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Stakeholder Engagement Practices in Greater Tzaneen Municipality.

A Dissertation

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by

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ABSTRACT

The rise of protests and community unrests around the county have cautioned municipalities to explore better ways to engage different groups affected by the decisions taken. While municipalities are exploring better ways of engaging communities and other stakeholders, communities are also exploring alternative mechanisms of reaching out to the government. There is no doubt that a government that include the people in the decision-making process is a government that promotes participatory, representative democracy and the will of the people. Stakeholder engagement provides both the government and the citizens an opportunity to plan, execute and distribute resources in a way that promotes people’s power and people’s government. This study explored the different methods used by the Greater Tzaneen Municipality to engage with different groups and the perception of the community on the stakeholder engagement process.

A case study approach which utilised a qualitative research method through semi-structured interviews was used in the exploration of different views and insights on the stakeholder engagement process of Greater Tzaneen Municipality. The findings revealed that stakeholder engagement in Greater Tzaneen Municipality operates on the information and consultation level of participation with the little role played by the community to influence the outcomes of the process. The study also revealed that, once a municipality operates at the information and consultation levels it creates a recipe for more misunderstanding and delegitimise every process meant to bring government and community together. The study established that public participation and involvement is reduced to counting signatures in meetings and events with no measuring tools in place to assess the level of involvement if communities in key decision-making.

Keywords: Stakeholder engagement, Stakeholder relationship Management, Public Participation, Government Communication, Local Government and Community Engagement.
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Dedication

I dedicate this study to my late mother Grace "Cate" Mothasi Kubayi ntombi ya Muthavini ntukulu wa NWA-jeke. La ha unga kona u eltlela hi kurhula ntombi ya Kubayyi. I also dedicate this study to all the motherless and fatherless children, may God bless and protect them.
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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ANC- African National Congress
EFF- Economic Freedom Fighters
GCIS- Government Communication and Information Systems
GTM- Greater Tzaneen Municipality
RSA- Republic of South Africa
SALGA- South Africa Local Government Association
SANCO- South African Civic Organisation
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

In South Africa, local government is one of the three spheres of government closer to the beneficiaries of public services— the citizens. Communities as the primary stakeholder in municipalities and main beneficiaries of local services are entitled to the right to be consulted and contribute to the decisions by local authorities, (SALGA, 2013). Municipalities, on the other hand, are entrusted with the responsibility of consulting communities before decisions are taken; this is done to an idea of the kind of services the community want. Stakeholder engagement provides both municipalities and communities with an opportunity to identify and resolve problems together, advocate for policies and service collectively, distribute resources equally and can enhance accountability and organisational transparency and communities can exercise their rights to promote their interests in decision-making, (Russel, Igras, Johri, Kuoh, Pavin & Wicksrom, 2015:2).

Stakeholder engagement especially public participation has received attention from all levels of government and civic society (Matshe, 2009:3; Mngoma, 2010:1; Mosotho, 2012:130). In particular, community engagement is a form of participation that contain more than putting structures and committees together and expect them to work out (Tesoriero, 2010:144). Rather, it is an inclusive, collaborative and consultative is a two-way communication problem-solving mechanism with an intent to promote participatory democracy, (Venter and Lansberg, 2011:112 & Public Participation Framework, 2013). While municipalities are in pursuit of finding effective ways to engage with communities, residents are also assessing better ways to approach government (Buccus, Hicks & Piper 2011:3). Through integrated development plans, participatory communication, mayoral imbizo, and public addresses, municipal councils and communities come together for the purpose of a common goal, to provide better service delivery (Rowe & Frewer, 2005:263).

Communications departments in local municipalities play an important role in the process of stakeholder engagement, from identifying key stakeholders, their needs and influences and identification of effective communication channels to meet the
needs of all stakeholders (Comm Strategy, 2012-15). Despite all possible mechanisms, inter alia Integrated Development Plan, public communications, public dialogue, public consultations, municipal visits and imbizos, public services protests dominate the news and public debate agenda in South Africa.

The current debate in the public domain aims to question whether these formal processes can bring about change, or if informal approach through protests can yield good results. Greater Tzaneen Municipality (GTM) was selected based on the integration of community involvement as a strategic tool in stakeholder engagement process to maximise the provision of basic services and reduce violent public protest in the area. The study explored different methods used by GTM to engage different groups and the perceptions of the community towards this process in Greater Tzaneen Municipality.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The increase in public service protests and their use by communities as a communication tool to demonstrate their dissatisfaction on service delivery has cautioned municipalities to engage communities more than ever before. It has also required municipalities to explore different mechanisms of engagement, the most recent being the integrated development plans to enhance the level of community involvement in service delivery decision-making process. Despite all possible methods of engagement, some communities still feel excluded and not engaged adequately and ultimately resort to protests as a way of communicating their concerns to the local authority. Post the 2016 local government elections GTM experienced public protests; in November 2016, municipal workers took to the street to demand good working conditions, September 2017, in Ga-Kgapane, Letsitele, and in Bolobedu Southward 8, 9 and 10 communities protested for basic services. The study at hand aims to explore the current engagement methods adopted by Greater Tzaneen Municipality to engage with communities as well as the perceptions of the communities towards this process. Through the integration of the four elements of public participation namely, consult, collaborate, involve and inform, the study will explore stakeholder as an inclusive ongoing process rather than a once-off event following a qualitative research approach
with an intent of understanding the phenomenon under scrutiny from the subjective experiences of the GTM stakeholders.

1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Overall objective

- To explore the engagement methods in the process of stakeholder engagement and the perceptions of the community towards this process in the Greater Tzaneen Municipality.

1.3.1 Research Questions

- How the current stakeholder engagement methods used by the Greater Tzaneen Municipality promote community engagement?
- How are the four elements of public participation i.e. consult, collaborate, involve and inform integrated into the Greater Tzaneen Municipality stakeholder engagement practices?
- What is the role of the communication department of the Greater Tzaneen Municipality in the community engagement process?
- What are the perceptions of the community towards the process of community engagement?

1.4 RESEARCH CONTEXT

1.4.1. Greater Tzaneen Municipality in the context of Local Government

The constitution of the Republic of South Africa Chapter 7 section 151 dictates that local government must consist of municipalities in the whole territory of the republic. It also entrusts the municipality with the authority to govern its community affairs without inference from the provincial or national government. Greater Tzaneen Municipality in terms of section 155(1) of the constitution is a category B municipality; this means it shares its executive and legislative powers with Greater Lebata that is situated in the same area. GTM is divided into main places namely: Bankuna, Bakgaga Ba Maake, Bakgage, Bathabine Ba Mogoboya, Dwarsfotnein, Haenesburg, Litsitele, Modjadji, N’wa Mitwa and Nyavane. The Greater Tzaneen Municipality is also divided into four clusters, Bulamahlo, Lesedi, Runnymede and Relela. GTM economic sector
comprises of 31.7% community services, 23.8% finance, 10.2 trade, 7.6% agriculture and 3.7% manufacturing, GTM is also a category B municipality in Mopani District, Limpopo Province South Africa (Census, 2011). The participants of this study were selected from Lesedi cluster in ward 16 and 18 Khujwana village.

1.4.2 Legislative and executive function of a municipality in relation to the current study

- To ensure the provision of services to communities in a sustainable manner, (Constitution RSA, 1996:152).
- To encourage the involvement of communities and community organisations in matters of local government, (Constitution RSA, 1996:152)

1.5 Summary of the theoretical framework and literature review

This chapter starts with the overall objective of the study to provide context to the theoretical background and the literature which must address the key research questions. The main concept covered by this chapter is, stakeholder theory and key constructs, stakeholder engagement, social movement, deprivation theory and public spaces of participation and communication in municipalities.

1.6 Summary of research methodology

This research used a case study method, which adopted the qualitative research approach. The qualitative approach helps the researcher to understand a phenomenon in the real-life situation through an understanding of subjective experiences of the participants, (Henning, Van Rensburg & Smit, 2011:20; Flick, 2015:24).

In order to the stakeholder engagement and community perceptions; the study used semi-structured interviews to collect data which was later transcribed and analysed through thematic content analysis. The participants were selected from three different groups: three participants were the GTM managers, two councillors who oversee the community selected of the purpose of this study and 15 community member selected
purposively by the researcher. Communication managers and the public participation manager were selected for their role and understanding of the stakeholder engagement and community participation processes in GTM. Councillors selected for their role in the engagement process as representatives of wards. The study used thematic analysis in order to generate meaning from the data. The qualitative criteria were also discussed. The quality criteria for qualitative studies proposed by De Vos, Strydom, Fouche & Delport, (2011:420) include credibility, dependability, transferability and confirmability.

1.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The researcher adhered to the ethical considerations stipulated in the Academic and Ethical research Code of Conduct of the University of Johannesburg. The researcher requested permission from the faculty ethics committee indicating the purpose of the study. The researcher also requested permission from the municipal manager of Greater Tzaneen Municipality to have access to municipal officials, organisational information and interact with participants from different departments needed for the purpose of the study. Informed consent letters and information letters were distributed to all participants. In cases of participants who did not understand or unable to read English, the content was read to them in their own languages. Identities and names of all participants remain anonymous and confidential. Other important ethical considerations that the researcher adhered to as proposed by De Vos et al. (2011:45) include voluntary participation, privacy and confidentiality of respondents’ identities.

1.8 DEFINITIONS OF KEY CONSTRUCTS

Government Communication- a form of communication between government and citizens characterised by information sharing, government key messages and nation-building, GCIS (2014:2).

Stakeholder- individuals, groups and organisation affected directly or indirectly by the actions and decisions of the organisation, (Stelliing 2017:160; & Freeman and Olabije 2015). In a government context, these are individuals, groups and organisation with interests in government processes and outcomes, (Public Participation Framework 2013:8)
Public Participation- a process by which government prior to making decisions, consult with the individuals, groups, organisations and government entities who may be affected by these decisions, (Public Participation Framework, 2013:7).

Stakeholder engagement- is a process of getting all stakeholders to be in a position to identify, negotiate and draw a road map to achieve their collective objectives, (Rowalingston & Cheung 2008:611).

Participatory democracy- social order whose purpose is to provide equal rights of participation to ordinary people and active involvement of citizens in democratic processes, (Kocaoglu 2015:1545 & Public Participation Framework, 2013:7).

1.9 CONCLUSION

This chapter outlined the background of the study, problem statement, the research objectives, context, summary of the literature reviewed and the methodology. It also outlined ethical considerations and the key concepts of the study. The next chapter will outline detailed information on the literature review, methodology, data presentation and analysis and the findings of the study.
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines the stakeholder theory and its main concepts followed by the researcher in building the foundation of this literature. The chapter also highlighted the concepts of democratic spaces of participation as well as public participation in the process of stakeholder engagement in municipalities. The literature also highlighted the practice of communication and stakeholder engagement in South Africa by reviewing the current government communication policy and practices. The existing literature and studies suggest that the process of stakeholder engagement as a public participation mechanism for government institutions continue to receive attention and consideration from local municipalities to manage and maintain good relationships with communities even at the provincial and national government. In the context of public governance, communities are the key stakeholders of local government and therefore consultation and engagement with locals by the local authority are critical in the local governance of municipalities. This chapter aimed at reviewing the existing literature on stakeholder engagement as a process adopted by municipalities to enhance the provision of services and maintain good relationships with communities.

2.2 THE STAKEHOLDER CONCEPT

The definition of the stakeholder concept differs from one organisation to the other depending on the context and environment the organisation operates. Different authors and researchers also define the term differently; according to Lau (2014:764-5), the ineffective traditional strategic framework considers the dynamics of the organisational environment and context. According to Lau (2014:763), the term “stakeholder” was selected by Freeman to oppose the traditional term of “stockholder” which primarily looked at an organisation from an economic perspective. The economic perspective on stakeholder classified those with stakes or stock to the organisations as legitimate stakeholders to the organisations. This means that those with financial contribution prioritised by the organisation. The changes in the conceptualisation of the stakeholder term were based on the fact that organisational environment no longer constitutes only the internal stakeholders as key role players,
but also constitute external stakeholders as role players, (Lau 2014,764 ). Interestingly, Stelling et al (2017:160) they define stakeholders as “individuals, people, groups or organisations that are directly or indirectly affected by the decisions of an organisation” who may not be part of the decision process. In the municipality, the stakeholder is defined these are individuals, groups and organisation with interests in government processes and outcomes, (Public Participation Framework 2013:7).

This definition provides the current study with an operational definition of stakeholders that defined them, individuals, people, groups, community groups, and civil society groups directly or indirectly affected by the decision of Greater Tzaneen Municipality. Many scholars argue that although the stakeholder concept is organisational and context-specific, it is also discipline, (Freeman, 2007, Harrison et al, 2015, Harrison, Bosse and Philips, 2010, Freeman and Olabije 2015). This means that authors and researcher define stakeholders on the basis and background of their disciplines. The current study uses (Freeman, 2007; & Olabije, 2015) definition; they define stakeholders as individuals, or groups who can be affected, affect or benefit from the achievements of the organisation. The contextualisation of this definition in a municipality translate to individuals and groups affected by the decisions of the municipality.

Stakeholders are also defined in terms of primary and secondary stakeholder; primary stakeholder is individuals or groups who participate directly in the core functions of the organisation, they are the employees, managers, shareholders, financiers, customers and suppliers, (Harrison, Freeman & Sa de Abreu ( 2015:859). According to Fassin, (2012) and Skinner et al (2014), Primary stakeholders who are very important to the existence, sustainability and continuity of the organisation, they have a direct rapport to the organisation. These stakeholders include customers, employees, suppliers and communities. Moreover, Secondary stakeholders are individuals and groups with no direct contribution to the operations of the organisation but affected by the decisions and achievement of the organisation (Harrison et al 2015:859). The secondary stakeholder may be government, interest groups, non-government organisations, environment, human rights associations and the media in the case of corporate firms (Harrison et al (2015:859). Secondary stakeholders are stakeholders affected by the actions, decisions and broader business environment of the organisation, they are in
the boundary of the organisation and have no direct rapport to the organisation, Skinner, (2010:41) and Fassin, (2012:84). Skinner et al (2014:41) argue that stakeholders are not static and may operate at a different point in time.

Initially, the stakeholder definition was defined in business organisations and firms where more emphases was placed on customers, employees, local community, suppliers and distributors as well as shareholders as the main group of stakeholders the organisation should allocate more time and resources to, (Freeman, 2006, Fontaine, Haarman and Schmid, 2006). From the business perspective primary stakeholders groups whom the organisation cannot survive without their participation in the corporation (Clarkson 1995:106). Fassin (2012:83) notes that these stakeholders have the power to influence the managerial decision and have a contractual and direct relationship with the organisation. Benn, Abtratt and O’Leary (2016:3), Clarkson (1995:107), define secondary stakeholders in the business context as those stakeholders who have no contractual relationship with the organisation and can influence or influenced by the organisation but are not engaged in activities that determine the survival of the organisation. Clarkson (1995:107) and Fontaine et al (2006:7) argue that this group include competitors, media, trade unions, pressure groups, government regulators, and policymakers who have no authority to dictate what the organisation must do. Although the community in the business organisation as an important group to consider by the organisation, more emphasis is on those who enable the organisation to meet its financial obligations.

Contrary, the prioritisation and classification of stakeholders in the public organisation such as the municipality is different from business organisations. In the context of South Africa, section 153 (a) of the constitution articulate that the municipality has to “structure and manage its administration, and budgeting and planning processes to give priority to the basic needs of the community, and to promote the social and economic development of the community”. This prescription places the community at the centre of the functions decisions making of a municipality and thereby providing a bringing in a different way categorising of looking at the community as a stakeholder. Unlike In business organisations where the government and the community are categorised as secondary stakeholder, in the municipality, the community, the municipal council, municipal employees, ward councillors, traditional and community
leaders, South African Local Government Association (SALGA), South African Civic Organisation (SANCO), district, Provincial and National government are key primary stakeholders.

Drawing from the description of Clarkson, (1995), Freeman, (2006), Fontain et al (2006), Fassin, (2012) and Benn et al (2016) of primary stakeholders as those that the organisation cannot survive without and must allocate resource for the organisation to function. In the context of this study, communities, councillors, municipal employees, service providers, community leaders, and government as a whole are the key drivers of local governance and therefore municipality relies on them for survival. However, organisations whether private or public they fall into the temptation of assuming that stakeholders are static and fall within a single category or group. Harrison et al (2015:860) argue that organisation need to acknowledge the heterogeneity of stakeholder; to accept that stakeholders wear different hats depending on the context, situation and environment they find themselves. The heterogeneous stakeholder group of municipality constitutes a significant number of stakeholder sub-groups within one group. For instance, the municipal council is made of up of many parties which may include which present different ideological and policy directions perspectives. Municipalities also operate at a local level where there are different tribes and cultures may sometimes classify as community one whole without an account of the different group within the community. For an example, in the context of the current study an employee of the municipality or government entity, may also be a beneficiary of municipal services and fall within the secondary stakeholder group as part of pressure groups such as a union or political party put pressure to municipality management. Although the community in the business organisations classified as s group considered by the organisation and not the group to which the organisation is accountable to.

2.3 STAKEHOLDER CLASSIFICATION TYPOLOGY

The stakeholder typology classifies stakeholders in terms of legitimacy, power and urgency in contrast to the primary and secondary traditional classification. Mitchel et al (1997:853) proposed a model of stakeholder classification with specific attention paid to three attributes namely, power, legitimacy and urgency. This model aims to
provide an organisational leader with a set of criteria used to classify organisational stakeholders. Freidman and Miles (2006) articulate that this model provides a clear understanding of how the three attributes can be used to properly classify stakeholder and best attend to their concerns. Mainardes et al (2012:1684), further note and acknowledges that although this typology is useful in the stakeholder classification process, managers should understand that these attributes are not static nor universally accepted, they change depending on the situation the organisation find itself. For example, one stakeholder group may have power during a certain situation, but the power may shift as situation favour the other group.

The first attribute is the power which according to Alves et al (2014:37) is the ability of one stakeholder group to influence organisational decision-making through their ability to have access to resources which make them powerful than others. Using Weber's sociological perspective to power, power defined as the ability of actor A to be able to influence actor B to do something actor B would not be able to do if not influenced by actor A. Similarly, (Winkler (2009:4) articulates that power rest of the ability of one stakeholder to use their access to resources to influence decision-making process in an organisation. Alves et al (2014:38) also note that power can be in forms i.e. coercion and normative; coerced power is determined by the use of resources either material or financial to impose of influence organisational decisions. Normative power is characterised by symbolic power a certain stakeholder group may have to influence organisational power (Alves et al 2014:38).

The second attribute of stakeholder classification is legitimacy. This attribute focus on what is socially accepted and structure of behaviour it points to certain standards, values, principles and beliefs of an organisation, (Mitchel et al (1997:123). Alves et al refer to legitimacy as a “social will” and relate it to the social standing of an organisation as a corporate citizen. Legitimacy, therefore, becomes an important element organisational leaders must use to classify a certain stakeholder as legitimate to the organisation based on their importance and the power they may have towards the organisation, (Alves et al (2014:38). The third attribute of the stakeholder classification model is urgency. According to Mitchel et al (1997), urgency refers to the ability of a stakeholder group to determine the level of criticality, sensitivity and pressure require organisational leaders’ attention. Winkler (2009:5) states, “Urgency is understood as
the degree to which the management is allowed to delay in attending stakeholders’ claims before the relationship is perceived as unacceptable”. Urgency can also be best understood in relation to the importance of stakeholders’ claims or demands and how this call for immediate attention from the organisational leaders, (Mitchel et al, 1997:123).

Furthermore, normative stakeholders are those the organisation with a moral obligation to treat with fairness, while derivative stakeholders are those to whom the organisation has no moral obligation to but they can harm or benefit the organisation, Fassin (2012:85). However, it is very important also, to approach these categories within the context of this study, looking at the roles local communities can play and several hats they can wear. The local community in this context are not merely communities to which the organisation needs to invest in through corporate social responsibility programs, they are main beneficiaries whom the municipality is obliged to serve.

2.4 STAKEHOLDER CLASSIFICATION

In addition to power, legitimacy and urgency stakeholders can be dormant, discretionary, dominant, dependant, demanding and definite. This section discussed the different types of stakeholder classifications in relations to the stakeholder typology.

2.4.1 Dormant Stakeholders

The dormant stakeholders are those who with the power to impose their will on other stakeholders, but with no direct influence on the stakeholder system and with no direct rapport to the organisation. Although these stakeholders have the power to influence and impose their agenda on other stakeholders groups, they do not have a legitimate relationship with the organisation or urgent claim and to this effect, their power remains dormant, (Mitchell et al (1997:168). Mitchell et al (1997:168) also argue that these see no need to engage with the stakeholder system due to the absence of both legitimacy and urgency; however, they may become more salient if they acquire either legitimacy or urgency. Examples of this type of stakeholder could be dismissed employees and specifically in the context of this study, political parties or groups who might have lost
the polls during elections. The objective of dormant stakeholder in the system is to exercise latent power.

2.4.2 Discretionary Stakeholders

Discretionary stakeholder has no power to influence the organisation even though they possess the attribute of legitimacy. The lack of urgent claim that provides a weak point for this group to influence organisational decisions, (Mitchell et al 1997:169). Mitchell et al (1997:169) states, “The key point regarding discretionary stakeholders is that, in the absence of power and urgent claims, there is absolutely no pressure to engage in an active relationship with such a stakeholder although people can choose to so actively engage”. Mitchell et al (1997:169), highlight that these type of stakeholder may include people respected by communities because of their accomplishments or contribution to the society. However, Shabangu & Oksiutycz (2017:11) concur with Mitchell et al (1997) and notes that in the context of municipal governance by people who qualify for charitable services from municipality or government, such as orphans, elderly people or poor families.

2.4.3 Dominant Stakeholders

Dominant stakeholder through acquiring both power and legitimacy have influence over organisational functions and ultimately the power to influence the stakeholder system. According to Mitchell et al (1997:170) dominant stakeholder through their acquisition of power coupled with a legitimacy they can influence since they are part of the dominant structure. An example of this type of stakeholder is political party funders and investors. Although political parties hold political power to influence policies and distribution of public resources, their funders and investors hold important resources to ensure that these policies funded through different funding models and they are at the helm of local and national economic activities. Access to resources makes them powerful and legitimate.

2.4.4 Dangerous Stakeholders

Dangerous stakeholders hold both power and urgent claim but lack legitimacy. They use coercion and violence as a way of engagement, Shabangu (2017:11). These
stakeholder resorts to violence and coercion through their illegitimate status to try to influence decisions or organisational function. In the context of the current study with a specific focus on service delivery and stakeholder engagement, these stakeholders may include groups in communities, in most cases oppositions, community associations and organised movements who resort to violent service delivery protests as a way engaging those in charge. Mitchell et al (1997:170) argue that these stakeholders are not categorised as “dangerous” only because they use violence and coercion to gain legitimacy, but also because they are dangerous to the stability, sustainability and continuity of the organisation. This is evident in violent service delivery protest where destruction of both private and public property coupled by the looting of shops have placed many towns and cities under the state of collapse.

