveals that it comprises of volunteers without journalism qualification and experience. This hampers their ability to conduct investigative journalism and perform their watchdog role of ensuring that local government leadership and officials are accountable and good governance is enhanced. Bulbulia (2021:36) argue that the inability to afford permanent, skilled and over-reliance on volunteerism have direct effect on listenership figures and further undermines the trust advertisers place in community radio. The National Association Broadcasters (2022:25) sees the lack of journalistic and content development experience, and insufficient staff threatens the sustainability of community radio stations as they serve communities that were historically denied access to the media.

The literature review has shown that there's limited research that explores lack of skills with particular emphasis on news content generation.

Compliance Challenges

The findings have revealed that Vukani Community Radio Station was granted a free broadcasting license by the ICASA on a non-profit basis. The findings on ICASA licensing conditions revealed that the station management should ensure that ICASA's rules are not flouted as that could lead to the regulatory imposing punitive fines. In 2021, ICASA complaints and compliance committee received a complain the concerning an allegation relating to regulation 6(14) of the Municipal Election Party Elections Broadcasts and Political Advertisements.

It was revealed that ICASA regulation 6(14) provides that broadcasting service licensee that broadcast PAs must ensure that all PA broadcasts are clearly identified through a standard pre-recorded introductory and concluding message (top and tail) disclaimer." The findings revealed that the contravention occurred six times over five days namely 13/10/2021 at 16h51; 14/10/2021 at 15h57 and again at 20h32; 15/10/2021 at 15h53; 18/10/2021 at 06h56 and on 20/10/2021 at 18h59. The findings of the research reveal that ICASA's ordered Vukani Community Radio Station to pay a fine of R12 500 for the transgression. The findings also revealed that the station did not adhere to the Standard Terms and Conditions for class licences: The Programmes Manager occupies dual roles of being a presenter on the station, which is in contravention of Clause 10A (7) (d) of the regulations on Amended Standard Terms and Conditions for Class Licences, 2016 published in Government Gazette No. 39872 dated 30 March 2016, which provides that: "The Board of Directors/Trustees and station management must not occupy dual roles with regard to being

managers/presenters at the station ICASA (2022:8). The findings revealed that the Parliament of the Republic of South Africa's Portfolio Committee on Communications 2020 oversight report on have shown community media outlets were not compliant with Central Supplier Database (CSD) requirements, ICASA regulations and MDDA funding requirements. The report recommended that MDDA should assist non-compliant community media outlets. With capacity building and mentorship programmes.

Financial Sustainability

Mbombo (2018:36) state one the most immediate reality that community radio stations are lack of funds to be able to pay salaries/stipends, produce programmes, buy equipment, meet operational expenses, and pay transmission costs. The desktop revealed that in the year 2000, South African Government passed MDDA Act that established an agency that is mandated to provide financial support to community media outlets. In terms of the Act, the agency's priority is to help create an enabling environment for media development and diversity by supporting marginalised and disadvantaged communities to access to the media. It was found that that since its inception the agency has funded a total number of 586 community media projects across South Africa. These community media outlets are mainly based in disadvantaged communities. The findings revealed that the MDDA Position Paper (2002) state that the agency support amongst other things community media enterprises, news agencies located in marginalised areas of the country with training and capacity building programmes. In the MDDA's 2021/22 Annual Report, the findings

have shown that in the Eastern Cape, the agency supported 25 community media outlets, as indicated in the graph below:

