



## Democracy and Service Delivery in the Post-Apartheid of South Africa: A Critical Review of Musina Local Municipality

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### **Abstract**

The purpose of the paper is to evaluate the state of service delivery in the democratic South Africa. The beginning of democracy brought an anticipation of enhanced standards of living and service delivery for most South Africans who were longing for survival during the apartheid system. Twenty-eight years into democracy, the government appears to be still faced with difficulties in meeting the hopes of the citizens of the country. Policies, frameworks, and legislations such as the White Paper on Service Delivery and the Municipal Systems Act were promulgated to allow valuable service delivery to its people. The paper argues that this democracy did not transform into enhanced bread and butter issues as enthusiastically expected. This is a theoretical paper which relied on desktop study to acquire information. Government documents, Scholarly articles and newspapers were reviewed to analyse the democracy and development in the post-apartheid South Africa. Theoretically, In South Africa democratisation is taking place since pressures from subordinate classes have become strong enough to make demands for their inclusion credible. Even though there is democracy, there is still a huge backlog in the services delivery. The delivery process has the tendency of being biased to a certain group of people, particularly the people in rural areas. This paper concludes that, the apartheid regime left both of its footprints and legacy of disparities associated with service delivery that triumph up to date. However, looking at some positive progress that were noted, it is also evident that the government of the country South Africa has not taken a step back in terms of fighting against footprints and legacy of apartheid. Based on the conclusion, the paper recommends the need for government to ensure that policies about democracy and service delivery are continuously reviewed and updated until all the goals of development are achieved.

**Keywords:** *Democracy; Service Delivery; Development; South Africa; Post-Apartheid*

### **1. Introduction**

The dawn of democracy brought an anticipation of enhanced standards of living and service delivery for most South Africans who were longing for survival during the apartheid system (Sithole &

Mathonsi, 2021). Twenty-eight years into democracy, the government appears to be still faced with difficulties in meeting the hopes of the citizens of the country (Sithole & Mathonsi, 2021). Policies, frameworks, and legislations were put in place by the government to allow valuable service delivery to its people. Citizens expected enhanced service delivery that would address the apparent and continuing legacy of apartheid, particularly on the subject matter of delivery of social services in the country (Sithole & Mathonsi, 2021). To a certain extent, citizens had come to associate the recent system of governance with enhanced service delivery, particularly in black societies which were clubbed by the evil system of Apartheid. Marginalised citizens argued that this democracy did not transform into enhanced bread and butter problems as enthusiastically expected. Whenever the needs of the citizens are not met, an upsurge of frustration and distrust of the existing political system develops (Reddy, 2016; Sithole & Mathonsi, 2021). Sithole and Mathonsi (2021: 5) argued that “Protests about service delivery interspersed and permeated the living conditions in South Africa”. The citizens who are socially excluded do not see much of a distinction among the recent and the former one political exemption (Sithole & Mathonsi, 2021). This argument generated a loophole for the credibility of the recent governance system from citizens' point of view who consider themselves unnoticed by the government.

Scholars such as Reddy (2016); Phatlane (2021); Liberman and Lekalakale (2022), believed that political backbiting and clashes associated with the political and management mechanisms in local government of South Africa have also adversely influenced the poor service delivery to the underprivileged communities. It is a given that the public sector in an African context has always been judged to be political in nature and South Africa is no omission. From the year 1997, the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) published the White Paper on the Transforming Public Service Delivery which outlines the eight principles known as Batho Pele Service Delivery Principles (Joel, 2022). This was a first inventiveness of its own kind wherein the public sector was provided with principles to stick to as goods and services are delivered to the citizens. The nature of the principles helps the public service to see citizens as customers or clients of the public sector. According to Joel (2022), the Batho Pele principle are namely: firstly, is Information, which puts emphasis on the need for citizens to be provided with adequate information of the level and quality of services they want. Secondly is openness and transparency, which puts emphasis on the need for all government operations to be undertaken in a transparent and open manner. Thirdly is consultation which puts emphasis on the need for citizens to be consulted about everything concerning their services. The fourth one is courtesy, which calls for the need for a polite and altruistic manner when facilitating service delivery for the citizens.