2.4.5 Dependent Stakeholders

These are stakeholders with no power, but have both legitimacy and urgent claim to the organisation and are dependent upon other stakeholders to address their claims on their behalf, (Mitchell et al 1997:170). Mitchell et al (1997:170) further argue that “However, dependency upon others for advocacy or guardianship can produce a variety of problematic responses, including (non-exhaustively) resentment, disengagement, activism or open hostility. Thus, membership in the dependent class of stakeholders is often non-permanent since dependent stakeholders (possessing urgency) tend to seek the missing definitive element: the power necessary to address their needs”. However, Shabangu and Oksiutycz (2017:11) and Mitchell et al (1997:171) argue that these stakeholders depend highly on other stakeholders to be their advocates and address their issues. In the context of the current study communities, members can be at some point be a dependent stakeholder relying upon municipal officials, political leaders, community leaders and traditional leaders to address their issues of services with the local authority.

2.4.6 Demanding Stakeholders

These stakeholders only hold one attribute of urgency, with no intention of acquiring either power or legitimacy to voice out their claims, Mitchell et al (1997:172). Mitchell (1997) and Shabangu (2017) both argue that although these stakeholders may not get the necessary attention from the organisation, they are bothersome and may attract
the attention of the media or communication officers of the municipality. An individual or just a minority group protesting outside local authority headquarters demanding special attention or serves may not get the attention of the leadership but it may be destructive to the operations of the municipal administrative duties.

2.4.7 Definitive Stakeholders

These stakeholders have both power and legitimacy and requires attention from the organisational management and continuous effective communication with them, Michell et al (1997:172) and Shabangu (2017:12). Mitchell (1997:173) also argues, “By definition, a stakeholder exhibiting both power and legitimacy will already be a member of a stakeholder system’s dominant coalition. When such a stakeholder’s claim is urgent, then a clear and immediate mandate created to attend to, and give priority to, that stakeholder’s claim. Hence, the most common occurrence of this phenomenon is likely to be the movement of a dominant stakeholder into the definitive category.

In order for municipalities to engage and manage relationships effectively, they need to take into account the legitimacy, power and urgency of each stakeholder group case-by-case depending on what could be at stake at a different point in time. Local government municipalities need to make a clear assessment of what works for each stakeholder group and avoid the one size fits all approach.

2.5 STAKEHOLDER THEORY

This study adopted the stakeholder theory to provide the theoretical foundation of understanding stakeholder engage. Stakeholder theory is useful not only to provide direction on how organisations should treat their relationships with stakeholders, but it also addresses some crucial issues relating to engagement of stakeholders, (Harrison, Freeman & Sa de Abreu 2015:858). Harrison et al (2015:859) state that stakeholder theory is a practical, efficient, effective and highly ethical way to manage relationships with different stakeholders in a highly complex and turbulent environment. Stakeholder theory is practical because it provides a practical to manage relationships with stakeholders and not concerned on how it is done Harrison et al, 2015, Ali, 2017, Gooyet et al (2017). These authors suggest that if all stakeholders are well- treated by
the organisation they are likely to respond with a positive attitude towards organisation is activities and provide some ethical background on how organisational managers should treat stakeholders in an ethical manner so they can remain loyal to the organisation. For the municipality, having good relationships with all the stakeholder groups can result in good reputation and less service delivery protests, (Albert, 2011, Mbeki and Phago, 2014). Harrison et al, 2015, Ali, 2017, Gooyet et al (2017)

Moreover, Ali (2017:154) argues that stakeholder theory provides managers and organisational leaders an opportunity to negotiation skills within a competitive and dynamic environment; the managerial approach assists organisational leaders to manage and engage stakeholders. An organisation is an open system; therefore, it requires managers to take into account the interests of all key stakeholders, (Ali (2017:155). Ali (2017:156), states, “In a volatile invasive environment, successful organisations will need to reconcile their interests with stakeholders’ interests”. Ali (2017:156), further notes organisations do not have enough resources and time to take into account all the claims of all stakeholders, therefore they should identify legitimate stakeholders through the use of stakeholder maps. Ali’s argument that there is a need to take into consideration the interest of different stakeholders by organisations. In the context of this study, it is the responsibility of the municipality and local government to consider the needs and interests of every stakeholder group and establish effective communication and engagement methods to attend to the needs of citizens, (Alberts, (2011); and Jarvis, (2016).

The stakeholder theory rests on the notion of moral treatment of stakeholders, (Harrison et al (2015:850). Harrison et al, (2015), Freeman, Harrison, Wicks, Parmar & de Colle, (2010) concur that scholars and researchers abandon the stakeholder theory as a core management theory because they perceive it as a CRS and as something that organisations do only if they can afford not a prerequisite. Gooyert, Rouwette, Kranenburg & Freeman (2017:402) argue that another way of addressing the stakeholder theory is by considering instrumental versus moral stakeholder theory by focusing on trade-offs versus focusing on avoiding trade-offs and by focusing on the decision-making organisation and stakeholder engagement. This perspective deals with the question of whether satisfying stakeholders will improve the performance of the organisation and which mechanisms used by the organisation to
achieve this objective. Gooyert et al (2017:404) articulate that satisfying can ultimately improve organisational performance, reputation, cooperative governance, increase trust and stakeholders acting reciprocally. When discussing the moral stakeholder theory, Gooyert et al (2017:404), articulate perspective the focus on stakeholder engagement as the right thing to do, not something organisations do to benefit from. Gooyert et al also provide another category of stakeholder theory that focuses on making a trade-off and avoiding trade-off. From this perspective, the authors articulate that focusing on trade-off rest on the alignment of stakeholders’ interests and stakeholders should receive more priority. However, the priority of stakeholder in an organisation depends on the characteristics of a stakeholder and the effect on the organisation. In public institutions, the priority is on meeting the needs and providing services to the citizens. Section 152 of the constitution directs municipalities and local government in South Africa to provide accountable and democratic government to communities they serve, which means in everything they do they must put the community first.

The stakeholder theory like any other theory has its own limits and strength. The theory is very useful because it helps to predict and explain the organisational achievements and functions in relation to the stakeholders’ influences. Guided by the work done by Donaldson and Preston (1995:66) the functions of the stakeholder theory rest on the four central theses to explain how the theory works. Firstly, the theory is descriptive through its provision of a model to describe the relationship between the organisation and constituents. Secondly, it is instrumental for its provision of a mechanism to evaluate the relationship between stakeholder management and other corporate performance that is how stakeholder management can affect other organisational functions. Thirdly, it is normative- for the provision of the ethical groundwork for stakeholder management, which is how the organisation should operate in relation to the wellbeing of all stakeholders. Lastly, it is managerial in the sense that it provides management practices to stakeholder management, which deals primarily of how organisations should manage their stakeholders.

However, despite the strengths the theory holds, there are some limits as stated by Fassin (2008:4). Fassin (2008:2) further states, “Criticisms of stakeholder theory from philosophical and theoretical standpoints have been thoroughly analysed and widely
commented upon in the scientific literature”. Fassin’s criticism is grounded on the notion that graphical presentation of stakeholders fail to address some complex issue in stakeholder management, to this effect Fassin (2008:5) argues that “the reality is far more complex than graphical presentation”. Although Freeman and others through graphical presentation proposed distinctions between each stakeholder group, Fassin (2008:6), argue that homogeneity does not apply to all stakeholders in a category notwithstanding the fact that stakeholders within the same category may have different interest and views and therefore the theory fails to recognise the intra-stakeholder heterogeneity. This critic provides a caution to organisational leaders to be aware of the dynamics within the stakeholder category. Similarly, Harrison, Freeman and Sa de Abreu (2015:863) state, “one of the most important, but sometimes neglected, aspect of stakeholder theory is that stakeholders are not generic, nor are they homoegenous within groups”. Similarly, Paul (2014:172) inclusive stakeholder engagement strategy is good for organisations, at times it gives rise to the conflict based on interests, but there are many instances where interests may be aligned. For instance, in multiparty municipalities, where differences in terms of ideology may arise and a common purpose to provide quality all parties may agree upon services.

Furthermore, another critic of the stakeholder theory is the issue of multiple inclusion or appearance. Fassin (2008:6) argues that individuals may belong to more than one stakeholder category at the same time and occupy numerous roles. for example in the context of this study, a community member may occupy a political position as well as a government leadership position to represent the community in the municipal council, therefore there will be a fine line between political party mandate and the mandate of the people. This requires organisational leaders to be careful when addressing issues of stakeholder classification. However, Posqueux & Damak (2005:850) argue that the position of a stakeholder should be analysed in terms of the role played at a particular point in time. For example, when political leaders execute government duties they should be distinguished from political party duties. One of the crucial criticism of the stakeholder theory is the impact of various stakeholder on the organisation and the effects of their treatment. Fassin (2008:8), argue that although the theory suggests that all stakeholders should be treated equally regardless of their impact, this is not the case in reality because organisations attend to stakeholders who
may negatively influence their functions should their grievances not attended to and those who have no greater effect are sometimes neglected.

However, Miles (2015:438) also highlights that stakeholder theory is not just a single theory or belong to a single discipline, but a combination of multiple narratives emerged from interpretations and application from different disciplines. Miles (2015:438), further notes that the theory’s richness also acts as its central weakness, this is due to differences in terms of the definition of the term stakeholder. Similarly, Orts & Strudler (2009:606) found that the classification of stakeholders as one of the weaknesses of the theory, articulating that the theory suffers from vagueness and overbreadth in its scope. Miles (2015:439) articulates that stakeholder theory and concepts are not just ambiguous or confusing, but highly contested concepts, the contestation is rooted from a variety of disciplines and subject areas all concerned about the definition of the term “stakeholder”. Miles, (2012), and Mitchel (2012) concur that although the theory and its concepts are highly contested; a continuous debate will not bring about a universally accepted definition of the term stakeholder. However, improvements can which will ensure that the theory and concepts developed in a manner, that which will enable a much deeper understanding of organisations from a stakeholder’s perspective.

In summary, stakeholder theory deals primarily with the relationships which exist between the organisation and different groups and how relationships can bring positive results for the organisation. Researchers and authors in different disciplines and subject areas concur that there are a number of ambiguities; in the literature of stakeholder theory the biggest problems is on defining stakeholders, boundaries and roles as well as power they have toward the organisation, (Fassin, 2008, Donaldson & Preston 1995, Paul 2014, Miles, 2015, Orts & Studler 2009. Fassin, 2008:7).

Like any other theory, the stakeholder theory suffers from many shortcomings and constitutes imperfections, which are rooted form, its vagueness, ambiguity and breath, (Lau, 2014; Annenberg, 2015 & Fassin 2008). However, the authors also concur that this is because researchers and theorist explain and describe the theory based on context-specific perspectives and that the theory gets its interpretations and application from many disciplines. Brandt & Georgiou (2016:17) argue that although
the stakeholder approach attracted a lot of attention from authors and researchers in many disciplines, it does not address social issues. In the public organisations such as municipalities in the context of this study, the approach to classification, management and engagement of stakeholders differs from business organisations in the sense that a municipality is there to serve the people. The next section discusses the community as a stakeholder in the municipality.

2.6 COMMUNITY AS A STAKEHOLDER

Defining Community

The terms community and public are used in the public administration interchangeably, although they mean two different things, Mathebula, (2016:19). In the context of South Africa the definition of the term community must take into account the complexity in terms of demarcation, tribes, languages, race as well as languages, (Mathebula, 2016:19). The current study adopts the operational definition by Shabalala and Lombard (2009) which they define community in terms of ward systems used for election purposes. In addition, Malena, Forster and Singh (2004) articulate that community can also be described in terms of the social organisation bound by shared blood, language, history as well as culture. This definition is appropriate for this study because of the demarcation complication in Khujwana village, where the village is divided into two wards 16 and 18, but fall within the same cluster and municipality.

The White Paper on Local Government (1998), Netswera and Phago (2013:31) argue that it is the responsibility of the municipality to serve the communities they represent, identify mechanisms to engage these communities in order to identify services delivery gaps, opportunities and priorities in order to allocate enough resources in response. This provision by the White Paper places the community as the centre of the existence of municipalities, which is to serve the communities they represent. Unlike in corporate business context communities in the public service is the power holder rather than recipients of handout through social responsibility by the organisation. Communities have the power to elect the municipal councillors who form part of the council which is the highest decision-making body in the municipality and must at all times put the needs of the communities first in their decision decision-making processes.
The community as a stakeholder on its own has its own present complexities given the heterogeneity nature of community members who form part of it. The diversity within the communities means diverse needs, interest and opportunities and diverse challenges require different methods of engagement, (Mathebula, 2016:19, & Vivier et al 2015:85). The community comprised of many individuals who belong to sub-group and wear different hats depending on the situation. For instance, the councillor who is the head of the ward belongs to a political party elected as councillor candidate, in some cases, he/she is also part of the municipal council, part of the party branch executive committee and ultimately a member of the community. Other members of the communities as part of traditional councils, religious formations, civic organisations, business forums, women and youth organisation, workers unions and political formations and all this brings in different interests and needs. This complexity caution municipalities not to assume that communities are homogenous and members change their positions depending on the situation, context and interests.

2.7 STAKEHOLDER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT

Organisations across the world face a greater challenge of prioritising their stakeholder and allocating resources to groups that have an interest in the affair of the organisation. To attend to each stakeholder’s interest and concerns organisations are required to analyse each group in terms of interest, influence and effect they may have towards the organisational survival. Organisations across all sectors are it in the public or private sector relies on the relationship with different groups for sustainability and continuity if their day-to-day business. To successfully manage and maintain these valuable relationships with different groups, organisations must undertake a process of managing these stakeholders. Stakeholder management is not only about managing relationships with different groups, rather it also includes a clear identification of different groups, determination if their needs and the pressure they may exert to the organisation, and means and ways to address this needs and concerns and implementation of these mechanisms, (Skinner et al., (2014:40), Freeman (1984), Bryson, (2004).

According to Driesen, Kok, & Hillebrand (2013:3) organisation engaged in the dialogue process with different stakeholders through various communication channels. These
authors emphasise on dialogue in the engagement process between in the organisation and multiple stakeholders rest on the notion that it has the ability to strengthen relationships. However, Skinner et al. (2014:40) articulate that although stakeholder relationships are important to the process of stakeholder management, the tendency by organisational leaders to isolate relationships with other groups, for example with shareholders, employees, investors from communities and looking at them as separate components.

How the organisation manage different relationships with stakeholder depends on how the organisation is controlled and managed that is its corporate governance, Mkhabele, (2014:3). Cassim, Cassim, Cassim, Jooste and Yeast (2013), Mkhabele (2014) argue corporate governance focuses on how managed, controlled, how the decision is taken and what structures are available to facilitate these processes. In the contexts of municipalities, corporate governance means providing services to the community in a way that is equitable, effective, efficient and affordable, coupled with the high level of openness, integrity, accountability, honesty and fairness, (Mkabele, (2014:4). How the municipality manages relationships with stakeholders will depend on its corporate governance standpoint. The King IV report on corporate governance, stresses that municipalities have an interdependent relationship with its stakeholders and its value depends on how it creates values for these stakeholders.

The report also articulates the importance of inclusive stakeholder approach, a process in which an organisation take into consideration all needs, concerns and expectations of all stakeholders in the execution of its duties while maintaining balance and fairness in treating different groups. The King IV Report further notes, “Stakeholder inclusivity involves the balancing of interest over time by way of prioritising and in some instances, trading off interests”. Organisations can use one of the followings ways to manage relationships with stakeholders:

2.7.1 Proactive Approach

Proactive stakeholder relationship management is based on creating value for the organisation and is part of the organisational strategic management; briefly, the proactive approach is based on long-term objectives and results with an intent to contribute meaningfully to the strategic intent of the organisation, (Ali 2017:24). A
proactive stakeholder relationship approach can help the organisation to have a better understanding of different stakeholders and stakeholders working towards a common goal, (Ali 2017:24). Proactive stakeholder relationship management can enhance a good working environment for employees and for leaders to make informed decisions, (Ali 2017:25). For customer and communicates, proactive approach means more personalised products and collaboration. If a municipality adopts this approach, it will take decisions favourable to all stakeholders and create a good working environment for everyone.

2.7.2 Strategic Approach

According to Verbeke and Tung (2012:529), the strategic approach does not only examine the management of different groups of organisational stakeholders but examine the different relationships, provision of attention to legitimate stakeholders with an intent of achieving strategic goals. They argue that strategic stakeholder management does not only focus on maximisation of profit for the organisation but to focus and respond to all stakeholders for various reasons. Strategic stakeholder management aligns the needs of the organisation with that of the different stakeholder and identifies mutual ways to satisfy the interest of the stakeholders while not compromising the organisational goals.

Interestingly, Post, Preston and Sachs (2002:38) argue that learning should form part of the strategic stakeholder management given the dramatic changes in the interests of stakeholders over time. In other words, these authors suggest that an organisation should adopt a learning approach as part of its strategic management to understand different changes in the stakeholder environment. In summary strategic stakeholder management, the approach focuses on the management of stakeholder in a way that will assist the organisation to reach its strategic intent through effective stakeholder management.

2.7.3 The Utilitarian Stakeholder Management Approach

The utilitarian approach focuses on the maximisation of the organisation in terms of profit and growth and therefore stakeholder management is a tool to achieve these two organisational objectives (Meding, McAllister, Oyedele and Kelly, 2013:24).
Meding et al (2013:26) identify the four approach within the umbrella of the utilitarian approach, namely; ethical and social, positive, negative and non-present and present them as follows:

Ethical and social; this approach focuses on the engagement of stakeholders by way of allowing their inputs, treating them equally within a short-term to achieve long-term benefits. However, this approach is characterised by profit, growth, social goals and ethics.

Positive Utilitarian- characterised by the ranking of stakeholders, places more engagement efforts on those with more power, legitimacy, influence, and may even change strategic objectives to satisfy the dominant, influential and powerful stakeholder group. Stakeholders are a risk that needs to manage.

Negative Utilitarian- Some form of social appearance displayed to mask activities, stakeholders within similar objectives engaged and the power of those who oppose is limited and stakeholders as a problem. Also driven by profit and growth.

Non-Present- there is a total disregard to stakeholder management, no engagement with outsiders and stakeholders have nothing to offer to the organisation.

2.7.4 The Network Stakeholder Management Approach

An organisation is a network constituting multiple actors interacting inside and outside this network. According to Sciarelli and Tani (2013:180), the network approach focus on how different networks in the organisation may assist the managers to manage their stakeholders. This approach consists of four different approaches within the umbrella of network approach namely; dyadic relationship approach, ego-network approach, multiple interaction approaches and the complete network approach. In addition, we explain them in this study in the following ways:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Approach</th>
<th>Description and Task of Managers</th>
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Dyadic Relationship Approach

Based on the dyadic relationship between the most relevant stakeholders and the organisation. Managers focus only on the stakeholder who is most relevant to the organisation. Other groups cannot influence the relationship between these stakeholders and the organisation.

Ego-network approach

Looks at the whole stakeholder network, not a single group. Stakeholders who are active actors in the organisation requests are addressed without expecting trade-offs. Managers need to treat stakeholders as a system and stakeholders expect managers to address all active stakeholders concerns as part of the organisation as a good corporate citizen.

The Multiple interaction approach

Focus more on all stakeholders including those who are not active actors of the organisation. Also, focus more on the interactions between various stakeholders and the relationships that exist between them. Based on a realistic perspective on the relationship between the organisation and its stakeholders and the organisation’s value to their lives. More effort is placed on how different stakeholders through interaction influence each other and the organisation.

The complete Network Approach

Takes a form of system approach in which the organisation is an open system and a part of a broader system not isolated from other units. The role of network structure is also an important element in this approach when evaluating stakeholders’ issues. A holistic view of stakeholder management is required to understand how different stakeholders related to each other.

The four different approached were integrated into the literature to provide an understanding of how an organisation such as GTM can use them in their planning of stakeholder engagement strategy. Every organisation guided by the nature of the
relationship and its structure coupled with its mission and vision adopts certain methods to engage their stakeholders. An organisation such as GTM as a political institution in its nature established to act as service delivery machinery to the people served by its council will approach their stakeholder engagement differently when compared to corporate entities whose aims are to make maximise profit.

2.8 STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Stakeholder engagement refers to a process whereby an organisation and its leaders initiate processes to enable dialogue with different groups in order to have a clear understanding of the needs of these groups, (Shabangu & Oksiutycz 2018:201). Community engagement has received attention from all levels of government and civic society (Matshe, 2009:3; Mngoma, 2010:1; Mosotho, 2012:130). In particular, community engagement is a form of participation that contains more than putting structures and committees together and expect them to work out (Tesoriero, 2010:144). Rather, it is an inclusive, collaborative and consultative is a two-way communication problem-solving mechanism with an intent to promote participatory democracy, (Venter & Lansberg, 2011:112 & Public Participation Framework, 2013). While municipalities are in pursuit of finding effective ways to engage with communities, residents are also assessing better ways to approach government (Buccus, Hicks & Piper 2011:3). Through integrated development plans, participatory communication, mayoral imbizo, and public addresses, municipal councils and communities come together for a common goal, to provide better service delivery (Rowe & Frewer, 2005:263).

The process stakeholder engagement is the involvement of all key stakeholders in the design, delivery, review and implementation of services and policies. Rowlinson and Cheung (2008:611) state that stakeholder management is a process of getting all stakeholders to be in a position to identify, negotiate and draw a road map to achieve their collective objectives. The organisation as an open system should consider concerns of all stakeholder in the organisation (Ali 2017:155). Ali (2015:155) articulates that organisations are not operating in a vacuum and cannot succeed on their own or be functional if they ignore stakeholders who are key drivers in the achievements of strategic objectives of the organisations. There are notable
differences between reactive or defensive and accommodative or proactive stakeholder approaches; proactive or accommodative orientation take into account all concerns, needs, demands, interests all of the stakeholder, and treat, Ali (2015:156). Reactive or defensive stakeholder orientation prioritise certain stakeholder group based on a given case, this is a reactive based on the importance of certain stakeholder group on a given point in time, Ali (2015:156).

2.8.1 Public Participation as Stakeholder engagement: A South African legislative perspective.

2.8.1.1 Historical context

South African history of apartheid and colonial rule characterised by authoritarian rule, state-societal conflict gave birth to social movements between 1950 and 1980, (Public Participation Framework 2013:12). These movements’ motive was to build people’s power and people’s government characterised by direct participation of the people and to have public policy driven by public agenda. Prior to the democratic dispensation in 1994, public policy was a closed affair with little or no public involvement, (Public Participation Framework 2013:12 & SAHRC, 2015:1). The new constitution in 1996 asserted South Africa as a representative and participatory democracy; where the public is directly involved in the state affairs, (Participation Framework 2013:12). To this effect, local government as the closest sphere of government has entrusted the responsibility of ensuring that public opinion guide government decision-making process, (SAHRC, 2015:2). Section 195 of the constitution states “the public must be encouraged to participate in policymaking” and all spheres of government must ensure that public participation forms part of legislative processes.