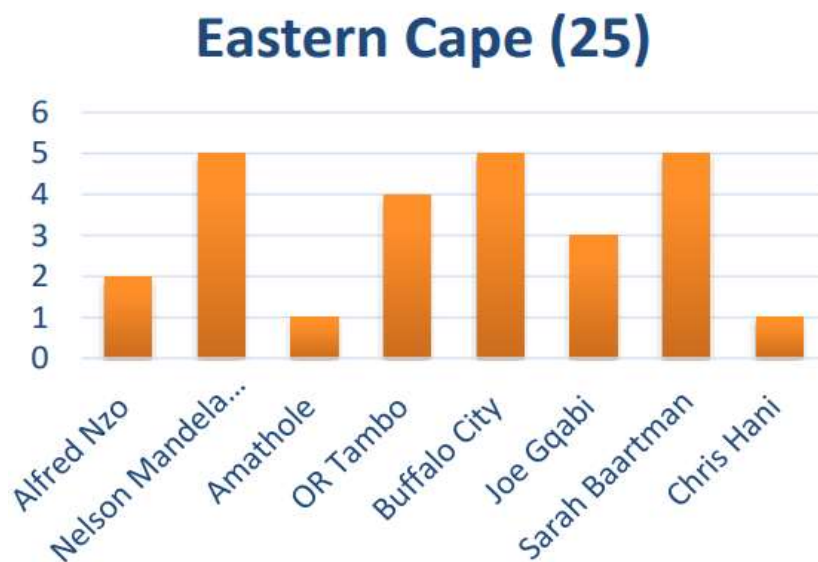


Figure 5: Community Media Outlets supported by MDDA in the Eastern Cape (Source: MDDA's 2021/22 Annual Report, 2022:34)

Msileni (2021:47) research on community radio sustainability indicated that the sector is faced with financial challenges that impede on the potential of the station's development, creating job opportunities for community members, and most importantly their daily operations. The desktop analysis on MDDA support to Vukani Community Radio Station revealed the following:

- MDDA supported the radio station with infrastructure and broadcasting equipment that it needed ensure can be on air and run its operations smoothly.
- The MDDA operation costs, covering volunteers and employee's stipends, salaries so that the station has the necessary capacity to delivery content its listenership.
- The MDDA has also assisted the radio station to meet its local content quotas by ensuring that it deliver the content it supposed to deliver to the community.

The literature view revealed that the station does face sustainability challenges and the MDDA assists the stations towards achieving sustainability. The finding further revealed that most community outlets struggle to generate revenue post MDDA grant funding. The desktop analysis revealed that Vukani Community Radio Station have developed creative financial sustainable methods to fund its operation beyond MDDA grant funding. Through a partnership with partnership, the station received a motor vehicle donated from a local Nissan dealership to help the station staff to attend to newsworthy events and important meetings. Mafani (2016:61) sees trade-outs and partnerships supply with tangible goods or services which are crucial for the functioning and promotion of community media outlets, "Vukani FM generates revenue through an in-house ICT Centre from which members of the community may access internet, scanning, faxing and printing services at a cost. The rates of the Centre are the cheapest in the area and four (including the Vukani FM) outlets offer such services" Mafani (2015:61). Bulbulia (*et al.*2019:21) cites advertising agencies, responsible for the ad-spend of large corporations perceived community media projects as ineffective vehicles for advertising due to their large number, small footprints, and at times poor

administration. Bulbulia (*et al.*2019:21) state that community media outlets woes are exacerbated by inability to attract advertisers.

Many community stations are in communities that have limited consumer power and thus do not represent attractive to private sector advertisers. Inefficient and inadequate financial and administrative systems within community radio stations are also cited as a problem by advertisers Bulbulia (*et al.*2019:21). The findings further revealed Vukani Community Radio Stations main source of advertisement are municipalities and government with tiny support from the private sector. In addition to this support, the findings revealed in 202 the station received a donation of an Outside Broadcasting Vehicle from the Department of Communications to improve visibility and accessibility. The findings on donations further revealed that the station also received state-of-the-Art Digital Broadcast Studio donated by the MDDA. With almost 90% of Vukani Community Radio advertising revenue coming government and the infrastructure donations, it is evident that the station will find difficult to hold local government accountable and promote good governance. Mafani (2015:59) affirms that government support becomes vividly evident when one looks closely at the situation of Alfred Nzo Community Radio Station. He states that the station was saved from closure by the Umzimvubu local municipality, provided unconditionally, i.e., the station did not have to refund the municipality. However, Mdledle (2019: n.p) notes that over the past few years there has been an increased in lack of credibility and accountability within community media, where instead of social development and democracy, it merely became a tool of generating certain agendas driven by certain elites.