The fifth Batho Pele principle is access, which advocates for every citizen to have equal access to service delivery. The sixth Batho Pele principle is service standards, which advocate for the citizens to be always informed of the service standards. Last but not least, is redress principle, which advocates for the need for government to address all the imbalances brought by the past apartheid. The last principle is the value for money, which puts emphasis on efficiency and effectiveness on the use of goods (Joel, 2022). With all the above arguments, this paper attempts to make a critical analysis of democracy and service delivery in the post-apartheid of South Africa and it also seeks to make a review of the Integrated Development Plan of Musina Local Municipality.

This paper is divided into 9 sections. The first section introduces the study and its purpose. The second section provides a brief discussion of the theoretical framework that the paper has adopted. The third section provides a discussion on service delivery in apartheid and democratic South Africa. The fourth section provides a conceptual analysis of democracy and service delivery in South Africa. The fifth section provides the research methodology that the paper has adopted to achieve the purpose of the study. The sixth section provides the results or findings emanated during the time the study was conducted. The seventh section provides an in-depth discussion of the findings from the study. Last, but not least, it is the eighth section which provides a clear conclusion of the study and it also recommend mechanisms that would best suit the findings. The last section is the list of sources that were acknowledge in this paper.

## 2. Theoretical Framework

The paper is grounded on the Cohesion on Service Delivery Theory (CSDT) to evaluate the service delivery challenges in South Africa during the new democratic dispensation. The Cohesion on Service Delivery Theory (CSDT) is a data, communiqué and technologies (ICTs)-based theory that enables the understanding, development, and nourishment of service delivery system (Mbecke, 2014; Rulashe & Ijeoma, 2022). The theory suggests diverse situations of service delivery. For example, the amalgamation of public participation, e-governance system and adequate government resources could lead to a 70% likelihood of service delivery (Mbecke, 2014; Rulashe & Ijeoma, 2022). Whenever government resources are inadequate, the residents do not partake in decision-making processes of matters affecting them, which inhibit e-governance scheme (Mbecke, 2014; Rulashe & Ijeoma, 2022). According to Mbecke (2014:5), “The CSDT also enables policy process about interferences for service delivery. The CSDT was established through two research methods, the qualitative research method and the modelling method”. Therefore, the Cohesive Service Delivery Theory (CSDT) adopted by this paper describes and links diverse aspects and interpret likelihoods in understanding how the amalgamation of factors explains more excellently a service delivery system. Incessant service delivery protests have been one of the nastiest quandaries the post-apartheid South African government had to face (Rulashe & Ijeoma, 2022). Even though the post 1994 government went aboard on public sector restructuring with one of the crucial outputs being altering service delivery to provide basic needs and address past disparities, service delivery remained a predicament.

## 3. Service Delivery in Apartheid and Democratic South Africa

- *Service Delivery in Apartheid South Africa*

Sithole and Mathonsi (2021:10) contended that “during apartheid homelands primarily aided as labour pool or reservoirs for white people in South Africa to store black people and release them from time to time into white areas/towns whenever their workforce was needed”. The apartheid government requested to operate the mining industry’s labour obligations as well as of farmers and other white-owned industries but at the same time maintaining white political supremacy in the country through the homelands system. Homelands, wherein majority black people lived were exemplified by negligible lands with minimal production ability which were not capable of creating local economies which has resulted in homelands relying on the apartheid state of funding (Sithole & Mathonsi, 2021). As a result of lack of resources, corruption issues and lack of lawfulness of the homeland governments, massive bottlenecks numbers on basic services such as electricity, water, education, and health facilities began to worsen in homelands. The impact of this legacy is at this time being experienced. Sithole and Mathonsi (2021:11), argued that “majority of the homelands were not supplied with access to basic municipal services such as clean water, sanitation, refuse removal, and electricity”. These municipal services were often non-existent as contrasting to regions where the white people lived.