2.8.1.2 Conceptualisation of public participation within the South African context

In the South Africa context, public participation is a process whereby government prior to making decision consult with individuals, groups, organisations and other government entities whom the decision will affect, (Participation Framework 2013:12, GCIS, 2014-17:31). Ideally, it is a process characterised by two-way communication, community involvement, collaboration to drive more repetitive and acceptable decisions that reflects the will of the people, SAHRC, 2015:3 & Public participation
Framework 2013:7). Public involvement should be at the centre of the participation process and be guided by the nature of the issues, urgency, public response as well as specific processes. It within a background that this study also sought to understand the perceptions of the community toward the stakeholder engagement process. Community response and view of every government initiative is the central focus of this study. Base the Public Participation concept and its implementation on constitutional democracy, good governance, stakeholders’ views, participatory democracy and cooperative governance, (Public Participation Framework 2013:8).

2.8.2 Principles of stakeholder engagement: South African local government participatory perspective

2.8.2.1 Identification of stakeholders and their roles.

Part of stakeholder engagement and management is a clear and careful identification of legitimate stakeholders, their roles, their impact, their needs and concerns in order to identify engagement methods appropriate for different groups. In a South African context specifically the public service delivery perspective this identification process should consider, issues of gender, human rights, urgency, the needs of the people and issues of historical disadvantages of certain communities.

2.8.2.2 Inclusivity and diversity.

The public participation framework (2013:31) articulates that in order to deepen the shared understanding that is important for a long-term benefit for the municipality and the community there should be recognition of diversity and integrated into stakeholder engagement plans and initiatives. It further argues that inclusivity should embrace different background of community members, differences in terms of political ideology and needs and interests of residents.

2.8.2.3 Transparency, participation and fair and equal representation

The stakeholder engagement in a municipal or any public institution informed by freedom of participation of all stakeholders including the minority groups, illiterate, the women, youth and other groups. They must participate freely without fear of being punished by authorities. The municipality as a public entity must be transparent in
terms of the goals it wants to achieve through its stakeholder initiatives and encourage participation.

2.8.2.4 Effective communication with all stakeholders

In order for stakeholder engagement to effective and achieve its goals, communication must play a central role in the process. Effective communication is characterised by feedback, understanding of other parties and meaningful engagement.

Stakeholder engagement should promote the culture of continuous learning amongst all its stakeholders, in the process of engagement, each group should be able to learn about the needs and concerns of other groups in order to identify common ground and shared values. The public participation framework (2013:32) articulates that the engagement should aim to encourage all stakeholders to learn about issues affecting them from, economic, political, societal, environmental, psychological and environmental affecting the entire stakeholder network.

In addition to the principles provided by the Public Participation Framework (2013), Naidoo (2017:35) highlight that in the context of local government setting stakeholder engagement and participation programs should constitute the following:

The involvement of all stakeholders, including the women, marginalised groups including minority groups and youth.

Involvement of all stakeholders in all process of service delivery, from the planning, implementation and the monitoring and evaluation process.

Public participation by the wishes, needs and interest of the communities and therefore the output of this process must reflect such realities.

Stakeholder engaged all the times and allowed to participate in a more representative manner and process of selection should not be secret.

2.8.3 Levels of Participation

Figure 2.8.3 below demonstrate the level of public participation.
2.8.3.1 Level one: Inform

This level is characterised by one-way communication of providing citizens with information to help them make informed decisions, (Public Participation 2013:29). Arnstein (1969:219) articulates that informing is a good step towards achieving citizen participation by educating citizens about their rights and responsibilities. At this level government use news media, pamphlets, posters and other one-way communication methods to inform the public about government information.

2.8.3.2 Level two: Consult

At this level of participation, the public invited to give input and opinion about policies or initiatives, (Public Participation 2013:29). Arnstein (1969:219) argue that public opinion is important to public governance and once it is restricted, the consultation process is just a window-dressing ritual with no meaning. In South Africa, the consultations process conducted through public meetings and hearings.

2.8.3.3 Level three: Involve
This level is characterised by dialogue and interaction between government and the public, but the legislative branch of the state remains the decision-maker, (Public Participation Framework, 2013:24). This type of participation used to ensure that all matter of importance understood and that citizen are part of the discourse while leaving the decision-making responsibility to the legislature. In the case of a municipality, the council will remain the highest decision-maker, but the decisions are informed by public opinion through involvement.

2.8.3.4 Level four: Collaboration

At this level, the public partner with the decision-makers to find possible and publicly acceptable solutions to problems; as with involvement, the legislature remains the highest decision-maker, (Public Participation 2013:24). At this level of participation the municipality partner with different stakeholder to find possible solutions to problems, but the council takes the last decision taking into considerations the inputs by different groups.

2.9. Existing Engagement mechanisms for South African municipalities.

South African municipalities charged with a responsibility of involving communities and community organisation in government projects and activities to drive citizen agenda. To deliver this mandate the South African government established the national Government Communication Policy and the National Public Participation Framework to guide government entities on community engagement. The Comm Policy (2018:28) outlined the following methods of engagement for local government:

THUSONG SERVICE CENTRES

The Thusong centres are community development centres acing as one-stop integrated centres to facilitate two-way communication between the government and the citizens. They also act as public participation centres and service delivery machinery, Comm Policy, (2018:22). Guided by the four principles of Public Participation i.e. Consult, Inform, Involve and Collaborate as well as the developmental approach to government communication, the government communicators can use the Thusong Service Centres to:
Identify community information needs and provide them with accurate and reliable information to the public in a way they can use to improve their lives.

Open up the conversation in a way that enables two-way communication between the government and citizens and allows citizens to participate in the government decision-making process.

Enhance cooperation among the three spheres of government and ensure all the information flow from local to national and vice versa.

They also act as access points for the provision of communication technologies to assist in the exploration of more communication endeavours with the intent of building informed citizenry.

IZIMBIZO

The Izimbizo are public participation communication program, which forms part of the communication strategy that brings together all spheres of government to attend to a certain community problem and have an engagement to resolve it.

It consists of a task team formed by GCISM, the Presidency, CoGTA and other national department and provincial heads in consultation with SALGA and local municipalities.

They are informed by research, which identifies the needs and issues in the areas, the forum will take place to allow an informed engagement and proper and informed responses and follow-ups.

They attended by communities, administrators, elected representatives, ward committees, and other key role players including businesses and traditional leaders.

COUNCILLORS' WARD COMMITTEE

Ward committees are the essence and key drive of public service delivery with an obligation to look after communities; they are the closest structure to the people.
They consist of ward councillors who act heads of these committees a role to play in communities.

Councillor uses these committees to hold community meetings and facilitate progress in service delivery and attend to community needs and concerns.

Local government communicators are expected to provide the necessary tools to assist councillors to report on deliverables on community issues.

These three engagement structures are integrated into the literature of this study to provide a clear understanding of strategy and policy perspectives on the mechanisms put in place in government to ensure effective communication with citizens. These three provide insight into what are the available mechanism and structures are available for GTM to facilitate engagement between communities and the municipalities. The integration of the government communication policy also was necessary to provide policy perspective on how government communication should be and how communication initiatives should be implemented in line with legislation and other key pieces of local government that guide procedure on communication with the citizens. It also clear from a policy perspective that communication at the government level is in national, provincial, district or municipal level should be guided by the goal to address the needs of the people and government key messages. The policy also highlights that government communication in a South African context should be developmental in nature in the sense that every communication initiative should be aimed at helping people improve their daily lives and provide them with government plans to help them in the process of development.

2.10 PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY, LOCAL GOVERNMENT, SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND DEMOCRATIC SPACES OF PARTICIPATION.

2.10.1 Nature of Local Government in South Africa: A participatory democracy perspective.

In current democratic South Africa, access to quality service delivery a legitimate basic right to all residents, rather than a privilege to the selected individuals in communities, (Pretorius & Schurink, 2007:19). Guided by the above prescriptions from the
constitution, municipalities are charged with the responsibility to ensure that communities are effectively engaged at all times through mechanisms put in place to facilitate the engagement process. Engagement of stakeholders provides both municipalities and communities an opportunity to identify and resolve problems together, advocate for policies and service collectively, distribute resources equally and enhance accountability and organisational transparency and communities can exercise their rights to promote their interests in decision making, (Russel, Igras, Johri, Kuoh, Pavin & Wicksrom, 2015:2).

Ideally, community participation, if effectively practised and executed, can play an important role in the process of stakeholder engagement by ensuring that residents are directly involved in the decision-making process, (Motsie, 2015:16). Similarly, Tesoriero (2010:145), states that participate as part of engagement process can “attempt to empower people to participate in their own development, unsure the role of people in development initiatives, focus on improving the ability of people to participate rather than just achieving the pre-determined objectives of the project”. The author further articulates that community participation can be sustainable if viewed as a long-term ongoing process rather than a short-term process.

In South Africa government is separated into three spheres, National, Provincial and Local government, all these three spheres must cooperate to successfully deliver services to the people, but it is local government that is responsible for the implementation of most of these crucial services given its proximity to the people, CGIS, (2014-17). It is a local where citizens engage directly with their government, participatory democracy is very crucial as it forms part of the strategic local governance through the provision of spaces for ordinary citizens to be involved and have the impact to the administrative processes. Kocaoglu (2015:1545), further states that participatory democracy plays a critical role in improving local governance and as one of the basic values for this sphere of government because it is a local government where ordinary men and women feel connected and closer to their government. The concept of participatory democracy is rooted form the notion of “all shall participate” used to describe the new social order whose purpose is to provide equal rights of participation to ordinary people. Public participation is a form of the participatory democratic process aimed at mobilizing sectors of society to collaborate with the
government to speed up service delivery in their respective communities. It is also argued that for public participation communication to be very successful and meet the determined objectives, it must be based on a clear communication strategy and a feasible action plan to capture all the elements of public participation i.e. consult, collaborate, inform and involve. Public participation also offers communities access to local councillors, mayor, MECs, Premiers, Ministers and in some cases even the state President, it brings all three spheres of government together and informs decision making on service delivery, (GCIS, 2014-17:70)

Besides the implementation of government policy and the provision of services; the local government also have an obligation to facilitate public opinion as part of policymaking through public participation. Service delivery is not something communities should just wait to receive from government be given by the government, rather a process they should participate in and determine what kind of services they want, (Masango, 2009:128). Public opinion can be expressed through many public participation methods such as elections, public hearings and public demonstrations. In South Africa listening to public opinion and responding effectively by way of providing what the citizens want is not a choice politicians who are in public office has, but a constitutional obligation as prescribed in section 195 (d) of the constitution of Republic of South Africa. Masango (2009:129) argue that once communities feel recognised by the authority as an important stakeholder in the service delivery and policymaking structures they are likely to support the outcomes of these processes.

Local government in SA act as service delivery and development entities, Manyaka and Madzivhandila (2013). In the South Africa context, municipalities are also charged with the big responsibility of alleviation of poverty, infrastructure development, economic development, employment creation and eradication of inequality and this can only be fulfilled if communities actively participate, Mathebul, (2016:23). Mpehle (2012) and Mathebula (2016), argue that South Africa has not yet recovered from the injustices from apartheid legacy and in order to deal with this municipalities have an obligation of ensuring full participation of the public and communities in local government service delivery processes as part of good governance and accountability.
Kocaoglu (2015:1545), Tesoriero (2010:142), Le Roux (2015:97) & Miraftab & Wills (2005), highlight that local government municipalities are legal entities with the primary responsibility to ensure that freedom and democracy prevail. Kocaoglu (2015:1545) also articulates that it is a local government level where participatory democracy prevails without any compromise. This author also notes that at the heart of participatory democracy is self-action, self-dominance, self-perception and self-improvement. The provision of democratic spaces of participation should provide changes in the lives of citizens characterised by collective action and outcomes informed by the needs of citizens, Kocaoglu (2015:1545). This author also highlights that for participatory democracy to be effective, citizens should see themselves active in the process of participation and as a key stakeholder with an important role to play.

2.10.2 Social movements and democratic spaces of participation.

In order for participants to take place, there should be spaces to which participants should use to engage with one another or with those in power. Sinwell (2009:82) define the concept of spaces as “a dynamic, humanly constructed means of control and domination of power”, le Roux (2015:85) articulates that Sinwell’s definition define the concepts of spaces in line with the concepts of public participation. Cornwall & Coelho (2004:1) articulate that the rise to these participatory space is a result of constitutional and government reforms aimed at remodelling old colonial rules to suit new governance agenda and readdress past mistakes and exclusion. On the other hand, Cornwall (2004:1) states that “moves to extend opportunities for citizen participation in governance are inspired and underpinned by the view that to do so makes for better citizens, better decisions and better government”. Cornwall (2004:1), further argues that scholars hold different arguments when it comes to the concept of citizen engagement. The author argues that to some this is just a mechanism to redress democratic deficit and perpetuate the liberal institution. Mbeki and Phago (2014:213) also argue that IDP forums are just a shopping list for with no long-term strategic focus and with no clear alignment with the district, provincial and national government.

Cornwall (2004:1) argue that politicians will listen to those who voted for them and bureaucrats will only respond to those they are meant to serve, while to others citizen engagement demonstrate more radical machinery of strengthening the relationship
between government and the people. Cornwall (2004:2) further highlights the distinction between the invited and invented spaces of democratic participation in the following manner: invited spaces are government-provided spaces where the authority establishes these spaces as a response to citizens demands or policy changes, this kind of spaces are characterised by deliberations and communication as well as well-structured committees. Contrary, popular or invented spaces are spaces that citizens come together in their own accord to respond to the government whether by way of protests against government policies or to demand to better services or demonstrate dissatisfactions (Cornwall, 2004:2).

The concept of social movements is integrated into the study to understand why communities engagement in public protest as a way to communicate their grievances to the local authorities. The study identified the increase in public protest in South African Municipalities despite the introduction of public participation and community engagement initiative and aims to explore how community participation can enhance stakeholder engagement in Greater Tzaneen Municipality. According to Porta & Diani (2006:31), social movements are "a distinct social process, consisting of mechanisms through which actors engage in collective action". They are involved in this action with an intent to oppose those who are in power and to influence political action, Porta & Diani (2006:31). These actors engage in either political or cultural conflict to promote or oppose the change in the status quo and control public discourse. Control in this context refers to the oppositional relationship between authorities and these actors characterized by negative claims on each other, Porta and Diani (2006:31).

Port and Diani (2006:32), state, “Addressing collective problems, producing public goods, or expressing support for some moral values or principles does not automatically correspond to social action”. These authors argue that social movement action requires a clear identification of target for the collective effort they should be identified through within the social and political terms. Furthermore, Port and Diani (2006:32), argue that once collective action is grounded on individual behaviour or legitimacy and blaming all problems to humankind as its directive, it cannot be declared and identified as a social movement. One way of distinguishing social movements from other initiatives that may result in collective action is through the dense informal network and collective identity as articulated by Diani (2006:32). From
the dense informal network perspective, a social movement is a process whereby both individual and organized actors engage in an altercation of means and resources in a quest for a common goal while maintaining their autonomy and independence (Diani, Diani, 2006:32). Although coordination of strategies, tactics, initiatives and regulation of actors’ behaviour underpin this process, it depends on negotiations between all parties involved in the collective action quest, (Diani, 2006:32).

According to Porta and Diani (2006:32), at the core of social movements is recognition and connectedness of all the actors in pursuit of collective action. They also note that social movement is not just a series of protests action, campaigns or once-off mass mobilization, but a process that encompasses collective identities that goes beyond identifiable aspects of specific occasions and initiatives. Porta and Diani (2006:32) further state “it brings with it a sense of common purpose and shared commitment to a cause, which enables single actors or organisations to regard themselves as inextricably linked to other actors, necessarily identical, but surely compatible in broader collective mobilisation”.

Interestingly, Artbatli, Akim, Rosenberg and Dina (2017:2) argue that most of the contemporary social movements are not motivated by the demand for democracy and social right as opposed to those after the cold war, rather they are aimed at challenging the liberal democracy. Artbatli et al (2017:2) also argue, “rather than being part of the mainstream liberal discourse on rights, the new social movements seek to redefine social demands by challenging fixed identities. They further articulate that the struggle of many contemporary social movements seeks to promote participatory democracy as opposed to liberal democracy. Artbatli et al (2017:3) also argue that in order to understand social movement within the context of participatory democracy and the reasoning behind the motive of protesters and frame their demands attention must be given to the three common frames i.e. real participation, social justice and dignity.

Moreover, according to Arbatli et al (2017:4) new social movements aim to a more inclusive and participatory approach to collective action through the empowerment of underprivileged groups such as women, children, historically disadvantaged groups, the poor, indigenous people and minority groups through the provision of spaces to voice out their demands. They further articulate that in these new social movements,
protesters refuse to identify themselves with any political party with the fear that opportunists will hijack the movement. In the context of municipal service delivery protests, the protesters will define themselves as the “community” rather than members of any political party in their quest to demand services. However, some social movements result as a part of political divisions to challenge the local authority and to try to delegitimise it. Although social movements are leaderless and pursue collective action as articulated by Arbatli et al (2017:4), the current study argues that social movements may be hijacked by politicians who use the community to promote themselves and their interest under the notion of collective action. This is evident in social movements such as the Fees Must fall movement that was hijacked by political parties for political point-scoring and as results; the efforts of students are claimed as victories of certain political parties.

Furthermore, Arbatli et al (2017:4) highlight that protesters frame their demands under the umbrella of social justice. According to Arbatli et al. (2017:4), Sen and Acvi (2016:126) and McAdam et al. (1988:25), once protesters or citizens feel deprived or neglected they form social movements as a collective enquiry of attaining social justice and frame their demands under the social justice perspective. Some of the demands by the protesters, which may revolve around social justice, inter alia: social-economic inequality, gender inequality, political shortcomings, poor service delivery, and poverty. Social movements in this regard facilitate the attainment of social justice beyond political and social differences of actors involved, (Arbatli et al 2017:4).

The third component used by protesters is dignity, Jasper (2014:210) states, “just as group honour motivates political action, so does a desire for individual honour in the form of dignity. Even in situations where success seems unlikely, people often join movements simply to assert their dignity as human beings who are suffering and can make noise”. Arbatli et al (2017:5) articulate that dignity captures the formation and participation of many social movements’ actors around the world in public protests, the aim is to regain the lost dignity of human beings perpetuated by poverty and poor service delivery. Arbatli et al (2017:5) further note that the claim of dignity by actors in social movements has a strong attribute of reaffirming the standing of ordinary individuals and groups against the power, it has the ability to promote both social justice and participatory democracy.
2.10.3 DEPRIVATION THEORY

The deprivation theory is incorporated into the study to highlight the formation of some social movements as a way of addressing concerns collectively. The theory rests on the assumption that; if people are deprived basic rights, good or services they engage in social movement as a collective way of acquiring what they have been deprived, Sen and Acvi (2016:126). The two branches of the theory are absolute and relative deprivation. According to McAdam, McCarthy and Zald (1988:25), absolute deprivation treats the concerns of the affected parties in isolation from the rest of the community. They further articulate that relative deprivation looks at the group as disadvantaged in comparison with others in the community which might be the basis for engaging in social movements with an intention of acquiring what they have been deprived.

In South Africa, local government is one of the three spheres of government closer to the beneficiaries of public services. Communities as key role players in municipalities and main beneficiaries of local services are entitled to the right to be consulted and contribute to the decisions by local authorities, (SALGA, 2013). The constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) states the role of municipalities as, “provide democratic and accountable government to local communities” and “to encourage the involvement of communities and community organisations in the matters of local government”. These provisions intrust municipalities with a responsibility to ensure that communities have access to basic public services, which include inter alia, water, electricity, libraries, recreational facilities, roads, hospitals, emergency services, museums and refuse dumps (Municipal Act, 2000). Once communities feel deprived of these crucial services by the local municipality they resort to movements as a way of claiming what they have been deprived. Some of the most powerful social movements are the Vuwani total shutdown and Alex Shutdown movement, which attracted even National Government, City Press, (2018) and News24 (2019).

2.11 GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATION IN SOUTH AFRICA: APPROACH, POLICY FRAMEWORK, STRATEGY, PRACTICE AND FACTORS AFFECTING COMMUNICATION AS PUBLIC SERVICE.

12.11.1 Government Communication Policy Framework
The South African government acknowledges the importance of communication in the implementation of public policy and service delivery. This is evident through the establishment of government communication under the government communication and information systems (GCIS) IN 1996, GCIS, (2014-17:1). The government communicators’ handbook as a blueprint to facilitate professionalism in communication for the public sector; communication as a strategic tool in service delivery efforts to implement people-centred policy. Communication in government is a mechanism to facilitate engagement and flow of messages between government and the citizens and as the lifeblood of government institutions at all levels of government.

In the modern democracies, the strategic objective of communication by the government is to strive for effective communication with the citizens and to ensure that communication is an important element of good governance, (Comm Policy 2018:12). The emerging paradigm in government communication is the strategic government communication which aims to place communication at the centre of government and creating value for communication within government, GCIS, 2014-17:4). The government communicators handbook (2014-17:5) states, “In the rapidly changing environment, the GCIS strive to achieve integration, coordination and high levels professionalism in government communication profession”. To this effect, government communicators are required to apply these high levels of professionalism in their execution of government communication activities to improve the lives of ordinary South Africans.

To ensure the effective and ethical communication in all spheres; the South African government had established the Government Communication Policy with the aim to guide all government communication in the three spheres of government, Comm Policy, (2018:9). The latest policy passed by the cabinet in 2018 aims to achieve the following strategic objective:

To ensure that all communicators in all spheres operate at from developmental communication guided by the needs of South Africans.

To strength the government communication system with an intention to enable the international and citizens to participate in government programmes and policies.
To ensure that at all levels is, well-integrated, coherent, ethical, credible, managed, transformative, coordinated and constant guided by the needs and of the aspirations of all South Africans.

To build a citizen-centred and client-focused communication system.

To create an effective feedback mechanism between government and citizens.


The South African government communication policy and strategy adopted a developmental communication paradigm that follows the fundamental values of democracy, openness and participation, Comm Policy (2018:8). Development communication as defined by Quebral (2001) refer to the effective use of communication to facilitate social change. This means, that the South African government adopts this paradigm to ensure that communication facilitates social change in all spheres of government.

The Communication Policy (2018:9) also demonstrates that government communicators as executors of all communication activities they should operate under the development paradigm. Following this paradigm, the Comm Policy (2018:8) government communicators must “provide the public with timely, accurate, and clear information about government policies, plans, programmes, services and initiatives in a non-partisan way, thus making it accountable to the public it serves”. It further instructs these communicators to educate and transform society and promote dialogue between citizens and government through debate and discussion and provide feedback, which will allow citizens to participate in shaping government policies. It is clear from a policy that South African government put communication at the centre of changes and transformation; hence, there is a need to integrate this into the literature to provide an outlook of the practices of communication at government level.