The Rep Community Newspaper

The finding revealed that the challenges facing the Rep Community Newspaper in promoting accountability and good governance are unique to Vukani radio station. The findings revealed that the corporate-owned community newspapers unlike independent community media outlets are driven by commercial interest over public good. In the South African context, small towns and communities are served by different types of community newspapers, such as corporately owned and community-owned not-for-profit and independent for-profit community newspapers Duncan (2015:237). In the case of the Rep newspaper, it is owned by the second largest media conglomerate, Arena Holdings. The Rep Community Newspaper was the only corporate-owned community newspaper in the Chris Hani region until its competitor, Media24 introduced its own community title in 2013. The Rep Newspaper in response to the competition made the paper available for free circulation increasing accessibility to counter loss of potential readership.

The findings shows that the paper increased its readership and bolstered its local content to the benefit of citizens. Rao and Wasserman (2015:652) asserts that corporately owned community newspapers also face their own unique challenges because they must satisfy their parent media conglomerate's interest and focus on commercial interests at stake. The findings have shown that due to commercial pressures, Arena Holding recently embarked on restructuring process by reducing newsroom staff complement to reduce operative costs. During this process, the paper lost its experienced journalist to mainstream newspapers. The findings of the literature review state that corporately owned community newspapers rarely have unique content because of recycling news from the national sister newspapers. However, the Rep Community Newspaper play a role of being a feeder of the community news to

their mainstream newspapers such as the Daily dispatch. This commercial interest led to the neglect of local news which includes accountability of local government leaders.

5.4 Summary of Findings

The findings of the research postulated that if municipalities want to succeed in service delivery service delivery, they should prioritise accountability and good governance. The underlining the importance of accountability and good governance in local government are expressed in the constitution of the South Africa, 1996 and other legislative instruments such as White paper on local government of 1998 and Local Government Municipal Systems Act of 2000. The Chris Hani District Municipality's 2022-2027 IDP and Budget and 2022/2023 Annual Performance Report has placed considerable emphasis on the council function as an efficient provider of basic services to foster democratic values. Those values encompass accountability and citizen participation in municipal affairs to ensure key decisions represents interests and needs of local community. Local government legislative instruments require municipal leadership to establish public participation platforms for purpose of regular communication and engagement with communities. Key amongst those channels that are stipulated in the local government legislation are community media.

In the findings from the Municipal 2022-2027 IDP and Budget and 2022/2023 Annual Performance Report, it was proven that the council leadership and officials had utilised community media to engage with local citizens to account for the work they have done. In the findings and interpretation of literature related to the role of local government in promoting accountability and good governance, if municipalities pay poor lip service to public participation citizens resort to protests. The literature review also revealed that clean good governance and effective service delivery cannot be

achieved without citizens involvement in governance affairs. As the findings of the research further shows that there are several ways local government can communicate and engage with citizens and community media has a potential to be a trusted channel due to its proximity to local communities.

The interpretation of the findings has shown that the Rep Community Newspaper have made significant strides in providing platforms that seeks to promote accountability in Chris Hani District Municipality. The expose on Lessyton Stadium saga was a testament to the paper's commitment to unearth corruption, maladministration, and enhance accountability by municipal leadership. However, the findings identified gaps and weaknesses in its editorial approach towards covering municipal affairs. The paper lost its senior and experienced reporters to established papers and this has negatively affected its in-depth and robust reporting. The findings in the literature review identified juniorisation of newsrooms phenomena, where newsrooms consist of inexperienced reporters. This phenomenon has somehow affected by the paper's ability to probe municipal performance to strengthened participatory democracy. The findings on Vukani Community Radio Station have showed that the station has meet its license requirements in terms of airing local news content as stipulated in ICASA regulations. However, the findings also revealed that Vukani Community Radio Station failed to adhere to its license due to the dual role played by the programme manager as the presenter and head of the station. This finding points out to community medias challenges of capacity constraints and skills development.