According to The Presidency, (2015) cited in Sithole and Mathonsi, (2021), the lack of basic services led to high occurrences of water-borne different dangerous diseases such as diarrhoea and cholera to name a few in homelands. The scarcity of electricity rose making communities to use coal stoves which led to an upsurge of respirational diseases and other conditions. Majority of black people had no other choice but to travel long distances to get to their places of work or health and educational facilities (just to mention a few) due to apartheid spatial patterns (The Presidency, 2015 cited in Sithole & Mathonsi, 2021). In addition, the state did not even bother providing safe, dependable, suitable and affordable means of transport (The Presidency, 2015 cited in Sithole & Mathonsi, 2021). Most local government revenue in urban South Africa was self-generated, mainly through businesses, property taxes and through the delivery of services to residents. This phenomenon appropriately well-matched white

municipalities that had few people to provide for and large concentrations of economic resources to tax (Rulashe & Ijeoma, 2022). Fiscal deficits were built into local government for black communities. This limited the tax base and forced residents and retailers to spend most of their money in white areas. Municipalities in black areas were therefore deprived of the means to meet the needs of residents. In rural areas, discrimination and segregation were equally stark (Rulashe & Ijeoma, 2022). This paper found it necessary to look at the service delivery in apartheid South Africa in order to have a background of how service delivery was prior the democratic South Africa.

- *Service Delivery in Democratic South Africa*

The Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) published the White Paper on the Transforming Public Service Delivery which outlines the eight principles known as Batho Pele Service Delivery Principles (Joel, 2022). The principles are as follows:

The firstly is the principle of information which puts emphasis on the need for citizens to be provided with adequate information of the level and quality of services they need. Zehirun and Mashingo (2022) argued that this principle argues that all citizens should be provided with information of whether there are good news or challenges about service delivery. Secondly is the principle of openness and transparency which puts emphasis on the need for all government operations to be undertaken in a transparent and open manner. This will strengthen the trust of citizens towards their government and also reduce the likelihood of corruption and fraud (Zehirun & Mashingo, 2022).

Thirdly is the principle of consultation which puts emphasis on the need for citizens to be consulted about everything concerning their services. This will assist the government to deliver precisely the services required by the citizens. In addition, it will ensure efficiency and effectiveness in service delivery (Naaido & Ramphal, 2019). The fourth principle is courtesy which calls for the need for a polite and altruistic manner when facilitating service delivery for the citizens. This will promote warm and transformed attitude of the citizens towards their government (Joel, 2022). The fifth principle is access which advocates for every citizen to have equal access to service delivery. This will reduce the likelihood of discrimination of some of the citizens. Issues of poverty and inequalities just to mention a few, will also be reduced (Zehirun & Mashingo, 2022). The sixth principle is service standards which advocates for the citizens to be always informed of the service standards. Joel (2022) believes that this will enable the government to deliver services of great standards that best meet the needs of the citizens. Furthermore, the government will receive less complains concerning the services.

Last, but not least is the principle of redress which advocates for the need for government to address all the imbalances brought by the past apartheid. The past apartheid left its footprints in the democratic South Africa and majority of the less privileged societies are still suffering (Naaido & Ramphal, 2019). Hence, it is important for the current government to work towards addressing all those imbalances brought by the apartheid. The last principle is value for money which puts emphasis on the need to ensure efficiency and effectiveness on the use of goods. The principle believes that resources are never copious (Naaido & Ramphal, 2019). Therefore, available resources should be used wisely. This interprets into better outcomes and efficient service delivery at slight costs (Naaido & Ramphal, 2019; Joel, 2022).

Furthermore, the White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery was introduced in 1994. This act argued that public services are not privileged in a cultured and democratic societies; they are a genuine anticipation. According to Joel (2021:13), that is the reason why meeting the basic desires of all citizens is one of the five main programmes of the government's Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP)". It is also the reason why the Government's macro-economic strategy called Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) calls, for the alleviation in redundant government feasting and the issue of resources for fruitful investment and their redirection to areas of utmost needs (Joel, 2021).

This means that, it is necessarily for the government to be reoriented to optimise the access to services by all the citizens of the country within context of economic limitations and completion of contending needs. It is continuously imperative to look at what the legislature articulates regarding service delivery. This could help policy makers, administrations, residents, and interested parties to recognise whether the public sector is winning the combat against changing the apartheid trend legacy in the delivery of services.

Section 73 of the Local Government Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000 calls for the need for municipalities to prioritize all basic needs and improve the ways of living all the local communities (Gladwin-Wood & Brits, 2022). The act calls for a need for municipalities to ensure that all the residents in local communities have access to at least a minimum level of basic municipal services. All municipal services should be reasonable, unbiased, and available to all citizens (Pieterse, 2021). Furthermore, municipal services should be provided in a way that they are beneficial to judicious, financial, well-organized, and effective usage of accessible resources and the enhancement of the living conditions of the local communities. Lastly, municipal services should be economically and environmentally sustainable as well as frequently revised with a view to advancement, progression, and development (Pieterse, 2021).