2.11.3 Communication as public service in South Africa: The Batho Pele Principles

Governments and private organisations acknowledge and recognise the need to interact and engage with communities. The high level of poverty in Africa,
organisations had realised the need to collaborate with communities for sustainable development, (De Klerk & Oelofse, (2014:389). These two authors further argue that collaboration is not enough; a two-way reciprocal communication with the intention to build relationships and trust with communities can enhance the engagement process. This section of the literature looks at the community as a primary stakeholder in the municipal public services. The community is described as a client that municipality has an obligation to serve and provide services to in terms of the constitution, (Public Participation Framework 2013).

The white paper on the transformation of public service delivery (1997) set out the Batho-Pele principles that guide service delivery in South Africa under the citizen-driven policy agenda perspective. According to this white paper, public service is a constitutional right to South Africans and therefore meeting the needs of all citizens it is a government’s priority. The white paper provides a highlight of the need for providing public services in a more efficient and effective way. The white paper also emphasises the need for a shift from a culture of public servants to see themselves first and prioritize the citizens as their primary goal.

The customer-perspective was incorporated in the white paper by the department of public services and administration as a mechanism to improve the quality of public services. Pietersen (2014:254) argues that the Batho Pele initiative is to get public servants to be service orientated, to strive for excellence in service delivery, and commit themselves to continuous service delivery improvement. This author emphasises that the white paper aims to allow citizens to hold them accountable for the type of services they deliver and to adopt a citizen orientated approach to service delivery informed by eight principles. From a customer’s perspective from a private business point of view, companies cannot ignore the needs and demands of their customers if they want to remain competitive, because the customers will take their business elsewhere, (White Paper, (1997). The white paper also highlights that the customer first principles are not just a slogan but also an important business principle to be maintained and practised even by public institutions, rather a blueprint to service delivery in all sphere of government.
In contrast, from the public service and administration perspectives, the citizens as clients and recipient of public services cannot take their business elsewhere if the government fails to satisfy their needs (White Paper, 1997). However, the terms customer may seem to be inappropriate in another context of government, but in the context of public service delivery, the term treating citizens as customers is appropriate as it implies the following:

Listening to the views and taking into consideration the needs, concerns and demands before decisions are taken.

Treating them with respect and consideration

Making sure that they receive promised high-level quality services;

The argument made by this study current study from a stakeholder engagement perspective is that communities should be seen as important clients rather than merely as recipients of corporate charity handouts. Citizens in this regards are the main primary stakeholders who must be a priority in the process of stakeholder engagement. From the Batho Pele principle, citizens are not just communities who should be included in the stakeholder system for governance compliance sake, but as important stakeholder whom the public service, municipalities, in this case, exist to serve. The White Paper also makes it clear that communication and engagement play a crucial role in the consultation process with the citizens, hence the current study focus on the role public participation paly in the stakeholder engagement process.


Government communication is practised within the highly competitive space with multiple voices competing for one audience. The Government Communicator’s Handbook (2014:14) state, “A thousand voices speaking without a common message and a single purpose will end just like an indistinct noise that few will hear.” Strategic Communication entails communication that is purposeful, intentional with predetermined objectives. Dryden and Allen (2018) articulate that for communication to be strategic, it should have an intended goal, the audience must be identified, the messenger of mediums must be clearly identified and ultimately communication must
be measured. Therefore, there is a need for strategy in Government communication activities. The handbook further highlights that strategy allows for the delivery of government messages that are clear, effective and efficient communication. Communication plays a key role in all government' decision and to that effect, it should be planned to ensure maximum impact, Government Communicator's Handbook (2014:15).

Moreover, in terms of the Government Communicator's Handbook (2014:16) when strategizing and planning for government communication, the PRPs should take note of the following:

Scope and Context - Government communicators should scope of government, of different departments and the context to which these communications are taking place.

Environment – taking note of the environment to which one is communicating at allows for proper assessment of; public mood, political noise and issues, media agenda, forces at play attitudes and concerns of the citizens and their demography.

Communication Objectives – when strategizing for communication the government communicators should have a clear understanding of the communication goals, Government Communicator's Handbook (2014:15). The handbook further highlights that the objectives of government communication maybe to popularise, inform, educate, mobilise, raise awareness, reassure, unsure and clarify government policies, decisions and programs to the citizens.

Communication Challenges – Government Communicators should understand and know the communication challenges and provide solutions in addressing them, strategy allow them to scan within the environment and pinpoint the communication challenges in place.

Communication channels- Communication environmental scanning enable practitioners to know the available channels to communicate with different stakeholders.

Government Key Messages and Messengers – every communication message has to have its own messenger, this enables the impact of the message to the public.
Although communicators are highly trained to communicate effectively, in the public services the appearance of, political principals also play an important role. Key messages are also important in communication programs of government as they articulate the position of government in certain issues.

However, providing important elements of strategic communication approach in the public sector without giving the reason why it should be done is not enough to encourage implementation by practitioners. It is quite clear that government communicators communicate in a very noisy environment with many parties competing for the attention of the citizens, (GCSI, (2014-2017:14). The array of these messages is not only from the anti-government organisation but also in government there are many different messages from different department and divisions competing for the citizens and that also creates a message clutter in the government communication environment. Therefore, strategic communication allows all spheres of government to communicate in one voice and their communication guided by key government messages. In the context of local government, it is important for managers to ensure that in communication strategy integrates the district, provincial and national key messages to convince residents that government is one system operating under the same policy. It is at the local level that citizens feel very close to the government; therefore, it is important for municipal communicators to contextualise their messages and communication to meet the needs of the people they serve.

2.11.5 Factors affecting Government Communication as a public service duty.

The public sector on its own if affect my many factors that also have a direct impact on a number of important elements such as communication with the citizens. Government communication is not immune to certain changes in the public sector environment. Lui & Horsely (2007:378) argue that the manner in which communication and public relations is practised in the public sector is different in the private sector. These to authors further highlight that government communication affected by the following factors:

Politics – the public sector is influenced and shaped by politics, no public institution is free from politics, because the government is politics. Lui and& Horsely (2007:378), articulate that politics restrict creativity and innovation in the development of
communication programs. In a country like South Africa with the party political-party-political system, it is very difficult for government communicators to communicate on behalf of the government and not refer to the ruling party’s policies.

Public good – the public institutions are established for only one reason, to serve the people, therefore even the communication by government communicators should be aimed at responding to the needs of the people. The government communicators handbook (2014:6) highlight that government communication is a service delivery machinery aimed at improving the lives of the people. Lui & Horsely (2007:379) articulate that the focus of government communication on public makes it easy for the government to provide services to the people.

Legal Constraints- although government communicators are supposed to communicate under the guideline of the public good, legal constraints also limit them to communicate certain information to the public, (Lui & Horsley, (2007:379). Government communicators as public servants are expected at all times to be honest and maintain stability and good relationship with the public.

Media scrutiny- government institutions are not immune to media scrutiny; the media cover their decisions and action more than the private corporations do. Lui and Horsely (2007:379) refer to the relationship between government and media as a mutually beneficial one. However, these authors also stress that the government communicators should maintain a good relationship with the media to enable them to execute their public reporting function. The government communicators need the media to report the decisions of government in order to keep the public informed.

Devaluation of Communication- it is unfortunate that communication in some government spheres and departments perceived it as a luxury rather than a managerial function. Lui and Horsely (2007:379) argue that in times of budget cuts communication programs are always the first to go.

2.11.6 Local Government Communication Forums and Public Participation Structures.

For the government to fasten coordination and implementation of national government communication strategic objective and to enhance public service delivery; the Comm
Policy (2018:21) there must be public participation structures to keep the nation informed of government plans which affect their lives (Comm Policy 2018:21). However, for the purpose of this study, the focus will be on the Local communication forum that informs how municipalities should communicate. The LCF consist of heads of communications of municipalities, parastatals, and other government entities within the jurisdiction of a certain locality and is concerned by SALGA, CoGTA and GCIS, Comm Policy (2018:21).

Roles and Responsibilities of Local Government Communication Forum are as follows according to the Government Communication Policy:

Discuss the communication issues arising from national, provincial, district forums including the SoNA, SoPA and SoDA and is integrated into municipal communication strategy, for example, issues of digital technology, the fourth industrial revolution and digital migration as current communication issues in South Africa.

Assess the implementation of government communication programmes and strategies through the creation of case studies share fewer lessons learnt and establish best practices.

Building capacity and development for communication strategies to help municipalities and other local government entities initiate and maintain good relationships with other stakeholders at the national, provincial and district level.

Strategize and plan for communication calendar of events for municipalities and communication departments.

2.11.7. Different Media used by Government to Communicate with communities.

South Africa still depend on media liaison and public liaison for engaging the citizens through the use of publication of legislative proceedings, live broadcast of legislative proceedings, i.e. SONA (State of the Nation Address), SOPA (State of Province Address) and SOMA (State of Municipal Address), journalistic coverages, newsletters and websites, Sebola (2017:30).
However, social media such as Facebook, YouTube and Twitter provides the government with the opportunity to engage directly with the communities and citizens; they enhance the public participation objectives, Averweg (2011:16). In order to build a strong and vibrant local government, the local authority needs to engage the communities more effectively and social media provides that opportunity for municipalities. Jatakanthan (2011:14) states, “Engaging communities through social media is a very vital means of developing a strong and vibrant local government”. Similarly, Dozier, Hacker, Silbererg and Ziegahn (2011:151) also articulate that social does not only provide the government with an opportunity to communicate with citizens, but also with opportunity of bringing together sectors of the communities which may seem to be difficult to bring together. These authors also argue that social media brings in some characteristics of discussions such as participants having an opportunity to make contributions to the debate, respond and may take their time to review the discussion before they respond.

However, in the context of municipalities, Averweg (2011:17) articulates that municipalities can utilise the new technologies to improve the lives of those they serve. Averweg (2011:17) further states, “Social media now represents a key enabler for improved service delivery to these stakeholders”. Dozier et al (2011:153) also highlight some of the role of social media in the process of community engagement as, knowledge about the community, mobilization of the community, build and sustain networks, and bring the community into one platform with no intermediaries. In the current study, social media is not examined as social networks of communication, rather as a form of the public sphere where communities come together to discuss issues of importance. The public sphere approach provides a more deep understanding of the role these networks can play in community engagement and building good relationships between the local government and communities.

Moreover, Sen (2012:68), Steenkamp and Hyde-Clarke (2012:15) and Averweg (2011:17) argue that the use of social media in modern government communication has become important to many political heads and municipal officials. They further note that the new media provides municipalities and government department with new avenues that enable citizens to have direct engagement and dialogue with government on policies and service delivery and thus contribute to the formation of public opinion.
Bartlett, Jones, Fisher and Jesperson (2015:22) also highlight that social media does not just provide avenues for communication but also can call for action from politician and official to act on certain issues. The call for action influenced by social media is evident in many parts of the world, examples such as Arab Spring, the #FeesMustFall, #RhodesMustFall, #ZumaMustFall and many service delivery protests in South Africa. Averrweg (2012:18) argue that South African municipalities will have to integrate social media channels into their existing citizens and community engagement frameworks and strategies to avoid being left behind.

2.11.8. COMMUNICATION IN SOUTH AFRICAN MUNICIPALITIES: BENEFITS, OPPORTUNITIES, LESSONS AND CHALLENGES.

Municipalities are the closest government local institutions to the communities and play a critical role in communicating the government’s information, Sebola (2017:31). Similarly, Stavrou (2001) articulates that communication is an important tool to facilitate cooperation between all the three spheres of government and for the smooth flow of information. Van der Merwe and Bohler-Maller (2013:115) also argue that communication is not just a tool for the municipality to facilitate service delivery satisfactions and views, but also a tool used to transform society, government-community relations and democracy. In order to understand the problems of the communities, the municipalities are required to constantly communicate and engage with these communities to improve their functions, to address poverty, inequality and unemployment, corruption, poor service delivery and to improve the relationship with citizens, Shabangu & Oksiutycz (2018:199), Mathebula (2017).

Some of the challenges faced by South African municipalities with regard to communication, engagement and community participation inter alia poor consultation by local authorities which causes chaos in meetings and forums, Molale (2018), Shabangu & Oksiutycz (2018:199). The lack of a clear policy framework, collaboration and alignment between spheres of government (Jarvis 2016:34) are also obstacles to the effective service delivery. Mbeki and Phago (2014:213) also argue that insufficient consultation with different actors and poor communication are the main causes of protests in many municipalities in South Africa. His authors also continue to argue that effective engagement remains a challenge for many municipalities and government
departments to implement policies coupled with a lack of evaluation process of communication methods. Matshiavhidi & Moeti (2016) argue that most of these methods are just mere shopping lists for municipalities with no intergovernmental alignment and propaganda machinery with no strategic alignment. These authors also highlight that communities are reluctant to participate and engage through these communication forums because they have no knowledge of how government works.

Furthermore, Malelo, Cornadies and Dondolo (2017:78) argue that communication has the ability to bind municipality and communities together, but the lack of information about audits outcomes, political interference, leadership issues, and the use of community problems as a campaign tool as well as reactive communication and engagement delegitimise the value of communications. Municipalities struggle to diversify communication strategies to accommodate diverse different ideas and interest of stakeholders, (Vivier, Seabe, Wentzel & Sanchez, 2015:85). Local government will have to think strategically when communicating with different communities through the evaluation of specific interest a particular group may have avoided the one size fits all approach.

2.12. CONCLUSION

The existing literature and the theoretical framework laid the basis for understanding the concept of stakeholder engagement and guided the exploration of different mechanisms adopted by the organisation to engage different groups. It is clear from the literature that if an organisation desire to be effective and successful it needs to take care of different groups and engage them thoroughly. The literature also highlighted that resources and time should be allocated to all stakeholders and a thorough background check on different groups with interest to the organisation should be done before different mechanism are adopted to maximise their effectiveness. The literature also provided a clear understanding on how government communication works, how different structures exists within the government communication realm, which policies guides the strategy in government communication, what forums and structures exists for government communicators to utilize in order to reach citizens.

However, the literature also provided a clear understanding of how public participation can play a critical role in the stakeholder engagement process for local government.
This chapter also looked at how the democratic spaces of participation play a critical role in the formation of public opinion that may guide policy development for effective service delivery. The literature also concluded that there is a need for municipalities and government, in general, to engage citizens at all times is always a need for municipalities and government in general to engage citizens. The effects of social movement in the public participation process and the community engagement were discussed. The chapter also highlighted the need for the integration of social media into the existing stakeholder and community participation frameworks.

The study established that stakeholder engagement to be effective and yield good results, there should be two-way communication, consultation, transparency even when things go wrong, there should be clear communication channels in place, stakeholders should be treated equally, communities must be afforded with an opportunity to participate in municipal decision making and feedback must be given to all stakeholders. There is a need for integration of public participation into the stakeholder plans especially in local government to give an opportunity to the voiceless to speak and the marginalised to have a say on what affects their lives. Above all communication is the key to successful strategy formulation and implementation and the delivery of good and quality services. The next chapter discusses the research methodology adopted in the current study.
CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines the research methodology adopted by the researcher in this study. The methodology includes the research constitutes, the research approach, the philosophical research paradigm, research design, population and sampling, data collection, data analysis and qualitative research quality criteria. A qualitative research approach adopted in this study to explore the different methods adopted by the Greater Tzaneen Municipality to engage with different stakeholders and the perceptions of the community as a stakeholder towards the process of stakeholder engagement. In order to scrutinize this phenomenon, a qualitative research inquiry adopted with an intent of understanding, the thoughts, experiences and the perceptions of different stakeholders in GTM from the subjective perception of each stakeholder. An interpretive paradigm concerned with the understanding of human behaviour and social settings and acts and how people are shaped by their experiences and the world they live in was adapted to guide the study at hand. A descriptive case study was adopted as a research design of the current study with the intent of exploring the phenomenon in question through detailed contextual analysis limited to Greater Tzaneen Municipality as a case. Semi-structured interviews were used by the researcher as data collection tools for the study and analysed through qualitative thematic content analysis.

3.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

3.2.1 Overall research objectives

To explore the engagement methods adopted by greater Tzaneen Municipality in the process of stakeholder engagement and the perceptions of the community towards this process.

3.2.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS
How are the current stakeholder engagement used by the Greater Tzaneen Municipality to promote community engagement?

How are the four elements of Public Participation i.e. consult, collaborate, involve and inform integrated into the Greater Tzaneen Municipality stakeholder engagement practices?

What is the role of the communication department of the Greater Tzaneen Municipality in the community engagement process?

What are the perceptions of the community as a stakeholder towards the process of community engagement?

3.3 RESEARCH APPROACH

3.3.1 Qualitative research Approach

This research project was exploratory in nature and attempted to explore the engagement methods adopted by the Greater Tzaneen Municipality to engage with stakeholders and the perception of the community. Following a qualitative research approach concerned with studying a phenomenon which takes place within the parameters of the real world and involves comprehending and learning the complications of a phenomenon by focusing on subjective experiences and in-depth understanding of people, (Leedy & Omrod, 2013). The subjective experiences of different stakeholder in GTM formed the core data of the study hence the qualitative research approach was relevant. Exploratory studies according to Bless et al (2012:40) by their nature and orientation conducted in the absence of knowledge or little information about a particular aspect and aimed at providing a deep understanding of the phenomenon. For the current study, despite considerable studies on stakeholder engagement and public participation in government, but little is done on the two aspects being studied at once within a single context, hence the current study adopted an exploratory approach to explore the role of public participation in stakeholder engagement in GTM.

Guided by the purpose, research problem, aim, objectives, and the questions of the study, a qualitative research approach through semi-structured interviews was
adopted. Qualitative research focuses on social research about people’s lives, subjective experiences, their behaviour, emotions and feelings as well as the functioning and structuring of organisations and how they operate. In qualitative research, the researcher does not arrive at the conclusions and inferences of the study through statistical data interpretation rather draw conclusions on the bases of what people have said, felt and done about life events and their surroundings and how they see their world. Leedy and Ormrod (2013:43) argue that qualitative researchers at the end of their research inquiry do not generalise their findings of a phenomenon, rather provide and explain contextualised findings of a particular phenomenon. Therefore, context is very important in qualitative research given the contextual nature of qualitative research enquiries. In the current study, the researcher sought to understand how GTM uses different methods of stakeholder engagement to promote public participation and how the community perceive the process. Although a similar study has been conducted somewhere else, the qualitative research approach provides the uniqueness of the results and finding within a particular context. To this effect, it can be argued that what is done is GTM may be done somewhere, but the community of GTM may have different understanding of the phenomenon.

According to Treadwell (2014:67), an advantage of the qualitative research approach is that the findings of new information about a specific phenomenon and a deep understanding achieved rather than a mere confirmation or an idea when using quantitative methods. Another advantage outlined by Treadwell (2014:67) is the richness of the validity of qualitative data when compared with experiments results. The reason for this is that qualitative methods take place in a natural environment and experimental research in an artificial environment (Treadwell, 2014:68). In qualitative research, the researcher engages in a research process through providing research questions directed at participants an organise the data in a manner that is coherent and use verbal descriptions to position what has been studied, (Neil, 2007). Once the data is collected, the research uses it to develop theories and concepts that provide a specific understanding of the social world through the participant’s perspective. Qualitative research is inductive in nature in the sense that researchers observe social events and draw a conclusion about a phenomenon from a contextual perspective.
3.3.2 CHARACTERISTICS OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Qualitative research approach can be distinguished from other methods through the following characteristics:

Focuses on the subjective experiences of the participants

Qualitative research focuses on the subjective experiences of the participants in the consolidation of research analysis and how participants attach meaning to the world. The perspective of the participants plays a critical role in the realisation of what constitutes reality.

Context is key

In qualitative research, context is very important as the approach seeks to provide context-specific analysis rather than providing generalised findings. Context is very important in qualitative research.

Researcher as a participant

In qualitative researcher is a data collection instrument through which participants are studied. The researcher perceived as a participant in the research process through the participation and the engagement with participants.

Pragmatic

The research findings are expected to contribute to an ongoing social process and the inquiry is expected to solve these problems. The research findings may or may not contribute to the development of a theory.

Real-world setting

According to Leedy and Ormrod, (2013:45), qualitative research focuses on the phenomenon which takes place within the parameters of the real world and involves comprehending and learning the complications of a phenomenon by focusing on the subjective experiences of people.
Inductive reasoning

In qualitative researcher when adopting inductive reasoning, he starts with a topic to develop empirical generalisation and identify preliminary relationships. No hypothesis in the initial stages of the research, it is a bottom-up approach of knowing in which the researcher uses observation to build describe a picture of a phenomenon.

3.4 Philosophical Research Paradigm

3.4.1 Research paradigm

A research paradigm refers to the philosophical way of thinking of research and guides the manner in which researchers understand their world. This is the worldview, a school of thought, set of beliefs used by researchers to guide the provision of meaning and interpretation of data, Kivunja & Kuyini (2017:26). Tanh & Thanh (2015:24) argue that the research paradigm comprises of three aspects, the belief researchers hold about the nature of knowledge, a methodology and criteria for validity. Some of the custodians of the research paradigm Lincoln & Guba (1985) argue that a paradigm comprises of the epistemology, ontology, methodology and axiology. There are three types of research paradigms, namely; the positivist, the interpretive and critical realism traditions. For the purpose of this study, the researcher chooses the interpretivism paradigm as the research philosophical tradition adopted in the study, (Thanh and Thanh 2015:24). For the purpose of this study, the researcher chooses the interpretive paradigm as the research philosophical tradition adopted in the study.

3.4.1.1 The interpretive paradigm

The interpretive paradigm is concerned with the understanding of human behaviour and social settings and acts as an alternative to the positivist paradigm, Bryman & Bell (2007). The interpretive paradigm deal primarily with the experiences of participants and they shape their understanding of the world they live in. Thanh & Thanh (2015:24) argue that the interpretive paradigm allows the researcher to view the world from the experiences and perceptions of the participants in the study. Thanh & Thanh (2015:24) further state “in seeking answers for research, the investigator who follows the interpretive paradigm uses those experiences to construct and interpret his
understanding from gathered data”. For the current study, the central point was to explore engagement methods adopted by GTM to engage stakeholders and communities perception towards the process perceived this process. In order to understand one had to have a deeper understanding and in in-depth of the experiences of all stakeholders involved in GTM in order to draw conclusions and to find answers for the research questions. To this effect, the research could not understand how communities and other stakeholders perceived stakeholder engagement and the public participation aspect of this process without understanding the different worlds of different stakeholders and how these shaped their perceptions towards the stakeholder engagement process.

The interpretive paradigm was applicable to this study since it provided an understanding of how subjective experiences shaped the perceptions of communities towards the stakeholder engagement process and their role through public participation processes put in place by the municipality to promote community engagement. Unlike the positivist paradigm which studies a phenomenon through statistical imperial approach and use these scientific means to generalise their findings and the critical realism which focuses on the discovery of societal and problems and resolve them,( De Villers, 2005; Bryman & Bell, 2007).