The literature review revealed that most community radio don't understand the term local news. They assume that the term local refers to South Africa, whereas it

refers to coverage of local news where radio station is based. In relation to the above-mentioned statement, the findings have shown that Vukani Community Radio has not prioritise programmes aimed at promoting accountability by local municipal leadership. This was attributed to lack of journalism skills and knowledge by the station's editorial team. The findings further revealed that Vukani Community Radio Station unlike other stations in the province doesn't have dedicated programme aimed at fostering accountability and good governance. Lastly the study looked at the challenges faced by community media in Chris Hani District Municipality in their quest to promote accountability and good governance. The findings have demonstrated that Vukani Community Radio Station was struggling to adhere to compliance of the highly regulated broadcasting section. A case in point is its inability to interpret and implement local content stipulated in ICASA's regulations. The findings have also shown that the station's was struggling to attract qualified editorial team due limited resources.

This challenge impeded the station's ability to engage in robust and investigative that can enhance accountability, transparency, and good governance. The stations overreliance on government support can negatively affect its editorial independence and likely led it to be a government mouthpiece and neglecting its watchdog role. As corporate-owned community newspaper, it has been revealed that the Rep newspaper is driven by commercial interest instead of public good. Despite its robust investigative journalism that managed to hold local government accountable, the paper's editorial team has been eroded to its inability to retain experience

journalist. The phenomena are not unique to paper but an industry wide challenge that threatens the country's participatory governance and democracy.

5.5 Conclusion

The main objective of the study was to examine the effectiveness of community media in fostering accountability and good governance in Chris Hani District Municipality. The study focused on the following objectives:

- Chris Hani District Municipality embraces accountability, good governance, and role of community media.
- Impact of programmes or platforms provided by community media to enhance accountability.
- Identify challenges or obstacles encountered by community media in ensuring that municipal leadership are accountable to the communities they serve.

In conclusion, it must be highlighted that Chris Hani District Municipality's embraces accountability and good governance as it met its key performance indicators in the 2022/23 Annual Performance Report. This is attributable to the measures it has put in place to ensure participation of communities in its programmes and activities as reported in the 2022/23 Annual Performance Report and 2022-2027, IDP and Budget document. The revealed that the municipality had utilised community media to engage with local citizens to account for the work they have done. However, the study found that the municipality is battling with the challenge of community protects related to poor municipal service deliver. The literature review indicates that the root cause of service delivery protects emanates from lack of communication, accountability, and transparency. The finding concludes that Chris Hani District Municipality's

Communication and Public Participation Strategy was not effective in achieving its objective of fostering a culture of transparency and accountability and to promote effective access to information. The finding revealed the strategy lacks coherence as most of its communication activities were reactively and centred around municipal leadership. It can be concluded that the development and implementation was solely based on ticking the compliance boxes. The study revealed that the Local Government Municipal System Act of 2000 is ambiguous on what is expected from municipalities when it comes to citizen participation and accountability.

The study found that the Act in its current form fails to advise on how exactly public participation should be addressed and achieved in municipalities. Since the Local Government Municipal System Act of 2000 is not prescriptive, this has given municipalities a leeway to development public participation programmes that are not adequately addressing the needs of the community. Callahan (2007:158) states that participatory programmes should not be pre-emptive. "There will be a sense of frustration and distrust on both sides due to the participatory planning phase happening at a later stage when the issues have already been framed, the agenda set, and most decisions made. The response of citizens towards this may be reactive and judgmental, often critical, and unsupportive of the process and the outcome" Callahan (2007:158).

The findings from literature review have found that many challenges facing municipalities in South African can be overcome if local councils listen to the concerns of citizens, and residents become actively involved in the affairs of their municipalities. Due to the lack of accountability and citizen participation, communities in municipalities have little trust in the effectiveness and responsiveness of councils and this result to service delivery protest. The literature review concludes that if municipalities develop

and implement credible programmes for public participation that can go a long way in ensuring that communities to take part in municipal programmes and activities. In the case of Chris Hani District Municipality, accountability and citizen participation can be achieved if community media is utilised meaningfully to enhance municipal communication.

However, community media should be able to provide for engagement platforms between citizens and local government leadership on issues that concern the municipality and its processes. The evidence has shown that both Vukani Community Radio Station and The Rep community Newspaper are facing several challenges that hampered their ability to perform their watchdog mandate. Amongst those challenges are lack of skilled and experienced media professionals, threat to financial sustainability and cogent programmes aimed at enhancing accountability and public participation. The literature reviewed revealed there has been minimum research done on local content develop in the community media and this has resulted into serious knowledge gap. The findings revealed that the Vukani Community Radio Station was struggling with compliance as it fails to meet its license requirements due to capacity constraints. The study found that the most immediate challenge facing community media is financial sustainability which affect all aspects of their operations.

As the result of financial viability, the Rep Community Newspaper has prioritised commercial interest involving cost cutting measures dictated by its parent company while Vukani Community Radio have been heavily relying on government grants and advertising for survival. The study has shown that editorial independence and robust journalism which is very important in the media's watchdog role of holding the political elites accountable will be compromised.

In conclusion, community media outlets are the most significant stakeholders in bridging the communication gap between local government and the communities that they serve. Community media outlets are better placed to represent the genuine views of communities when it comes to accountability and good governance in local government. It is important that all role-players including local government should support community media by providing much needed resources to encourage them to perform their role to promote democracy meaningfully. The study concludes that community media outlets are vital to advance accountability, citizen participation and good governance in local government. To promote participatory governance, community media is the most viable platform that citizens can use hold local government accountable because accessibility. media are essential for ensuring transparency, accountability and participation as fundamental elements of good governance and human rights-based development. However, the evidence has shown a gap in local government legislation on how exactly public participation should be implemented and achieved.

5.6 Recommendations

It is important to understand the significance of promoting accountability and good governance in local government and the challenges to develop conversant recommendations that will improve the role of community media in this regard. The recommendations emanate from document analysis and the studies done in terms of aims and objectives of the study. In a bid to promote accountability and good governance in local government, the following is suggested and recommended:

- The Local Government Municipal Structures Act 117 of 1998 should be amended to include a clause that explicitly state what is expected from municipalities regarding the accountability and public participation.

- The municipality should develop credible public participation and communication strategy that is fully- funded by the municipality.
- Accountability and good governance should be included in the municipal manager's and executive management performance contract with consequence management for non-performance.
- Political leadership especially municipal public accounts committee members should be capacitated with necessary skills that will help them to conduct their oversight role on the IDP, budget and annual performance report efficiently.
- The National Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs and SALGA should introduce an incentive system in the form of awards for the best performing municipalities in promoting accountability and good governance. Those that are failing should be recorded.
- Community media outlets should develop sound accountability programming and platforms with unique and relevant activities relevant to the community.
- To enhance their financial sustainability, community media outlets should professionalise their operations so that they can be able attract investment and advertising revenue. Community media should invest their modest resources to branding and marketing initiatives to ensure that they position themselves in a way that could bring revenue to stations so that they are sustainable and stop overreliance on government.
- Community media outlets should establish sales departments which are run by a sales team. They should have efficient and effective financial records methods so that they can be able produce annual compliance and auditing reports.

- To attract relevant skills in the sector, community media outlets should tap into Sector Education and Training Authority's grants by introducing internship and learnership intake for media graduate students.
- The Community media sector should lobby MDDA to fund them to produce different formats such as Q & A's live on air or drama program or features on accountability and good governance in municipalities.

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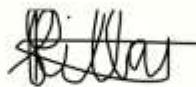
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