3.5 Elements of a research paradigm

According to Kivunja & Kuyini (2017:27), there are four elements of a research paradigm, namely; epistemology, ontology, methodology and axiology.

3.5.1 Epistemology

Epistemology is originally a Greek word episteme that means knowledge. In research, epistemology is concerned with knowledge creation and what counts as knowledge in the world, Kuvinja & Kuyini (2017:27). These two authors argue that epistemology in the research focuses on the nature of knowledge, how is acquired, communicated other human beings and how the researcher as knower can acquire and extend to those with little knowledge about the phenomenon being investigated and broaden and enrich knowledge, Kunjiva & Kuyini (2017:27). Thanh & Thanh (2015:26) argue that in interpretive paradigm knowledge and reality is a result of social interaction and
is socially constructed. Similarly, Kunjiva & Kuyini (2017:27) articulate that in order for one to determine important questions such as whether knowledge can be acquired or experienced. What counts as knowledge? These questions according to Kunjiva & Kuyini (2017:27) are important to allow the researcher to immerse himself into the research context and discover what is known in order to determine what is new and unknown and requires an investigation. Henning, Van Rensburg & Smit (2011:19) also articulate that in the interpretive theory of knowledge, knowledge is a result of an observable phenomenon and by descriptions of people’s intentions, values, beliefs and meanings attached to the phenomenon and self-understanding. Henning et al (2011:19) also argue that in the interpretive paradigm knowledge is dispersed and distributed. The researcher who follows this paradigm has to look at different places and different things in order to have a deep understanding of a phenomenon, Henning et al (2011:19).

The interpretive paradigm knowledge is gained through social construction such as language shared meanings and experiences, Bryman and Bell (2007). For the current study, the researcher sought to explore the engagement methods adopted by GTM and the perceptions of the community towards this process and in order to determine these two important aspects, the researcher had to understand his epistemological position and that of the participants in order to determine what is unknown and new. Given the kinds of knowledge as argued by scholars, the type of knowledge gained in this research was people and Kivunja and Kuyini (2017:27) argue that knowledge gained from people and leaders of the organisation is authoritative.

3.5.2 Ontology

One of the branches of philosophy is ontology, it is concerned with the assumptions we make in order to position or articulate what is real and makes sense in relation to the real world, Kivunji and Kuyini (2017:27). Ontology is about the existence of reality and existence of the knowledge and how the phenomenon under investigation makes sense to the real world. Snaper and Spencer (2003:20) articulate that in the social research the ontology for social science researcher places the critical question on whether socially reality can exist on its own without the human factor in it and interpretation. Similarly, Henning et al (2011:20) note, “the interpretive paradigm
denies the existence of an objective reality independent of the frame of reference of the observer”. The interpretive paradigm aims to create an intentional reality based on the mind of the observer and influenced by the process of observation. From this analysis, one can argue that the context of this research places human experience and their perspective at the centre of defining reality given the nature and context of the study. The study focused on the perception of the community and other stakeholders on the methods adopted by GTM to facilitate stakeholder engagement and promote community participation in municipal processes.

The adoption and integration of the interpretive paradigm into the current study was based on its provision of multiple perspectives and realities of all key role players in a social setting. The current study adopted this paradigm and its ontological stand to give different key stakeholders an opportunity to voice their prospection and reality on the relationships they share with the municipality and other stakeholders. For the GTM management, EXCO and councillors the interpretive paradigm was employed to explore their understanding and everyday experience when engaging with different stakeholders with specific attention to the community as primary stakeholders. In its application to the community and community leaders, the interpretive paradigm was employed in this research to probe the experiences and perceptions of these individuals through interviews in order to get rich and deep descriptions and perceptions towards stakeholder engagement practices by the municipality.

3.5.3 Methodology and research paradigm

The methodology also refers to the data gathering instruments used and the analysis methods and instruments used by a researcher in a research project. Methodology according to Kivunja and Kuyini (2017:28) also includes the assumption, limitations, data criteria and research problems. The two authors also argue that methodology helps the researcher to have a clear understanding of how to go about finding answers to an investigation of a particular phenomenon. The current study adopted a qualitative research approach within a case study design through a descriptive context in order to investigate the phenomenon under scrutiny. The choice is of a methodological approach to be used depend on a number of issues that include among other things,
the research problem, the research questions, the philosophical paradigm and set of data to be collected.

The research questions guided the choice of the methodology adopted by the researcher for the current study and guided by the paradigm. However, it should be noted that the choice of methodology also rely on the obtainment of data, knowledge and what the researcher wishes to achieve at the end of the investigation and the accessibility of the data. A qualitative research methodology was selected because it deals with what people say and do and how they interpret their world and surroundings. In qualitative research, the researcher does not aim to generalise the finding but to provide context-specific findings, (Leedy and Ormrod 2013:48). The qualitative research methodology deals with an understanding of a phenomenon occurring in a natural setting and researchers do not manipulate the environment, rather capture what people say, feel and perceive about their world and surroundings.

Furthermore, Thanh & Thanh (2015:25) state that “qualitative approaches often give rich reports that are necessary for the researcher to fully understand contexts”. They further argue that interpretive researcher prefers qualitative research methods because they depict the world which is socially constructed, complex and ever-changing. Similarly, Creswell (2009) that qualitative research methods are adopted to deal with human or social problems through the understanding of individuals and groups and how they use their experiences to create meaning to the world, they live in. Henning et al (2011:19) articulate that methodology adopted by the researcher who integrates interpretive paradigm aim to capture the insider knowledge of the researcher and forms part of qualitative approach as the preferred if the not suitable method for interpretive research. Qualitative research method enabled the researcher to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon under scrutiny and the perceptions of the stakeholders involved in the GTM stakeholder engagement process.

3.5.5 Axiology

The axiology of a research paradigm deals with ethical issues to be considered in the process of conducting research. According to Kunjiva and Kuyini (2017:28). The two authors also argue that axiology deals with issues of the rights of all participants, moral issues, cultural and intercultural issues, and what is the right and wrong behaviour in
conducting research. Kunjiva and Kuyini (2017:28) outline the criteria of ethical conduct comprising teleology, deontology, morality and fairness. Teleology is the theory that deals with the morality of doing what intrinsically good or desirable and a moral obligation to be pursued in the research project, Kunjiva & Kuyini (2017:28). Teleology is according to Kunjiva & Kuyini (2017:28), is “an attempt made in research to make sure that the research results in a meaningful outcome will satisfy as many people as possible”. This criterion is facilitated by the questions of harm and benefit of the research results, in the context of this research. It was made clear that this research will benefit, the GTM to successfully understand the effectiveness and weaknesses of the current engagement mechanisms and also the perceptions of the community about the public participation processes, it was also made clear that the research will also benefit the communities in understanding their role in the engagement process and how communication play a critical role in this process.

Deontology deals with consequence management of actions taken during the research process and how this will benefit the individual participant, the research, the public and the scholarly community. Morality according to Kunjiva & Kuyini (2017:28) deals with moral values to be upheld and adhered to during research. Fairness, on the other hand, refers to how the researcher deals with participants by treating them well and be truthful and honest to them of the intentions of the research and how the data collected is going to be used. When proposing this study the researcher outlined the following ethical issues:

The researcher adhered to the ethical considerations stipulated in the Academic and Ethical research Code of Conduct of the University of Johannesburg. The researcher requested permission from the ethics committee indicating the purpose of the study. The researcher also requested permission from the municipal manager of Greater Tzaneen Municipality to have access to municipal officials, organisational information and interact with participants from different departments needed for the purpose of the study. Informed consent letters were distributed to all participants. Identities and names of all participants were kept confidentially and did not appear in the final document of this study. Other important ethical considerations that the researcher will adhere to as proposed by De Vos et al. (2011) include voluntary participation, privacy and confidentiality of respondents’ identities.
The information collected from the corresponded were scanned and stored in a file with a password and only the researcher will have access to. Participants were be briefed prior to the interviews about the purpose of the study and why it conducted and that participation is voluntary and there are no incentives for participation. Other ethical consideration will include giving assurance that the respondents were not subjected to any physical or emotional harm because of their participation in this study. The researcher treated the respondents are human beings, rather than objects or research tools.

3.6 CASE STUDY RESEARCH DESIGN

The current study adopted a case study research design in order to assist in the exploration of the phenomenon under scrutiny. According to Zainal (2007:5) “case studies, in their true essence, explore and investigate contemporary real-life phenomenon through detailed contextual analysis of a limited number of events or conditions, and their relationships”. Similarly, Starman (2013:31) defines a case study as an exploration of individual, a group or phenomenon and a comprehensive description of this phenomenon with contextual analysis in its own unique space. Consider Yin (2003) outline the important aspect in a case study research design by the research. According to Yin (2003) the how and why questions are the first important aspect of consideration in case study research since it aims to answer how and why questions. This author further articulates that in the case study research especially for qualitative research the researcher cannot manipulate the behaviour of the participants involved in the research project. Guided by the Yin (2003) criteria for choosing a case study method, the current study adopted the case study research design based on the following:

The research questions and objectives of this research; the current research sought to explore the methods adopted by GTM to engage with different stakeholders such as the business people, traditional leaders, religious leaders, youth and women organisations, NGOs, SANCO, and how the community as a primary stakeholder perceive the current engagement methods. The research questions were related to how the methods adopted by GTM in the stakeholder engagement process promote
community participation, how the four-element of public participation integrated into the process of stakeholder engagement in GTM.

The researcher adopted the case study research design on the basis of looking for contextualised analysis of the stakeholder engagement in GTM as public participation and dialogue continue to dominate the public discourse in SA and in academic research as a method of building sustainable relationships between government and community.

A case study allowed the researcher to explore the phenomenon through a variety of lenses, rather than from one lens and this allowed for a variety of facets of the practice of stakeholders engaged in a municipal setting to be revealed.

3.6.1 Descriptive Case Study

In the current study, the researcher specifically adopted a descriptive case study. Rule & John (2011:28), articulate that descriptive case studies are applicable to cultivate a rich, thick description on a phenomenon being studied, and the aim is to describe a case in a more comprehensive manner. However, Henning et al (2011:32), argue that the aim to not to just describe but to connect patterns, connections and dynamic which requires an inquiry. Yin, (2003) Baxter & Jack (2008) argue that a descriptive case study is used by researchers to describe a phenomenon in the real-life context where it occurs. Similarly, Ziadah and Zainah (2007:2) articulate that descriptive case study also seeks to “describe a natural phenomenon which occurs within the data in question”. The descriptive case study was adopted in this study to help in describing the concept of stakeholder engagement and its role in the public participation process.

Advantages of the case study method

Zainal (2007:5) and Henning (2011:7) outlined the following as some of the advantages of Case study design:

Depth- case study allows the researcher to examine a phenomenon and get in-depth rather than looking at multiple instances superficially. A case study reaches conclusions through an examination of one of the few samples that might not be the case in the survey, which examine the large sample.
Flexibility- case study design is flexible in terms of what it studies. A case study design can also be used with other methods on the collection and analysis of data.

Versatility- Case study design can be used in combination with other approaches that allow for a more versatile approach. A case study design can be used with other methods or act as the first part of research to provide the context of the study and descriptions of a phenomenon.

Context- a case study design allows for examination of data within a context that its use and situations are examined within the social context it takes place.

Case study approach allows for an in-depth description of a real-life phenomenon that may not be captured through scientific experiments. In other words, the case study provides rich descriptions of real-life situations.

3.7 Participants: Populations and Sampling

3.7.1 Population

A population is a group of objects and comprise of individuals, groups, organisations with mutual characteristics and collection of units of analysis about a particular study (Wellman, Kruger & Mitchell, & 2011:52). The population for the current study will be selected key stakeholders of Greater Tzaneen Municipality. Greater Tzaneen Municipality consists of 69 members of the council. Out of which 35 are elected from 35 wards and 34 are selected from the party lists, the council consists of 10 Executive committee councillors, 24 Proportional Representative Councillors and 34 Ward councillors and the speaker of the council, with 7 political parties represented in the council and ANC is the ruling party. The second population of this study is the community of GTM. GTM comprise of over 360 000 population, with over 125 villages of which 80% of the population live in these villages. GTM population is made of 96.4% Blacks, 3.6% Whites, 0.2% Coloureds, and 0.4 Indians. Languages that are spoken in Tzaneen are Northern Sotho, Xitsonga, Sotho, Afrikaans and English. GTM is divided into main places namely: Bankuna, Bakgaga Ba Maake, Bakgage, Bathabine Ba Mogoboya, Dwarsfotnein, Haenesburg, Litsitele, Modjadji, N'wa Mitwa and Nyavane. The Greater Tzaneen Municipality is also divided into four clusters, Bulamahlo, Lesedi,
Runnymede and Relela. GTM economic sector comprises of 31.7% community services, 23.8% finance, 10.2 trade, 7.6% agriculture and 3.7% manufacturing, GTM is also a category B municipality in Mopani District, Limpopo Province South Africa (Census, 2011).

3.7.2 Sampling

Purposive heterogeneous sampling was adopted in the study. Purposive heterogeneous sampling refers to the type of sampling wherein the researcher chooses a variety of persons or objects with specific characteristics to participate in the study, (Johnson & Christensen 2012:44). For the purpose of this study the sample comprised of select stakeholders from GTM who play a critical role in the municipal stakeholder engagement, public participation and service delivery processes.

The sample of this study comprised of two categories, the first category was constituted by the municipal leadership and officials charged with the responsibility of facilitating the stakeholder engagement strategy and implementation of its objectives. The public participation manager was also selected based on the role hi/she plays in the process of engagement between the municipality and the communities they serve through ward councillors, the public participation office acts as middle man between the municipality and different communities and work closely with the councillors to implement the public participation programmes of the municipality. Another important municipal department selected for the purpose of this study was the communication and marketing department that plays an integral role in the communication, stakeholder management and relationships between the municipality and different stakeholders including communities served by the GTM. Two ward councillors of ward 16 and 18 in Khujwana village under the Lesedi Cluster were also selected for their role as representatives of the community in the municipal council; the highest decision is making body of the municipality. Both wards 16 and 18 were selected out of the guided to by the rationale of the study which looked at how communities use protest as a communication tool to address service delivery issues. They were selected to form the biggest cluster of Lesedi in GTM. These two wards have recently engaged in community protests due to lack of water for many years and many meetings and consultations were held, but there was little progress in providing water.
Another factor which motivated the selection of ward 16 and 18 is the demarcation of the village with one side belonging toward 16 and the other belonging to ward 18 and these have for many years created problems and endless conflicts for communities.

The second category of our sample is the community sample. This sample was identified to provide a deep understanding of the perception of the community towards the process of stakeholder engagement that is the central focus of this study. The approach of this study is to understand and get a deep understanding from both sides, the municipality and the community. The sample comprised of two community leaders, one is the headman (Induna); traditional leaders play a very critical role in the community affairs and decision-making, and the induna is an important figure who acts as the custodian of traditional leadership and customs. Another community leader is the chairperson of SANCO in Khuwjana, an important community organisation that acts as a mouthpiece and guard against the improper allocation of services in the community and corruption but also oversees the provision of services in the community. Ordinary community members with influence in the community were also selected to participate in the study.

3.8 Qualitative Data Collection

3.8.1 Procedure

The initial contact was made with the office of the municipal manager go GTM to obtain a letter of permission to conduct interviews with municipal officials and the request was referred to the Human Resource department for acknowledgement and for checks. A letter of request by the researcher was sent to the HR department upon request with all the research information stating the aim of the research and the kind of questions and information needed from various officials. After few days’ permission to conduct research was granted to the researchers via a letter signed by the municipal manager, dated 25 March 2019 sent via email with the supervisor copied in the email. Immediately after the permission was obtained various officer in the Communication and Public Participation with the letters and questions to be answered during the interviews. Dates with different officials were set to conduct the interviews. Initially, the researcher aimed to interviews official such as the executive councillors like the Mayor, but due to the busy schedule, the people in the office of the mayor handled the
interview on his behalf. The very same process was undertaken in the office of the Public Participation Manager, the assistant manager handled the interviews on behalf of the office as the manager was attending to other things during the time of the interview. However, with the Department of Communication and Marketing, the manager and his team were available for the interviews.

A brief meeting with the councillor who is the political head of the village was arranged to discuss the research project, upon meeting with the councillor he assisted a lot in providing names and contact details of some of the key stakeholders in the community who will be very helpful to the research. The councillor also organised a joint meeting with all stakeholder to make it easier for the researcher to interview them and have access to them as some are difficult to find. The induna who is also the traditional head of the village was also consulted and briefed about the intent of the study and what the research seeks to do, although he was very busy at the time he agrees to meet and be interviewed. Members of the community were also approached and letter of research information and the interview guide were given to them. Most of the community leaders and members were interviewed in their own homes.

3.8.2 Instrument: Semi-Structured interviews

The researcher employed semi-structured interviews though a face-face method to collect data from the selected stakeholders of Greater Tzaneen Municipality. Semi-structured interviews comprised of pre-planned questions to cover the scope of the research by the researcher and use open-ended question (Flick, 2015:140). Despite the fact that they use pre-planned questions like structured interviews, semi-structured interviews do not stick to the original question, they allow for deviation and follow up question by the researcher to the interviewee (Fox, 2009:6). Face-face interviews are useful to collect rich quality data and provide a subjective deeper understanding of a phenomenon from the participants (Alsaawi, 2014:164), they also provide the researcher with an opportunity to correct misunderstandings and clarify questions to the interviewee. The use of this method to collect data will enable the researcher to even explore more topics related to the phenomenon in question and gain more rich information from the interviewees, as it will allow them more space to respond to
question in their own terms and more extensively as Edwards & Holland (2013:140) articulate. Twenty interviews were conducted with different groups.

This was an exploratory study, therefore the use of semi-structured interviews allowed the researcher to gain more insights into the issues under scrutiny. The use of semi-structured interviews also allowed the researcher to probe more information from the participants and some clarification on issues that seemed to be confusing. Flexibility in this case allowed for a room for learning more about the phenomenon of stakeholder engagement, the different interpretations and understandings the of stakeholders’ roles.

3.8.2.1 Interview guide

Three, interview guides were used in the collection of data via semi-structured interviews. One guide for community members and is comprised of questions aimed at understanding the role of this stakeholder group in the process of stakeholder engagement; how they perceived their own municipality and other stakeholders and ultimately how they perceived the process of stakeholder engagement in the service delivery process of GTM. The guide for ordinary community members had questions relating to the public participation, communication methods used to communicate with the municipality and with other key stakeholders, protests, public participation and their views on municipal service delivery. The second interview guide was for councillors as political heads of these communities, to understand their views of stakeholder engagement and their involvement in this process as well as mechanisms and methods they employ to facilitate this process as well their views of public participation. The third guide for municipal managers in different departments of GTM in order to understand their views, experiences and role in the process of stakeholder engagement, the methods they employ to facilitate this process as well as the processes involved in getting the community to participate in the municipal decision-making.

3.8.2.2 Conducting the interviews: Environment and the relationship with the interviewees.
Most of the interviews especially with the community members of their leaders were conducted in their homes as there was no a place to conduct them, but what is more interesting was most interviewees were very much comfortable to have the interviews in the places they are familiar with. With many of the community members including some of the leaders, the interviews served as a platform to voice their concerns and had faith that more of the interventions like the current research are important to make their lives better. What made the environment friendlier and easier was that most of the people knew the research and were eager to engage more. In most cases, interviewees would resist being involved in the process, but in the case of the current study the mood was very welcoming and the participation was very good and effective.

Contrary to the community interviews, the environment with the municipal officials was very different, they had to maintain the image of the municipality and stick to the scripts. However, most of them were very welcoming and friendlier than one would expect in a government institution. In some cases, there were some barriers in terms of the researcher is treated as an outsider and certain information not clarified. Another big advantage was the fact that the researcher is a resident of GTM and this made it easier for officials to relate and demonstrate certain information. Having a common understanding of the area and some problems in Tzaneen made it easier for both officials and the researcher to relate to certain issues.

As for the relationship between the interviewer and the interviewee; the researcher could relate easily to certain issues and is aware of some of the things made it very easy for interviewees to relate with the researcher. However, most of the interviewees especially the elderly saw this as an intention that could help them with some of the issues they have. This was evident and supported by a constant statement made to the researcher by these people, they encouraged the researcher to conduct and write the findings and give them to the local authority to implement what they suggested. Given the seriousness of service delivery, most of the interviewees were very keen to share their experience during the interviews. The participants saw their participation more than a research activity rather as a very important exercise that could help improve relationships with the municipality and their councillors. The environment was very encouraging to the researcher to continue interacting more with the interviewees.
3.8.3 Recording the and transcribing interviews

In order to keep a record of what the participants were saying during the interview process the interviews were recorded using an electronic device and later transcribed into words for analysis. Each interview took about 30-40 minutes and were all recorded. Each interview saved separately and transcribed. Some interviews conducted in Sepedi and Xitsonga and translated into English.

3.9 Data Analysis

3.9.1 Thematic Content analysis

The researcher employed thematic analysis to analyse the data collected for the study at hand. Braun and Clarke (2006:6), describe thematic analysis as “a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns and themes within data”. The researcher will employ this method to identify, themes and patterns within the data collected through interviews with different stakeholders of GTM. Vaismoral, Turunen & Bondas (2013:400), articulate that thematic content analysis is a reliable and independent method useful for qualitative research. Similarly, Braun & Clarke (2013:121), articulate that thematic content analysis is reliable and useful because it is suitable for a variety of research interests, variety of research questions, used for both small and large scale of data and, can produce either theory or data-driven analyses.

Vaismoral et al (2013:400) articulate that thematic analysis is very useful in answering the question relating to how people feel about the event, their perception and views or a specific service or procedure. Similarly, Braun and Clarke (2006:7) argue that thematic analysis does not only provides the researcher with a high level of flexibility, but also “purely qualitative, detailed, and nuanced account of data”. The thematic analysis also extends beyond mere identification of common themes to the rest of the interview. It provides the researcher with an opportunity to identify new information in the data being analysed, Vaismoral et al (2013:400). While in communication research content analysis help researchers to be able to examine and explore question which deals with who says what, to whom, with what effect, thematic analysis assists in the reporting identification, analysis and reporting of themes within the data, Braun and Clarke (2006:7). Thematic analysis was employed in this study to help the researcher
understand how different stakeholders in GTM perceived the engagement mechanisms employed by the municipality to involve them in decision-making and how this can be improved to improve their services and their lives.

3.9.2 Conducting thematic content analysis

3.9.2.1 Approach: Inductive approach

This was an exploratory study aimed at exploring different mechanisms adopted by GTM to engage with different stakeholders and how communities as a stakeholder perceived this process. Although studies in public participation as one of the engaging processes by the government with the people have been conducted in recent years, little was done to explore how stakeholder engagement enhances public participation. Hence this study employed an exploratory approach, which according to Burnard et al (2008:429) can be used if little is known about the phenomenon. Drawing from this background, the current study adopted the inductive approach in the data analysis process. When following the inductive approach, the researcher analyses the data with no or little theory or structure to guide the analysis process rather uses the data as a frame of reference to derive the structure of analysis, Saunders and Thornhill, (2012). However, these authors also argue that an inductive process does not inhibit the researcher from using theories to formulate research questions and objectives, rather uses the collected data to build theory using the experiences of the participants to draw conclusions. The inductive approach is bottom-up and the researcher needs to understand the individual experiences in order to construct alternative realities and to draw inferences.

3.9.3 Categorising the data

Once the data transcribed, it has to be categorised into categories by the researcher. Burnard et al (2008:429) state, “Interview transcripts, field notes and observations provide a descriptive account of the data, but they do not provide explanations. They further articulate that is the researcher who had to make sense of the collected data by interpreting and exploring the data. Part of making sense of the data involves categorising the data into meaningful categories guided by the focus of the study. In
categorising the data the researcher followed these steps in figure 3.9.3:

1. The researcher reading through the interviews transcripts, and makes notes in the margins and short phrases.
2. Compile a list of categories with descriptions informed by the research theoretical and analytical framework.
3. Look for categories which overlap with others and compile a shorter list of categories.
4. The lists of categories is then used to devise the interviews and each is allocated its own coloured highlighter.
5. Each section is cut from the interviews and pasted in the particular category for analysis.

Although this process was time-consuming, it was necessary to ensure each unit of the data is places within and category to build what Burnard et al (2008:430) call a folder that can be used to write the findings report. Data categorisation is very important in the process of thematic analysis to help the researcher identify themes emerging from the raw data and make sense of it and attach meaning to it.

3.10 Ethical Consideration in conducting interviews

The researcher adhered to the ethical considerations stipulated in the Academic and Ethical research Code of Conduct of the University of Johannesburg. The researcher requested permission from the ethics committee indicating the purpose of the study. The researcher also requested permission from the municipal manager of Greater Tzaneen Municipality to have access to municipal officials, organisational information and interact with participants from different departments needed for the purpose of the study. Informed consent letters were also be given to all participants. Identities and names of all participants and their responses will be kept confidentially and will not appear in the final document of this study. Other important ethical considerations which the researcher will adhere to as proposed by De Vos et al. (2011) include voluntary participation, privacy and confidentiality of respondents’ identities.
The information collected from the corresponded will be scanned and stored in a file with a password and only the researcher will have access to. Participants were briefed prior to the interviews about the purpose of the study and why it conducted and that participation is voluntary and there are no incentives for participation. Other ethical consideration included giving assurance that the respondents will not be subjected to any physical or emotional harm as a result of their participation in this study. The researcher treated the respondents are human beings, rather than objects or research tools.

3.11 Generalisation and verification of qualitative research data

This was a qualitative study conducted with an intent to understand the subjective experiences and opinions of the different stakeholders of GTM towards the stakeholder engagement. Qualitative research projects are not conducted to arrive at a general conclusion of a phenomenon, rather understand the phenomenon from a specific context and guided by the experience of certain people, Leedy and Oomrod (2013:45). Guided by this notion, it must be carefully understood that the stakeholders have chosen in two wards i.e. 16 and 18 and different groups representatives do not represent the general views of the people of Tzaneen, but those of the people interviewed. Although they may share similar problems and opportunities, as well as location and same municipality, they have a different view on how the world should be, hence their suggestion of a successful stakeholders engagement methods and process were different.

However, Burnard et al (2008:431) also deal with an important of conducting qualitative research, the issue of verification of the analysed data and findings. The focus rest of the facts that qualitative data analyse is more subjective when compared to quantitative data analysis, therefore to reduce the level of business there should be some sort of verification process. These two methods of verifying data analysed through qualitative means are the researcher may use the responded who is also a qualitative researcher to check to verify the analysed data and how the researcher had reflected on what has been said, Burnard et al (2008:431). The second method is when the researcher returned to the participants to ask for a careful reading of the interview transcripts or the analysed data for them to validate the data. However, these
two methods again are not objective, firstly the responded may hold a different view and might not have the knowledge of what occurred during the collection of data, and secondly returning to participants may not be effective, as they would have changed their minds and perception on issues under scrutiny. The current study employed both methods to verify the data, firstly a responded who was briefed about the study was asked to check the transcripts and verify the data and secondly, the researcher returned to some participants to go through the transcripts to verify what has been written. Although with the second method some participants wanted to add more information of certain things they feel they did not elaborate more in the interview, an opportunity was given to strengthen the data and to give it its highest richness.

3.12 Quality data criteria

In order to ensure the trustworthiness and rigour of the study, the researcher adopted the following quality criteria elements:

Credibility- The researcher ensured credibility by making sure that the research questions, the study design, the data collection methods and the approaches to data analysis were appropriate and logical to produce believable and credible results, Bless, Smith & Sithole, (2013:45).

Dependability- Bless et al, (2013:45), describe dependability as a criterion which requires the searcher to describe thoroughly the research strategy followed in the study. The searcher described and explained how the data was collected, what processes were followed, what changes took place during the collection and analysis of data and how this was managed, how data was coded and analysed. This was done to ensure that other researchers are able to use the same methods to conduct similar studies on the same topic.

Transferability- transferability deal with how the results of the study can be transferred to other contexts and settings, Bless et al, (2013:45). However, the degree to which the transferability of the results to another context or settings depend on the researcher who will make the transfer, (De Vos, Strydom, Fouche & Delport, 2011:420). The researcher will explain the context in which the data was collected,
describe the methods used to collect the data, and analysed with reference to the setting under scrutiny.

Confirmability- Confirmability is an alternative to the traditional assumption of objectivity in quantitative research. However, in qualitative research every researcher brings in a unique way to study a phenomenon, therefore confirmability rests on the researcher who is conducting a different study to be able to incorporate the results of another study, (De Vos et al, 2011:420).

3.13 Conclusion

This chapter outlined the research methodology which comprised of the research approach followed which is qualitative, the characteristic of this approach, the philosophical research paradigm and the different of elements the interpretivism paradigm, the descriptive case study research design, as well the participants and the sample of the participants. This chapter also outlined semi-structured interviews as the data collection tool and how data was collected. Thematic analysis was also discussed as a data analysis method adopted in the study and how the collected raw data were analysed to give it meaning. The ethical consideration, as well as the quality criteria of the study, were also discussed in the methodology chapter. The next chapter focuses on data presentation and analysis.
CHAPTER FOUR: STAKEHOLDERS’ INSIGHTS OF GREATER TZANEEN MUNICIPALITY’S STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT PROCESS.

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines the presentation and analysis of data emanating from the data interviews conducted in Khujwana village and Greater Tzaneen Municipality town under Mopani District in Limpopo Province. The data is presented in the following structure; demographic information of the participants, understanding of stakeholder engagement, stakeholder engagement methods and stakeholder engagement challenges. Other constructs presented in the chapter include stakeholders of GTM at the municipal level, ward and community level, the role of the councillors in the engagement process and consultation process at ward level. The chapter also presented data on community perceptions of GTM and the engagement process, methods, municipality and councillors. The themes emerged from the data were, stakeholder engagement in GTM, the politicisation of the stakeholder engagement process, councillor as communication intermediaries, protest as an engagement tool and lack of understanding governance processes. These themes were analysed in relations to the literature and the theoretical framework of the current study and findings discussed.

4.2 DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION OF THE PARTICIPANTS

Table 4.2.1 Municipal Managers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Position in GTM</th>
<th>Years of service</th>
<th>Years lived in Tzaneen</th>
<th>Place of residence in Tzaneen</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PM1</td>
<td>Acting Communication and Marketing Manager</td>
<td>13 YEARS</td>
<td>My whole life</td>
<td>Nkowankowa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PM2</td>
<td>Assistant Communication Manager</td>
<td>9 years since 2010</td>
<td>All my life 32 years</td>
<td>Medipart ext 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant</td>
<td>Position in GTM</td>
<td>Ward</td>
<td>Years of service</td>
<td>Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PC1</td>
<td>Ward Councillor</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Second term</td>
<td>ANC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PC2</td>
<td>Ward Councillor</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>First-term</td>
<td>ANC</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 4.2.3. Community Members

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>WARD</th>
<th>YEARS LIVED IN GTM</th>
<th>EMPLOYMENT STATUS</th>
<th>AGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P1</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>Employed</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P2</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P3</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P4</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P5</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>Employed</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P6</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P7</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>Pensioner</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P8</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>Employed</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P9</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>Self-employed</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.3 UNDERSTANDING OF STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT CONCEPT BY GREATER TZANEEN MANAGERS.

This section of this chapter covers the understanding of the stakeholder engagement concept in GTM, looking at its role in society and in municipal processes and functions. The section also outlines communication and public participation mechanisms involving the community in the decision-making process. The section also covers the challenges outlined by managers in GTM engagement process.

TABLE 4.3.1.

<p>| | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P10</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Employed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P11</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>Unemployed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P12</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>Pensioner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P13</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Unemployed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P14</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Unemployed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P15</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Unemployed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Understanding of stakeholder engagement by GTM managers

- Going out to communities and listening to their problems.
- Involvement of stakeholders in the decision-making process.
- As public participation
- As communication
- Improve relationships with stakeholders
- Improved reputation and image of the municipality
- Contribute to the strategic intent of the municipality.
- Reduce tensions and riots
- Promote inclusivity in decision making
- Promote democracy
Contribute to good governance
Contribute to value creation of the organisation.
Alignment of goals and needs of stakeholders and the origination.

Table 4.3.1 shows that managers in GTM understand stakeholder engagement as the process whereby the municipality as a public service delivery entity goes out to meet with all key role players listen to their grievances and needs and find ways to respond to these needs. This supported by the sentiments echoed by PM1 who said; “….we use it as an institution to go to our communities and hear what they have to say, what kind of service need and level of quality…”. The data also indicates that the engagement process in GTM perceived by managers as consultative and collaborative public participation mechanism of involving the key role players in the service delivery decision-making process in GTM with an intent of involving everyone in the process. PM3 said that:

“…it brings all of us together as the municipality and our stakeholder to engage and find ways to our problems”

GTM managers understand stakeholder engagement as a communication process aimed at creating awareness about different initiatives and programmes of GTM. The managers also explain communication as an engagement method of educating the people of Tzaneen about different municipal processes and structure to help them make informed decisions. Managers also use communication to inform communities about the decision the municipality take on behalf of the people.

PM1 stated that:

“to create awareness of different programmes, to provide information for our community to develop”

Managers also emphasised that stakeholder engagement play a critical role in the service delivery process by providing the municipality with insight into the expectation of the people.
PM1 said:

“We use it as an institution to go to our community and hear what they have to say, what kind of service need and level of quality…”

The literature and theory explains stakeholder engagement as the process where the organisation initiate a process of bringing all interested groups together to understand their needs and ways in which these can be attended to, (Shabangu & Oksiutycz, 2018; Rowarlingston and Cheung, 2008, Matshe, 2009, Mngoma 2010 and Mosotho 2012.)

Managers also indicated that if Stakeholder engagement plans and strategies implemented well by the municipality can contribute to building good relations with different key role players; promote inclusivity and alignment of goals between GTM and its stakeholders. In a municipal context like GTM, the managers demonstrated that if stakeholder engagement can help promote democracy and participation of minority groups and ordinary people. PM1

“Public participation is whereby we as municipality engage pour people in decision making whether is budget issues or project, programme we have, there are programmes for youth, children, women…”

The views of the managers also expressed a view that stakeholder engagement as the participation of community that can also help to prevent conflict and riots and contribute significantly to creating value of GTM.

PM3 stated:

“reduce riots and protest, build strong relationships and environment that is workable.”

Managers perceived stakeholder engagement as a more participatory and communication process aimed at solving service delivery issues. Another difference between what the literature provided in comparison with the views of the managers is that stakeholder engagement is in a municipal context of the GTM, is perceived as a development and public participation process aimed at improving people’s rather than a process of just bringing together all interested groups together.
The literature supports the insights provided by the managers of GTM on the role stakeholder engagement in an organisation as improvement of governance, reputation, and trust from key role players and achievement of all strategic goals set for the organisation, Gooyert et al 2017, Ali 2015, and Stelling et al 2017. However, managers extended the role of stakeholder engagement to the promotion of democracy and prevention of conflict between the municipality and key role players.

The analysis above revealed that Stakeholder stakeholder engagement in GTM context mostly used as a consultation mechanism between the municipality and the stakeholders. PM1 said:

“…each and every ward there must be a consultation or public participation…”

The analysis also revealed that the understanding of stakeholder engagement by GTM manager is limited to as a public participation process, service delivery problem-solving mechanism and communication process. PM2 stated:

“When we engage our stakeholders we are able to know what they like and what they don’t like, they are able to us what the problems are, and we are able to provide services people want…”

The study also found that stakeholder engagement in GMT is a passive process where the municipality takes charge of the process and prescribe which methods and issues to discuss during this process. PM1:

“We meet all those stakeholders on a regular basis on a quarterly basis, we also have outreach programmes, your imbizos where we meet our stakeholders.”

The study also found that stakeholder engagement in GTM is more of a reactive process rather than the proactive process, hence the process is characterised by problems solving strategies aimed at addressing people’s grievances.

4.4 Stakeholder engagement methods used by GTM to engage different groups.

The managers mentioned the Integrated Development Plan, Imbizo; strategic sessions ward meetings, social media, and traditional media, loudhailers, and community visits as methods at their disposal to engage different groups. However,
managers had different views as to which methods are effective and which ones are not. Of the three managers, two demonstrated that community visits and Imbizo are the most effective methods because the municipality gets an opportunity to address the different group in a single session. PM2 stated that:

“Public participation meetings are the most effective ones because you engage directly with the community leaders”

In contrast, contrary to council debates which only cater to politicians, and strategic sessions which may cater to certain groups. Integrated development plans, ward meetings, community meetings and Imbizos cater even for ordinary men and women in the community.

The third manager said argued that the effective methods is are IDP and the ward meetings because people meet with their councillor and municipal representatives to specifically deal with issues affecting them directly unlike an Imbizo, which may cover the issues of the whole municipality and not a specific ward.

PM3 also stated:

“The community meetings are most effective because they are every original discussion and own the space.”

According to participants most of the methods used by the municipality to engage with different stakeholder are not effective because they are seasonal and some of them do not accommodate other groups. For instance, the study established that IDP, Public participation meetings, ward meetings and a municipal visit to communities are conducted either monthly or quarterly and this in some cases may fail to address immediate issues.

4.5 STAKEHOLDERS OF GREATER TZANEEN MUNICIPALITY

The managers mentioned community, councillors, district municipality, service providers, SANCO, municipal employees, tribal authority and political parties as a stakeholder of GTM. Managers mentioned that groups need to be registered in order to get recognition as a legitimate stakeholder of GTM. However, managers seemed to follow the old traditional way of classifying stakeholders as a primary and secondary
stakeholder that create problems due to the heterogeneity nature of stakeholders. managers treat stakeholders as static and belonging to a single category. The study also found that the GTM formalise the identification of stakeholders by requesting a group to sign up in order to be recognised as stakeholders.

4.6 CHALLENGES OF STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT IN GMT

This section covers the challenges of stakeholder engagement in GTM with emphasis on participation and communication and the conduct of those responsible to implement the engagement process.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenges</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Managers views on stakeholder engagement challenges in GTM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Political interference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Lack of media engagement by politicians</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Lack of transparency and feedback on community issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Fake news and disinformation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Lack of strategy evaluation by managers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Lack of education from communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Language diversity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Local media ineffectiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Lack of understanding of municipal governance by stakeholders</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Lack of different stakeholder roles by some stakeholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Councillors not holding a meeting with stakeholders</td>
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</table>

Table 4.6 shows stakeholder engagement challenges mentioned by the managers in GTM. All the managers said that politics and interference by the political head are the main problems that affect the engagement process negatively. Managers demonstrated that politicians do not draw the line between governance issues and political issues although municipal decisions rely heavily on politicians. PM3 also said:

“We are a municipality working with politicians who sometimes want to interfere in our work”
The respondents indicated that politicians do not use the local media to engage communities through them and this causes problems and pave a way for fake news and disinformation. PM2 said that:

"We also have to deal with disinformation and fake news on social media even outside social media"

Managers also said that in the era of technology, the rise of social media is very difficult to control and manage what goes to the public, and most of the fake news are uncastrated for political point-scoring by politicians who may not like the ruling party and even inter political fights within the ruling elite. Another challenge that relates to social media is the cost of data and connectivity that makes it difficult for stakeholders especially in deep rural areas to engage. PM2 said that:

“Data cost is also a challenge for us to use social media to engage”

The data also shows that the lack of public education by the municipality contributes to the lack of understating of governance issues and different roles of stakeholders in GTM. PM1 said:

“It goes down to education, not actually higher education, but just general education for people to understand our mandate”

The data also shows that the use of English in communication messages with different groups is also one of the challenges given the diverse nature of GTM and most of the community members cannot read English. PM2 said:

“English is the issue man”

Another challenge that emerged from the analysis is the councillors not holding meetings with communities as required. The data shows that councillors do not hold meetings to report issues of service delivery and project process, which create anger and result in protest from communities. The data also shows that there is no evaluation mechanism on engagement methods and communication channels by the managers.

PM1 also said:
“…To be honest I will not necessarily say there was a point where we checked how effectively we have implemented because is more like our day to day work…”

4.7 COUNCILLORS UNDERSTANDING OF THE STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

This section presents councillor’ views on stakeholder engagement process at ward level. The table below outlines the summary of councillors’ views of the process of stakeholder engagement and its role in the ward and community development.

TABLE 4.7.1 Councillors’ views on stakeholder engagement at the ward level.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Councillors’ view of Stakeholder engagement at ward level</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Summary of the view of councillors views of the stakeholder engagement process at ward level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Public participation method</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Relationship management method</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Problem-solving mechanism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Service delivery</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Consultative mechanism</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Collaboration method</td>
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</table>

The councillors seemed to understand stakeholder engagement as more of a public participation process in which councillors goes out to the communities to listen to the needs of the community. PC2 echoed that:

“It is when we bring everyone in and we listen to their views before we decide anything and this is handled by SANCO chair”

Councillors also understand stakeholder engagement as a method of building relationships where from time to time they meet with the different stakeholders to discuss issues of public importance and allow the community to participate in the process and find problems together. PC1 said:
“We use this opportunity to relate with my community and everyone in and outside the ward”

Councillors also explained stakeholder engagement as service delivery machinery, where the councillor and the ward committee initiate a process of collaborating with different stakeholders to find solutions. Councillors also explained stakeholder engagement as a method they use to consult with key role players before decisions taken by the authority at the ward and council level of the municipality. PC2 stated that:

“We use this process to get the views of our people before we make decisions for e.g. on by-laws”

Councillors perceive stakeholder engagement as more of a community engagement process that contributes significantly on service delivery. PC1 said:

“…is a process of collaborating with our community to plan for service and how to deliver…”

The study also found that councillors’ understanding of stakeholder engagement as an event-based and once-off event rather than an ongoing process which must happen whenever a need arises.

4.8 stakeholders who work with councillors in the wards

Councillors mentioned the community, Community workers program, SANCO, ward committee, headmen/indunas and their own parties and other political parties as stakeholders they work with at ward level. Despite the understanding by both councillor as to who are the stakeholders, PC1 has a reservation of considering political parties, especially opposition as stakeholders. PC1 accuse some political parties of being an absent stakeholder because they do not attend meetings and forums and only show when there is a crisis in a form of protest. PC1 said:

“…political parties are not stakeholders but will always refer to themselves as a stakeholder, but they are not a stakeholder…”

PC1 also stated that;
“…some political parties only come in whenever there are protests and you do not see them after…”

The councillors also seemed to treat the community as one group without an understanding of the heterogeneity nature of stakeholders in a single category. PC1 said:

“…I work with the community as whole…”

This limited understanding presents a number of challenges when trying to resolve the issues of the community and trying the best way of engaging them. In addition, see their own political parties as dominant stakeholders. Councillors also see a community as dependents and demanding stakeholder rather than a group that can make a significant contribution to the well-being of the ward.

Councillors see stakeholders as people they serve rather than the people they have to work with the provision of services. The study also found that councillors treat community as one category without acknowledging the different group within the bigger group. Councillors also see those who hold different views as distractors rather than stakeholders.

4.9 THE ROLE OF THE COUNCILLOR IN THE ENGAGEMENT AND THE CONSULTATION PROCESS AT A WARD LEVEL:

The councillors described their role as that of a mediator, representative, organiser and the leaders. As a mediator, the councillor facilitates engagement and communication between the municipality and the communities. PC1 said:

“I am the middleman between the municipality and the ward”

The councillors described their role as that of a mediator, representative, organiser and the leaders. As a mediator, the councillor facilitates engagement and communication between the municipality and the communities. PC1 said:

“I am the middleman between the municipality and the ward”

The councillors said that they communicate municipality messages to the people and vice versa. The councillors also said, as the representative of the ward they speak on
behalf of the wards they represent in the council, although they were elected under the banner they have to represent the views of everyone. PC2 also said:

“Although I am a member of the ANC, I am the councillor for the whole ward their council representative”

Councillors also said they play a crucial role in mobilising people for municipal events in their wards. The councillors described the role of the ward committee as a supporting structure to the ward councillor. Councillors said committee help them with mobilisation and engagement of different groups during IDP and other public participation programmes.

4.10 Stakeholder engagement challenges at a ward level

Table 4.10.1 below presents the councillors’ views on the stakeholder engagement challenges at ward level. The challenges relate to public participation meeting attendance, information dissemination, politics and stakeholder roles.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Councillors views on challenges</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Summary of the councillors views on stakeholder engagement challenges</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Lack of participation from members of the community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Politics, disinformation and fake news</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Impenitence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Lack of stakeholder role by other stakeholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Lack of understanding of municipality process by other stakeholders.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Councillors said that the biggest challenge is people not attending ward meetings, IDP meetings and feedback sessions. They complained about the lack of interest by the community to attend these forums and blamed this on political influences. PC1 said:

“Our people are so ignorant; you call a meeting they do not come”
Councillors also cited politics and disinformation as the second major problem in the engagement process in the ward. Councillors accused opposition parties of spreading false information to the community that affect the legitimacy as the ruling party. Councillors also accused their political rivals of using community problems and misfortunes to spread false information. PC2 stated:

“Our political rivals spread wrong things about us and this cause problem”

Councillors also said that another process is the lack of understanding of municipal processes by community members. PC1 emphasised that people are impatient and want services to be delivered whenever they request. PC1 said:

“…people do not understand how the process and are so impatient…”

Councillors also said that some of the stakeholders do not understand their roles and the role of other stakeholders, which create a lot of misunderstanding. Councillors referred to the water supply issue, they said most of the community do not understand that GTM is not a water supplier municipality, but the district is. Councillors said that community will still demand water from the GTM and every time explanations provided, they are not willing to accept them.

The study found that most of the stakeholder challenges relate to political responsibility and organisational structures and that councillors have to play a double agent role that does not always work out well. The study also established that little is done to educate people about municipal governance structures and process.

4.11 Community Perception of Greater Tzaneen Municipality and its Stakeholder Engagement process.

This section presents the perceptions of the community on Greater Tzaneen Municipality. The perceptions related to the leadership, services, municipal processes, municipality awareness and response to community problems. Table 4.11.1 presents the summary of community views about GTM and their councillors.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community views about GTM</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Summary of Community views about GTM and their councillors.</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Politicians do not care about the community
They employ friends and family
They only care about themselves
The ignorant
Councillor does not listen to the people
Councillors do not involve people in the decisions.

Majority of the participants accused the councillors and the municipality of ignorance, corruption, absence and cadre deployment. Community members accused the councillors and the municipality of ignoring their needs and demands and giving them what they did not ask for. P5 said:

“Well I will say they are not doing enough, some of the things just happen without our knowledge”

P6 also observed:

“…But my problem is that they do not want to listen but that is the work of politicians…”

Another participant accused the municipality of corruption and not providing the necessary services. Most of the participant referred to the unfinished water project in Khujwana that caused protest and closing of the village main road for days. P10 said:

“I do not like the ANC government, they are so ignorant and selfish and corrupt”

P3 stated:

“last time they said there was a project to bring water to pump water from the Ntsawanwisi dam”

Other participants accused the councillors and the municipality of cadre deployment in community projects and municipal jobs. Community members accused the councillor of hiring people from his party in community projects. P5 observed:
“…another problem with our municipality is cadre deployment and friendships, they do not care about others, they employment family and friends in projects…”

P5 and P8 also accused the councillor and the municipality of not involving them in the designing making process. P8 said:

“They do not ask us what we want and do what they like”

P5 said:

“…they do not involve people…”

The study found that the relationship between the councillors and the community is tense. P7 and P13 accused the councillor of not reporting their issues to the municipal council. P7 stated:

“The councillor is sabotaging us; I doubt if he reports our issues to the municipality….”

P13 also said:

“…He just goes to eat food in the council meeting and not report anything and they will not force him…”

This is evident in the responses and their perception of their leadership. The also revealed that there is tension between councillors and other political parties in the ward. P5 said:

“…if you’re an EFF member you cannot just to the ANC councillor because he is likely not to listen to you…”

4.12 Community perceptions of Stakeholder engagement.

This section presents the perception of the community participant on the stakeholder engagement process in GTM.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community views on the stakeholder engagement process</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Summary of the views of the community on the stakeholder engagement process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• An effective process for the community to raise their voices</td>
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</table>
One participant seemed to have hope in the role of stakeholder engagement as a participatory process that allows them to have a voice. These few participants community members said stakeholder engagement IDP and ward committee, in particular, allows them to have an opportunity to raise their concern on issues of public importance. P1 said

“Well, my view, I think what the public participation in terms of planning so far they doing well, for example, if there is meeting or want to hold a meeting regarding a certain issue”

P1 also observed:

“… I think they are very effective because you will notice if you compare with some other communities in terms of service delivery is much better”

Participants also said that engagement is a passive process and have no role to play rather than being passive participants while the politicians do all the talking. Participant 4 also described Community members also called this process as shop list for councillors who do it for compliance and procedure with no impact on their development. Participants 4 stated:

“…the engagement is poor, when they come to communities they come with pre-determined objective, they are just bypassing time and for the procedure. It is very passive…”

Participants 5 who is a member of the ward committee described the process as exclusive of ordinary people and the councillor of dominating the process. P5 stated that:
“they do not involve people, I work with them and we find it difficult to answer people’s questions in those report back meetings”

P5 also said:

“…some of the things are done and I do not know, I just see them on the reports by the councillor…”

The community went described the stakeholder engagement as further to say that, the engagement process is useless because nothing happens after the meetings. Participants Communities also accused their own community members of not allowing others to criticise the government in these forums. P12 said:

“…nothing happens. IDP, That thing is useless, its just talk show nothing happens…”

Two participants, P10 and P11 accused the municipality political heads of using the engagement process to promote party policies and preventing other people from criticising the government.

P10 also said:

“I don’t think it is useful, we can’t be allowed to criticise the government they will say we are negative”

P11 also observed:

“…This thing is guided by the ANC policies and they want to enforce it to us, so it is useless for some of us…”

The study found that participants most of the community do believe in the engagement process as a mechanism to help resolve their service delivery issues. It was also found that communities have a negative perception of the process because of the politicization of the process led by councillors. The study also found that the reliance on councillors to be in charge of the engagement process give rise to a high level of the negative perception of the participation process.
4.13 Community perceptions of stakeholder engagement methods used by GTM.

The community mentioned councillors, IDP meetings, ward meeting, community meetings, protest, Imbizo and posters as methods they use to engage and communicate with their councillor and municipality. Majority of the participants' community members said they rely on the councillor as the main communication and engagement tool with the municipality. P1 said:

“…councillor is my main man; I rely on him to take our message to the council and the mayor…”

P3 also said:

“…we elected the councillor so we rely on him to communicate with the bigger people”

However, other community members accused the councillor of not reporting their needs to the municipality. P6 said:

“…that man just go to council to drink tea; he does report the correct things”

P7 also said:

“..The councillor is sabotaging us; I doubt if he reports our issues to the municipality”

The second most cited method of engagement by community members was the protest. Community members said the protest is the only method the mayor and the council listen to when other method fails. A participant said a protest attracts attention because the politicians are scared of bad publicity and to lose elections. P8 said:

“…I put my hope on protest man, my best engagement tool”

P8 also said:

“…if you want to be heard go to the street and protest…”

However, other community members criticised protests and accused those with political ambitions of using them as campaigning opportunities. They demonstrated
that politicians even within the ruling elite use protest to mobilize support for their political ambitions. P2 said:

“…some of these protest like the one you saw last week are not genuine, they are used to get political power”

P1 also said:

“…some of these protests are used to fight political battles…”

P11 also said:

“A protest is good until it hijacked by criminals and burn community property”

Participant three and five criticised the current communication tools and suggested the municipality should use social media to engage with them. P3 said that:

“Times have changed; we need to use WhatsApp and Facebook”

P5 also said that:

“They need to use social media man we are tired of loudhailers”

The study found that participants prefer the councillor as their engagement tool to communicate on their behalf and to engage council. It has was revealed that some to communicate using public demonstrations to engage the municipality. The study also found that participants prefer social media for engagement. P2 said:

“that will be wonderful because if someone spots something or see something you can go to the WhatsApp group or you can see an act of abuse or something you can take a picture and go to WhatsApp”

4.14 Stakeholder and Public Participation challenges in community level

Community members said that in the last two meetings about water projects the meetings turned into political debates with officials not be able to control the meetings and maintain the decorum of the proceedings. P1 argued that:

“People always want to politics man, even in serious issues they want to debate”
P3 also said that:

“The big challenge is the political debates; even the councillor cannot control his own ANC people”

Other community ember accused the politicians of not being honest and postponing replies when the need to respond arise. P12 said

“The councillor does not answer our questions he always says he will get back to us”

Another community member who is part of the traditional authority argued that lack of consultation with the community makes the process of engagement useless and leaders not implementing the resolutions taken in public meetings cause problems.

P5 observed that:

“The politicians don’t tell us anything before, you just see meetings happening, but they will claim to work with us”

P1 said that stakeholder engagement challenges could be resolved by the implementation and fulfilment of the resolutions in community meetings

P2 said that:

“Implementation of resolutions is the best solution”

Community members stated that councillors should stop playing politics, provide services to the people, and implement IDP resolutions. P6 said:

“…we are tired of politics; we want to see jobs and water here…”

P5 suggests honesty and more apolitical debates as solutions to the current engagement challenges. P5 said:

“We must just be honest with people and encourage more debates that are normal and leave politics”

However, P7 suggested that voting out the current leadership and elect new people would resolve all the challenges. P7 said:
“We need to elect honest people and remove these crooks”

4.15 STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT IN GREATER TZANEEN MUNICIPALITY

Participants discussing this concept gave different views and insights on the stakeholder engagement process in GTM. Although participants explained what is the engagement they had different views on what the process entails. At the managerial level, stakeholder engagement is a process of bringing together all key role players of GTM decisions making structures in order to find solutions. PM3 said:

“…it brings all of us together as the municipality and our stakeholder to engage and find ways to our problems”

For councillors, stakeholder engagement is a consultative process characterized by councillors listening to community problems before decisions taken. PC2 said:

“It is when we bring everyone in and we listen to their views before we decide anything”

Both managers and councillors when referring refer to the community used words such as “our people, members of the public” and “residents” interchangeably. Participants in the councillors and managers groups empathized emphasised the involvement and participation of the community in the engagement process. Which is in line with the view that engagement characterised requires by dialogue among between a municipality and its different stakeholder in order to understand their needs, and facilitate problem-solving (Shabangu and Oksiutycz (2018:201, Venter and Lansberg, 2011:112). It is an inclusive two-way communication problem-solving mechanism to promote democracy, (Venter and Lansberg, 2011:112 & Public Participation Framework, 2013).

However, in reality, various problems related to engagement practice were identified. Although councillors and managers emphasised the involvement of residents in the process, community participants raised concerns about the lack of true consultation and the passive nature of the engagement processes in GTM and even not flowing the correct procedures in GTM. This is supported by sentiments said by for example P4 echoed said that:
“...the engagement is poor, when they come to communities they come with predetermined objective, they are just bypassing time and for the procedure. It is very passive...”

Community participants also painted a picture of councillors and the municipality who use the public participation process as information sessions to promote the ruling party’s policies and do not involve people in anything. P5 said:

“...they do not involve people, I work with them and we find it difficult to answer people’s questions in those report back meetings”

P11 observed that:

“...This thing is guided by the ANC policies and they want to enforce it to us, so it is useless for some of us...”

The above statements indicate that the public engagement events are not really organised with the aim of listening to the community but rather as a one-way communication by GTM officials. The study found that stakeholder engagement in GTM is reduced to an information-sharing session with councillors playing the intermediary role of gathering information on behalf of the municipality and the role of the community as to raise complaints and wait for answers. Such an approach is in contrast with the dialogical nature of engagement, which requires listening, positive regard for the other party and willingness to change (De Bussy 2010:133). Perhaps the biggest issue is the fact that the various public meetings are not organised with the aim to reach the agreement but merely to provide a forum for informing about what has already happened or to allow the community state their concerns without explaining how they will be resolved. The community participants suggest there should be more transparency about how the issues previously raised are addressed and consultation because it would create a good working environment and brings trust among stakeholders. Of the four groups of participants the shortcomings in community, involvement in resolving common problems and participation was one of the recurring themes.
4.16 COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND PARTICIPATION

The councillors and the managers painted the picture of a municipality that prioritise community participation in its initiatives and programs in order to promote the citizen-driven agenda. PM1 who is a manager in GTM said:

“…we use it as an institution to go to our community and hear what they have to say, what kind of service need and level of quality…”

Community participation affords ordinary men and women in the community to promote their interest and help those in power to make informed decisions, (Russel et al, 2015:2). Ideally, community participation is a process of ensuring people are involved in decisions making and have a role of play in development projects, (Motsie, 2015:16) and Tesoriero (2010:145). Therefore, a municipality that involves its community in the decisions making processes and integrates their input as part of making informed decisions likely has its decisions endorsed by the community, Suggest (2012:2). However, community members complained about the lack of involvement in the engagement process by councillors, for instance, participant five (P5) said:

“Some of the things happen and I do not know”

Participant six shared a similar view (P6) who stated that:

“…they do not want to listen but that is the work of politicians”

Participants raised concerns about the outcomes of decisions taken by councillors and municipality not reflecting their views and leave them with one option i.e. protest. For instance, participant eight (P8) said:

“…if you want to be heard go to the street and protest”

Managers and councillors also raised concerns about the unwillingness of community members to attend meetings and events that ultimately render these meetings useless. PC1 who is a councillor labelled the community as ignorant and said that:

“Our people are ignorant; you call a meeting they not come”
PM2 who is a manger also stated that:

“…they do not attend public participation meetings they only come when there is a protest…”

Participants revealed that although there is some sort of processes in place, a lack of deep and true engagement with communities act as a form of deprivation that they must respond to through a protest. Consequently, this deepens tension between the councillors and the community. Once communities feel they are deprived of their rights whether to participate or service delivery they resort to demonstrations as a way of acquiring what they are deprived, Sen & Acvi (2016:126). In this context, participants fell deprived if their right to participate in their own affairs and the only way to address this is through protests. Consequently, this creates a lot of tension between the councillors and the community. The study also found that the community on the other side do not play their part by not attending and participating in these processes.

4.17 THE POLITICISATION OF THE STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

The common theme coming of the participants’ discussion is the politicisation of the stakeholder engagement process by people with political ambitions. Municipalities are contested public organisations with political heads at the helm and therefore cannot be free from politics. Participants feel like the political factions and groupings turn to play a major role in the stakeholder engagement process and used to push certain political ideologies and narratives. For instance, PM3 said:

“We are a municipality working with politicians who sometimes want to interfere in our work”

PC2 complained that political opponents use public participation forums to spread propaganda and he stated that:

“Our political rivals spread wrong things about us and this cause problem”

One of the community participant P5 also accused the councillor of disregarding people who are not members and his party. P5 observed that:
“…If you’re an EFF member you cannot just tell the ANC councillor what do he is likely not to listen to you”

Although one of the principles of stakeholder engagement is inclusivity that also takes into account the acknowledgement of different political ideologies in public debates, Public Participation Framework (2013:31). Participants complained that the public participation forums are turned into political debates forums that compromise the strategic intent of the forum. In the context of SA, communities are still recovering from the injustices of the apartheid and at often times, no debate in society can never be apolitical even if it strives for the public good (Mathebula 2016 and Mphehle 2012). The study revealed that the stakeholder engagement process will not be free from politics since a municipality is by far a political institution and therefore politics will always influence decisions and drive public discourse. The study established that the politicisation of public participation forums limits the level of participation and constructive debates.

4.18. COUNCILLORS AS COMMUNICATION INTERMEDIARIES

Although participants mentioned posters, loudhailers, ward meetings, Imbizo, SMS, council debates and IDP meetings as communication methods, there was too much reliance on councillors to facilitate the communication process between the municipality and the communities and vice versa. For instance, participant one (P1) stated that:

“…councillor is my main man; I rely on him to our message to the councillor and the mayor”

Participants 3 (P3) concurred and stated that:

“…we elected the councillor so we rely on him to communicate with the bigger people”

Participant one (PC1) who is a councillor referred to himself as an intermediary who facilitates communication and engagement between the municipality and the community and he said:

“I am the middleman between the municipality and the ward”
On the other hand participant, two (PC2) who is also a councillor described his role as that of a representative of the community in the municipality council and stated that:

“Although I am a member of the ANC, I am a councillor for the whole ward and their council representative”

However, other participants accused the councillors of being ineffective and not doing enough to get the message across as expected. Participant one (PM1) who is a manager at GTM accused the councillors of not holding meetings and this affects the engagement process and ultimately stir community anger. PM1 said:

“Our biggest challenge is related to councillors not holding meetings with communities as required that is the problem we have”

Other participant accused the councillor of not reporting community issues to the council and this cause problem in the community. P6 said

“.That man just go to council to drink tea; he does not report correct things”

P7 shared similar sentiments and accused the councillor of sabotage. P7 stated:

“…the councillor is sabotaging us; I doubt if he reports our issues to the municipality”

This reliance on councillor to mediate on behalf of the community shaped by the participatory nature of South African democracy. In South Africa, citizens elect representative through a political party system to represent them in legislatures. Therefore, it at local government where communities feel very close to their government hence and councillors are the closest point of contact, Kocaoglu (2015:1545). The study found that despite complaints raised against the councillors, communities still rely on them to speak on their behalf and facilitate communication and engagement with the municipality. However, reliance on politicians to communicate government messages can be very problematic since they cannot separate themselves from party politics and messages often tailored to align with the political party’s views on certain issues.
4.19. PROTEST AS AN ENGAGEMENT TOOL

One of the recurring themes under the stakeholder engagement methods was a protest; participants raised different views on the use of protests to engagement those in power. On the one hand, participants argued that when all systems and methods fail, the only option left is to go to the street and protest. The pro-protest participants argued that the only language that politicians hear is protest. For instance, participants eight (P8) said that:

“If you want to be heard go to the street and protest”

P13 concurred and shared the following sentiments:

“.Protest is the only language politicians listen to”

Participants argued protest attracts media attention and politicians are scared of media scrutiny and bad publicity they respond very fast to respond to protesters demands. It seems some participants recognise the importance of using media to raise their concerns in order to attract the attention of the leaders in government. For example, P13 stated that:

“We are going to use media to expose them”

Despite all the observations made by the pro-protest participant's other participants held different views on protest. The anti-protest grouping accused politicians of using protest for political point-scoring and fight political battles. For instance, P1 said:

“…some of these protests are used to fight political battles”

P2 also argued that politicians use protest to gain political power. He stated that:

“…some of these protests like the one you saw last week are not genuine; they are used to get political power”

Another participant eleven argued that criminals use protest to loot and destroy public property. P11 stated that:

“…a protest is good until it is hijacked by criminals and burn community property”
Protest can be understood under the umbrella of social movements; explained by Porta and Diani (2006:31) as an enquiry initiated by those who feel deprived to claim what has been deprived. It also a process of empowering underprivileged groups to fight for social justice, Arbatli (2017:4). Social movements are characterised by negative claims between those in power and those who challenge the status quo, as noted by Porta & Diani (2006:32). Some of the negatives claims towards councillors and the municipality are signs of strong tension between the community and the leaders. The study found that protest is not so effective in GTM although there is an attempt to use them to address public issues.

4.20. Social Media as an alternative to the current engagement tools

A participant suggested that the integration of social media to the current media system could help improve the engagement process in GTM. Participants raised concerns about the current mediums used and lack of utilisation of the latest communication technologies by the GTM, for instance, participant three (P3) who is a member of the community stated that:

“Times have changed; we need to use WhatsApp and Facebook”

Participant 5 (P5) who is also a member of the community also said that:

“They need to use social media man we are tired of loudhailers”

One participant also suggested that the use of social media could fasten the process of reporting to community issues and thereby result in a quick response. P2 said:

“…that will be wonderful because if someone spots something or see something you can go to the WhatsApp group or you can see an act of abuse or something you can take a picture and go to WhatsApp”

Social media could provide local government with an opportunity to bring different sectors of society together in one medium, something other mediums may not be able to do, (Dozier et al (2011:151). Social media also provide municipalities with an opportunity to engage in dialogue with different groups and build a strong and vibrant local government where citizens are also content creators rather than just being
recipients of government messages, (Jatanthan 2011:14). If used appropriately, social media can also help municipalities to achieve its public participation objective i.e. consultation, information, collaboration and engagement, Averweg et al (2011:16). However, the study found that GTM uses social media as an information dissemination tool rather than an engagement tool, it is widely used for announcements and updates on events.

4.21. LACK OF UNDERSTANDING OF MUNICIPAL GOVERNANCE PROCESSES

Managers and Councillors raised concerns about the lack of understanding of governance issues to form the side of the community because of a lack of education. Participants one (PM1) argued that people do not understand the mandate of GTM and the role of the district municipality. For instance, PM1 stated:

“It goes down to education, not actually higher education, but just general education for people to understand our mandate”

PC1 who is a councillor shared the same sentiments and said:

“…people do not understand how the process and are so impatient…”

Participants complained that communities are so impatient and at times, they do even understand the municipal structures and responsibilities. For instance, PM2 gave an example with the water supply and said:

“With water is the same Tzaneen is not a water service provider but Mopani is, but they do not know they think Tzaneen is their municipality so they must get water from here.”

The participant argued that the lack of education is a contributing factor to the lack of understanding of how the municipality operates. Pm2 accused stakeholders of demonstrating even without asking how issues should be followed up. Pm2 said

“Some of these stakeholders do not understand how government works, so they will form concern groups and march in the municipality and say they want this and that..”
However, these sentiments made by manager contradict their communication objective of creating awareness on municipal programmes and information. For instance, PM1 said:

“*To create awareness of different programmes, to provide information for our community to develop*”

However, participant two (PM2) states that the municipality is not creating enough awareness campaigns and that the lack of transparency stirs tensions. MP2 said:

“…*Awareness campaigns those will help a lot…*”

If the municipality proactively created awareness of government programs, activities and processes, the challenges associated with the lack of understanding of government processes, its work or the municipalities’ mandate, would be minimised. It is clear managers do not fully understand their job description especially the educational part of it, which perpetuates misunderstandings between the municipality and the community.

With these kinds of contradictions, it is clear that even managers themselves cannot agree on what should be done to ensure people work well with the municipality. The study found that a lack of understanding of governance issues affect the success of any project or initiative aimed at getting government and community to work together.

4.22. CONCLUSION

This chapter presented the data collected from the managers, councillors and community members in GTM. The analysis revealed that stakeholder engagement in GTM is characterised by information sharing and putting structures and expect them to work. Councillors play a critical role in facilitating communication from the municipality to the communities and vice versa. Communities perceive the engagement methods in GTM at a municipal and ward level as ineffective, because discussions happen but it ends there and no outcomes. Of all the methods analysed, communities prefer to use their councillors to facilitate engagement between them and their local government even though they criticise them as being too political. The analysis also revealed that the engagement process in a municipal context could not
be purely apolitical given the nature of municipalities as public institutions headed by politicians. The study also found that theory, GTM follow all and the rules of how participation should be done and conduct all meetings, but it ends there nothing is done to tell the community how certain resolutions of such meetings are going to be implemented and the role of the community not clearly explained. The analysis also revealed that some community members prefer to use invented spaces such as protest to get their messages across.
CHAPTER 5: RESEARCH FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter outlined the analysis emanating from the data; through this analysis, the study suggests that proper consultation and participation, as well as depoliticisation of the engagement process, will improve the role of stakeholder engagement process in community development. The study also suggests an evaluation of stakeholder engagement will help the municipality to use different methods for different stakeholder and avoid the one-size fit all approach as it has proven to be ineffective. This chapter draws some conclusions concerning the overall study objectives, research questions and some recommendations that the municipality can use and for future researchers.

5.2 RESEARCH FINDINGS PER RESEARCH OBJECTIVE AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS.

The overall objective of this study was to explore the stakeholder engagement methods used by the Greater Tzaneen Municipality and the perception of the community towards this process. To achieve this objective the following questions were developed in the exploration of the phenomenon at hand:

5.2.1 Research Question one: How are the current stakeholder engagement methods used by the Greater Tzaneen Municipality promote community engagement?

The purpose of this question was to find out which methods are used by the Greater Tzaneen Municipality and how do those methods promote community participation

Several participants seemed aware of only six methods of engagement at their disposal to engage with one another i.e. Ward meetings, integrated development plan meetings, louder hailer, councillors, Imbizo and protest. Although the different participants mentioned other methods, the above six stood out of the list. The study
found that these methods are used in most cases for information sharing purposes and that some stakeholder is not content with they are used for. For instance, about the use of ward meetings, a significant number of participants complained about the politicisation of these forums by people with political ambitions and some complained about councillors not convening ward meetings quarterly as required. Although some participants complained about councillors' leadership and attitude towards their political rivals and people who are challenging the status quo, participant relies on these councillors to facilitate the engagement between local government and the community. Participants also complained about Imbizo turned into political campaigning event by the ruling elite and using government achievements to gather more votes and attract voters. The study also found that when all methods seem not be brewing good fruits communities are left with and only one option, which is going to the street and protest to attract the attention of those in power. To this effect, the study found that the current methods used by GTM in their engagement process are reactive, time-based; communication is one-way and treats communities as a mere recipient of information from the municipality with no significant role to play in the process. Therefore, the study established that most of the methods do not promote community engagement as well as effective participation of the community in the determination of subject matter tabled in these forums. The study also found that community engagement is reduced to the counting of heads in a meeting and with no effect on the outcomes of such meetings because community views are not reflected in final decisions outcomes.

These findings demonstrated that the current methods used by GTM as just shopping lists with no strategic objectives and intergovernmental alignment to enable promoting engagement and propaganda machinery for political ruling elites, Matshiavhidi & Moeti (2016).

5.2.2 Research Question 2: How are the four elements of Public Participation i.e. consult, collaborate, involve and inform integrated into the Greater Tzaneen Municipality stakeholder engagement practices?

This question sought to find out how GTM consult with different stakeholders in the decisions making the process, how they collaborate with stakeholder for mutually beneficial outcomes. This question also sought to find out how current engagement
methods and process encourage the involvement of different stakeholders in GTM decision making. Lastly, how the current methods and processes allow for information dissemination in GTM.

The research found that the consultation with the stakeholder in GTM is done through representatives and at times, it is confused with information dissemination. South Africa operates within the participatory democratic system where communities elect public representatives thought party political system and by so doing they give all the power to the representatives to speak on their behalf with compromises community direct involvement in the decision-making. The study also established that the municipality and the community rely on councillors to ensure that consultation with the community takes place. However, some participants raised concerns about giving such a responsibility to a politician. For example, participants complained about councillors not holding meetings and bias attitude of councillor it terms of whom they take seriously. The study established that councillors are by design representatives of political parties and they take their mandate from their political parties and therefore cannot be objective and welcoming to other political views although they are expected to do so as public representatives and therefore, trusting them with a consultation responsibility is a recipe of crisis. The study also found that GTM confuses presenting plans and initiatives for the community to comment with the consultation. A significant number of participant complained about how decisions are taken without their knowledge and that the process of engagement and participation is done to tick boxes that suggest the absence of collaboration between the municipality and the community. Of all the four elements of public participation, the study found that the municipality excels in information dissemination although participants complained about the biasness of the information shared with them.

These findings demonstrate that poor consultation by municipalities remain a big challenge and a recipe for chaos and misunderstanding and ultimately a source on the unworkable environment that affect the engagement processes, Jarvis (2016:34). Mbeki and Phago (2014:213). The study also established trough the findings that the one-size-fits-all approach does not work and that lack of communication and evaluation of engagement methods delegitimise the stakeholder engagement process.
5.2.3 Research Question Three: What is the role of the communication department of the Greater Tzaneen Municipality in the community engagement process?

This question sought to find what role the communication department and its manager play in the engagement process and what kind of support do they give to other departments involved and councillors to strengthen the process.

The study found that the role of the GTM communication department is responsible for the drafting of the communication strategy that outlines how the municipality is going to implement its engagement events and public participation events. It has also found that the approval of this strategy does not lie with the department but with the municipal council. To this effect, the study established that this process contributes to political interference and a lack of understanding of governance and political issues. For instance, some participants complained about the politicisation of the engagement processes and the ruling elites use public forums to peruse political agenda.

There is also a feeling that the communication department is turned into the mouthpiece for the ruling party. There was also an agreement among participants that there is a lack of understanding government process, although the communication manager claimed that one of the objectives of the communication department's is to create awareness on government programmes. The study established that as long as communication department of a municipality still survive and get its mandate from political leaders, there would be little space for creativity and innovation as well as communication of apolitical messages, Lui & Horsely (2007:378). The municipality is by design public institutions controlled by political leaders who are defined by the government communicators' handbook as principal communicators who communicate on behalf of the government. This principle of political heads as principal communicators compromises the independence of any communication department in government institutions.

5.2.4 Research question four: What are the perceptions of the community towards the process of stakeholder engagement?

This question sought to find out how communities perceive the stakeholder
The study found that the community perceive the stakeholder engagement process in GTM is passive because it does not address nor meet their expectation. Participants feel excluded from the process because the municipality does not implement the resolutions of the public participation process. The community labelled the process as a shopping list for political leaders to tick boxes and nothing happens after meetings as held. Engagement at a municipal level should be aimed at getting insights from communities about service delivery gaps, identify opportunities for community building, development, and allocation of resources priorities, Netswera and Phago (2013:31). However, once a municipality uses these processes to dump information about what they think is good for the community without proper consultation with the communities it will experience endless protests. The study suggests GTM adopt the dialogical approach of stakeholder engagement characterised by effective listening, positive regard of the other party and willingness to change, (De Bussy, 2010:133). Without dialogue and effective two-way communication, no process or activity will receive a positive reception from the community. The study found that all the community want it to be listened to, involved and updated even when things are not going as planned. If dialogue is absent, rumours will prevail and be interpreted as the truth and a recipe for crisis and protests are brewed. The findings revealed that the municipality is not engaging at the level is supposed to and delegate its responsibility of engaging communities to councillors.

5.3 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The participants interviewed especially, the two councillors and the community member are not representatives of the people of Tzaneen from which the data can be conclusive and generalised. However, the lessons can be taken from these participants and used to improve the stakeholder engagement in Greater Tzaneen Municipality. Most of the participant preferred to use their languages that made some of the concepts difficult for the researcher to unpack, although the researcher was fluent with the languages used. The responses provided by the different respondent cannot be concluded as objective reality since they come from a different political background and hold different views on certain issues. However, it must be acknowledged that the role of a qualitative study is to understand a phenomenon from the perspective of the participants guided by their subjective experiences. The
familiarity of the topics discussed by the participants must also be considered as some did not understand some aspect of the topics.

5.4 Recommendations from Municipality

5.4.1 Shift from Reactivity vs Proactivity

Stakeholder engagement must not be a reactive once-off event to respond to the crisis, rather a long-planned process aimed at achieving long-term goals with a meaningful contribution to the overall organisational objectives, Ali (2017:24).

5.4.2 From Monologue vs Dialogue

Stakeholder engagement practices must be characterised by dialogue between the organisation and the stakeholders grounded on effective listening, mutual respect of views of other parties and willingness to adjust certain decisions for mutual understanding. Communication between the stakeholders must a two-way communication characterised by feedback and follow-ups on commitments.

5.4.3 Strategic approach to engagement.

The strategic approach proposes that stakeholder engagement must be planned, stakeholders identified, their needs and pressure they exert to the organisation, legitimacy, power, as well as their urgency, identified and methods to engagement these groups identified by their profiles. The strategic approach also requires an evaluation process of stakeholder engagement methods as well as changing environment taken into consideration whenever a new process put in place, Verbeke and Tung (2012:529).

5.4.4 from homogenous to heterogeneous approach

Municipalities should avoid stakeholder as a static being belonging to a single category of the stakeholder group, rather should acknowledge the different hats individuals wear depending on the context as well the environment. An effective stakeholder engagement strategy will recognise the heterogeneous nature stakeholders to avoid short-sited assumption about the behaviour and the roles of stakeholders.
5.5 Recommendations for future research

The current study focused on stakeholder engagement practices in engagement and perceptions of the community towards the process. It did not focus on how the Greater Tzaneen Municipality manage stakeholders and how this effect relationships with different groups. However, consultation and community involvement came out in the discussion. Signs of lack of strategic communication and evaluation of engagement also came out in the study.

With the above observations, the following research topics are recommended:

The importance of consultation and dialogue in the stakeholder engagement process in Greater Tzaneen Municipality

Evaluation of engagement methods in Greater Tzaneen Municipality.

5.6 Summary of the chapters and the study.

South African government consists of three spheres, the national, provincial and local government. However, it is a local government where people feel close to the government and municipalities are the closest contact for residents. It is from this reason that municipalities are entrusted with the responsibility of consulting with communities to ensure decisions taken to reflect the wishes of the people, (SALGA, 2013). Stakeholder engagement provides municipalities and communities with an opportunity to identify and resolve problems together, advocate for policies and address service delivery together, (Russel et al, 2015:2). This study sought to explore the stakeholder engagement methods used by the Greater Tzaneen Municipality and the perception of the community towards this process. To critically explore this phenomenon the study investigated the methods used by GTM and how these methods promote community engagement, the role of the communication department in the engagement process and the perception of communities toward this process.

In the first chapter, the background of the study, motivation, problem statement, the research objectives and question of the study. Chapter one also summaries the literature, methodology, the data analysis and findings of the research. Guided by the objectives of the study, chapter two outlined the theoretical framework and literature
review inclusive. The theoretical framework covered the stakeholder concept, the stakeholder typology, and the stakeholder theory to provide a theoretical background for the study. Community as a stakeholder in a municipal context was also discussed to provide a distinctive understanding of how the community is categorised in a municipal setting. The literature receives also covered the concept of stakeholder relationship management and the principles of stakeholder engagement. Exiting engagement mechanisms in South African Municipality. Participatory democracy, local government and social movement were also covered in the literature to provide an understanding of how local government work in South Africa. The literature chapter also covers government communication in South Africa, focusing on the communication approach, policy framework, strategy and factors affecting communication as public service.

In chapter three, the research methodology was discussed. The qualitative research approach was discussed and its suitability in the current study. The study followed the interpretive paradigm as a philosophical paradigm for the current study covered in the methodology chapter. The study followed the case study research designed which study a phenomenon within a specific point of view; the case study of this research was Greater Tzaneen Municipality specifically in Khujwana village which comprises of ward 16 and 18. This chapter also discussed the population and sample used for data collection and units of analysis. Semi-structured interviews were used to collect data and data was analysed through thematic content analysis. This chapter concluded by discussing the generalisation and verification of the qualitative data, ethical consideration and quality criteria.

Furthermore, chapter four outlined the presentation and analysis of the data collected through semi-structured interviews and theme emerged from the data discussed. Chapter five discussed the findings in relations to the research objective and question, the limitations and recommendations to the municipality and for future research. Looking as the current South African local government environment characterised by protests and demonstrations; it is time for Greater Tzaneen Municipality will have to explore more engagement methods and do away with the one-size-fits-all approach. It is clear from the findings that GTM's stakeholder engagement process is not effective and requires attention from managers and leaders.
Although the municipality does not have the resources to implement all the resolutions taken in public participation meetings: the municipality will have to honest with communities and tell them what it can do and cannot do. No matter how many new methods the municipality can introduce to engagement with the community if there is no implementation of resolutions resulting from these forums the process will never gain its legitimacy from people. The municipality will also have to spend more time and resources to evaluate to avoid replication of methods and processes that are not effective. Although the findings do not reflect the views of all community members of GTM, the municipality can use shortcomings such as lack of involvement and consultation to improve the stakeholder engagement. It, therefore, be concluded that stakeholder engagement without dialogue, consultation, participation and effective communication with all stakeholders will not help the municipality and local government as well to achieve better service delivery for all.

5.7 Conclusions

The study has found that stakeholder engagement tools and methods in GTM are not effective enough to serve the purpose of connecting government with the people, contribution to quality service delivery and reduction of service delivery protests. It can be concluded that the engagement methods are just a "shopping list" and put in place for compliance's sake with no strategic intent to the well-being of the resident.

The lack of proper planning, monitoring and evaluation of stakeholder engagement process by GTM found by this study coupled with lack of intergovernmental coordination between provincial, district and local municipalities remain a major challenge for GTM. The study, therefore, concludes that stakeholder engagement in GTM is abandoned and outsourced by officials to councillors who have to clue of what the objective of the process is. For every process initiative to be effective there should be an implementation of resolutions taken. Once there is a lack of implementation the process or initiative becomes null and void and ultimately rendered useless. The same thing can be said about the absence of implementation of resolutions taken in public participation and engagement process in GTM. The study concludes that it will take more than meetings to convince people that the process is effective and the continuation of lack of implementation of resolutions will lead to further decay of the
stakeholder engagement process and mechanisms in GTM. One of the legislative functions of a local municipality is to encourage the involvement of the community and other key stakeholders in local government matters. This study concluded that although GTM has methods in place for community participation it has not delivered on this mandate. Communities and other key partners still feel excluded in the affairs of GTM and this creates tension between the municipality and the residents and lack of trust and breakdown in a relationship.

The communities in GTM still believe that the only effective method of engagement in protest and no alternatives. Therefore, it can be concluded that the belief is caused by the lack of report back on progress made in participation and engagement forums and communities feel unheard and resort. Part of the effective stakeholder engagement includes the involvement of stakeholder in all phases of engagement, not just one phase. For the government to succeed in its mandate of delivering service to the people it needs the people to buy into every process put in place to achieve this goal, unfortunately in GTM, the community perceive the stakeholder engagement as ineffective with no value to strengthening the quality of services. The study, therefore, concludes that for stakeholder engagement to be effective in GTM everyone from the municipal political and management leadership, local leaders and community must be involved listened and their opinions valued and ultimately with a high level of tolerance to diverse ideas and opinions. The study further concludes that GTM relies more on councillors to reach out to people ignoring the political tensions which may exist and the sensitive nature of the political environment in communities.

All the community want it to be listened to, involved and updated even when things are not going as planned. If dialogue is absent, rumours will prevail and be interpreted as the truth and a recipe for crisis and protests are brewed. The study, therefore, cautions that if the municipality does not engage at the level it is supposed to and delegate its responsibility of engaging communities to councillors, the current protest and community unrest will not end.
REFERENCES


http://www.scirp.org/(S(czeh2tfqyw2orz553k1w0r45))/reference/ReferencesPapers.aspx?ReferenceID=2013445


APPENDICES

APPENDIX A CONSENT FORM

PARTICIPANT’S CONSENT FORM

Faculty of Humanities
School of Communication
Department of Strategic Communication

Researcher: EM MOTLOUTSI
Supervisor: A OKSUITYCZ-MUNYAWIRI

Email: aoksiutycz@uj.ac.za
Tel: 011 559 2849

I ………………………………………. Hereby accept to participate in the study of MR EM MOTLOUTSI and aware of the following conditions:

- That my participation is voluntary and there will be no compensation.
- I am participating out of my own will without any force of manipulation from the researcher.
- My name will be falsified for confidentiality.
- I can withdraw at any time from the project and this will not have any negative consequences on me.
- That I can contact the researcher to clarify or withdraw should any form of discomfort arise.
Declaration

I, the undersigned, also declare that I have read the information on the consent information document and understood the purpose of the study, the procedures and that any information collected from me by the researcher cannot be falsified under any circumstance. I therefore voluntarily agree to participate in the current study.

Participant signature ..........................................................

Signature

..........................................................

Signed at ........................................................................ On the

...... Of ................., 201......
APPENDIX B: INFORMATION LETTER

RESEARCH INFORMATION BRIEF LETTER

Faculty of Humanities
School of Communication
Department of Strategic Communication

Researcher: EM MOTLOUTSI
Supervisor: A OKSUITYCZ-MUNYAWIRI
Email: aoksiutycz@uj.ac.za
Tel: 011 559 2849

Title: **Stakeholders Engagement Practices Greater Tzaneen Municipality.**

**Purpose of the study**

The study aims to explore the role of community involvement in the process of stakeholder engagement and the perception of the community towards this process in Greater Tzaneen Municipality.

**Procedures**

*Interviews:* The researcher will conduct interviews with, Communication manager, Community Participation managers, Ward and Proportional Representative Councillors, Executive Committee Councillors, and Community Leaders of Greater Tzaneen Municipality.

**Risks:** There are no feasible risks associated with the current study.

**Benefits**

There will be no financial compensations for participants. However, participation in the current study will provide all stakeholder of each municipality with an understanding of
the importance of involvement and consultation in stakeholder engagement and the role each of them in strengthening this process.

**Participants’ rights**

Participation to the current study is voluntary, participants have the right to withdraw their participation, this will not have any negative consequences to them, and information obtained from them will not be used as part of the data collected by the researcher.

Confidentiality- All the information collected will be treated as confidential by way of keeping it in a storage device that will be kept safe, all participants’ identities will be kept anonymous and any material or data will be destroyed should the participants withdraw from the study. Only the primary researcher and the supervisor will have access to the information collected.

**Participants’ access to the researcher**- all participants will be granted access to the researcher by way of providing contact details.
APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR COUNCILLORS

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR COUNCILLORS

Section A: General Demographic Information
1. Which ward in Tzaneen are you from?
2. How long have you lived in Tzaneen?
3. What is your position in Greater Tzaneen Municipality?
4. How long have you worked in GTM?

Section B: Stakeholder Engagement Practices in Greater Tzaneen
1. Who is the stakeholder you mostly work with as councillor?
2. What is your understanding of stakeholder engagement as a councillor?
   a. What do you think is the importance of engaging with stakeholders?
3. What methods do you use to engage with other stakeholders you work within your ward and at the municipal level?
4. What is the role of the councillor ward committees in the stakeholder engagement process?
5. Which structures are available for communities to engage with councillors and the municipality?
6. What are the challenges you experience when engaging with the communities as councillor?

Section C: Public Participation and Stakeholder Engagement
1. What is your understanding of public participation?
2. Why is public participation important?
   a. What about relationships between the municipality and the community?
   b. What about conflict?
3. As a councillor who do you consult with before decisions are taken in your different wards?
4. Which forums are available for the community to participate in the municipal decision-making process at the ward level?

5. Who does mostly participate in the public participation activities including the IDPs?

SECTION D: Communication and Stakeholder Engagement in Greater Tzaneen Municipality

1. What communication channels do you use to disseminate information with your community?

2. Which mediums do you find effective to communicate with communities?
   a. And why?

3. What kind of support do you receive from the municipal communication department to improve your communication with your residents?
   a. What kind of support would you like to receive?

Section E: Community Perception towards stakeholder engagement

1. What kind of feedback do you receive from the communities with regard to the engagement methods and process you use to engage with them?

2. What do you think are the challenges of the communities in using the current engagement platforms and methods available for them to engage with their councillors?

3. What will you recommend should be done by all stakeholders to improve and enhance the engagement process at the ward level?
APPENDIX D:

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR MANAGERS IN GREATER TZANEEN MUNICIPALITY

Section A: General Demographic Information
5. Which part of Tzaneen are you from?
6. How long have you lived in Tzaneen?
7. What is your position in Greater Tzaneen Municipality?
8. How long have you worked in GTM?

SECTION B: STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT PRACTICES IN GREATER TZANEEN.
1. Who are the key stakeholders of GTM?
2. What is your general understanding of stakeholder engagement?
3. How does the GTM engage stakeholders?
   a. What methods does GTM use to engage different stakeholders in Tzaneen?
   b. Which methods are the most effective and why?
   c. How are these methods selected by the municipality?
   d. How many people are involved in engagement projects & communication projects?
   e. What are their designations/qualifications—generally/experience etc?

4. What are the benefits of engaging these stakeholders?
5. What do you think are the challenges presented by the stakeholder engagement how can this be resolved?

Section C: PUBLIC PARTICIPATION and Stakeholder Engagement
1. What is your understanding of public participation in a municipal setting?
   a) what do you think it is its importance?
2. What are the structures and forums employed by the GTM for communities to participate in the municipal decision-making process?
3. What is the role of public participation in the stakeholder process of GTM?
4. How do you carry your consultative process with communities in Tzaneen before major decisions are taken?

5. Which municipal initiatives do you involve and collaborate with communities in different wards in Tzaneen?

6. What are the main reasons for service delivery protests
   a. How can the protests be prevented?
   b. What are the lessons from the previous protests?

SECTION D: Communication and Stakeholder Engagement in Greater Tzaneen Municipality

1. Which channels and mediums are used to communicate messages to different stakeholder groups in GTM?

2. How does the municipality develop its communication strategy?
   a. Who, when, how
   b. What are the key objectives of the strategy?
   c. What are the principles guiding the strategy?
   d. How successful is GTM in implementing the communication strategy? Why so?

3. Tell me about your recent communication campaigns aimed at the community stakeholders?

4. What are the main challenges to communication between the municipality and the stakeholders?

5. What has been the role of media especially community media in the communication process between the municipality and communities?

6. What is the role of communication with stakeholders in the process of stakeholder engagement process?

Section E: Community Perception towards stakeholder engagement

1. How does the GTM obtain feedback from different stakeholders?

2. In your view what the perceptions of communities with regard to GTM delivering on its mandate is?

3. How will you describe the relationship GTM has with communities around Tzaneen?
What would you improve in the GTM in terms of stakeholder engagement and communication?
APPENDIX E

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR ORDINARY MEMBERS

Section A: General Demographic Information

9. Which part of Tzaneen are you from?
10. How long have you lived in Tzaneen?
11. Are you currently employed?
12. How old are you?

SECTION B: STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT PRACTICES IN GREATER TZANEEN.

What is your opinion of the GTM?

1. How does the municipality keeps you informed about what they do?
   a. Methods, frequency, ease of access, how up to date is the information

2. What means are available to you and the community to inform the municipality of the issue that are important to them
   a. How easy it is to contact the municipality?
   b. Do they respond to the community needs? Requests?

3. How does the municipality consult the local community when there are important issues?

4. Does the municipality know about problems in your community?

5. What do you think they can do better to keep in touch with the community needs?

Public Participation in Greater Tzaneen Municipality at ward and community level

1. What is your view of community participation in planning processes?

2. What public participation forums and structures are available for you to participate in municipal decision making?
a. Do you attend them personally? If yes/no why
3. How effective are these methods?
4. What is your view of protests?

Communication in Greater Tzaneen Municipality at Ward and Community level
a. What are the channels available for you as a community member to communicate with your ward or the municipality?
b. (Meetings? what about leaflets; do you read them, is the information easy to understand? Etc, what about posters? What about community radio, etc)
c. Ask for details who, how often etc
2. What type of information do you receive from your councillors?
3. What is the role of your ward committee in the communication process between you and the municipality?

Community perceptions of stakeholder and community engagement?
1. Do you attend the meetings/participation events organised in the ward (by the municipality)?
2. What are the challenges from your point of view during the community engagement events? [ask for examples of specific events]
3. How can these challenges be resolved?
4. What will you suggest should be done to improve relationships between the community and the municipality?
   Besides the methods provided by the municipality to engage with you, which other methods or ways will you suggest should be used for engagement?
5. What should the municipality do to improve the relationships between the community and the municipality?