Whether or not the above legislations requirements are interpreted into existing noticeable services, they do not require rocket science (Pieterse, 2021). Based on recent literature, it can be inferred that most of the principles of the legislations are not taking place as they are supposed to (Gladwin-Wood & Brits, 2022). Nevertheless, it remains crucial to note that municipalities are faced with many difficulties that are responsible for the sluggish and uneven leap towards executing the legislated establishment (Pieterse, 2021). This is wherein trials such as capacity limitations, monetary instruments, political-administrative unintelligibility, and authority come to the front, and make it hard to contend that the public sector is weakening in ensuring delivery of services beyond a measly thought of what is trendy (Gladwin-Wood & Brits, 2022).

#### **4. Conceptual Analysis of Democracy and Service Delivery in South Africa**

- *Democracy*

Democracy is a form of governance wherein the citizens of the country have the power to deliberate and choose legislature and or governing officials to run their country (Delius, 2021). The Keystones of democracy comprise of liberty of gathering, connotation, property rights, liberty of belief and language, comprehensiveness and fairness, nationality, accord of the ruled, voting rights, liberty from unjustified governmental deficiency of the right to life and freedom, and marginal rights (Delius, 2021). The idea of democracy has progressed over time noticeably. The original system of democracy was a direct democracy (Koelble, 2022). The most common system of democracy nowadays is a typical democracy, whereby the citizens of the country elect government officials to rule on their behalf such as in a legislative and presidential democracy (Delius, 2021). Predominant day-to-day decision-making of democratic system is the majority rule yet other decision-making methods such as supermajority and agreement have also been essential to democratic system (Delius, 2021). They serve the vital determination of comprehensiveness and wider lawfulness on sensitive matters offsetting majoritarianism and thus mostly take superiority on a constitutional level. In the common irregular of liberal democracy, the authorities of the majority are trained within the framework of a representative democracy, but the constitution limits the majority and protects the minority usually through the enjoyment by all of certain individual rights (Koelble, 2022).

Democracy in most African countries is not bearing fruits (Mataruse and Matthews, 2022). This is because politicians and authorities did not uphold their constitutions. Autocracy and political instability



have tremendously floated its dark cloud all over African countries such as Zimbabwe, South Africa, Uganda among others (Mataruse and Matthews, 2022). Leaders in the African countries continued to make promises of substantial changes to turn their countries for better towards democracy and good governance (Mataruse and Matthews, 2022). They did that by wanting to remain in positions for longer period of times than they should. For instance, the late and former president of Zimbabwe, Robert Mugabe remained on the presidency chair for about thirty-seven years. The most devastating part of his years of ruling is that the citizens of the country continued to suffer from high levels of poverty, unemployment, and Inequity. With the trend of politicians wanting to be in power for a long period of time than they should, the Senegal African country ended up voting to cut presidential commands from seven to five years from 2019 till date (Mataruse and Matthews, 2022). However, this did not assist in fight for full democracy.

- *Service Delivery*

Service delivery is a common expression utilized to label the delivery of resources citizens: services such as water, electricity, sanitation infrastructure, land, and housing in South Africa. Regrettably, the government's delivery and maintenance of these resources is undependable and seriously disrupting or imperilling the entire societies (Mamokhere, 2021). The number of protests for demanding better service delivery rose in recent years. In fact, the term service delivery protest has become a no-win situation-all term in the media to describe numerous types of protests (Rulashe & Ijeoma, 2022). The significance of service delivery falls on municipalities since they are completely accountable for sustaining healthy living situations and enhancing the value of life for the citizens. The South African Constitution Act No. 108 of 1996 calls all the municipalities to assemble and manage its government as well as planning processes and making financial arrangements to give precedence to the basic needs of the society (Mamokhere, 2021). In addition, all municipalities should encourage the societal and economic development of the community. It is also the responsibility of municipalities to participate in national and provincial development plans, which play a crucial role in economic growth (Mamokhere, 2021). Poor service delivery and general poor government services causes a decrease of resources, less job opportunities, job losses and generally poor living situations (Farole, 2020).

Nevertheless, the service delivery issues in South Africa starts with the absence of sufficient infrastructure (Farole, 2020; Mamokhere, 2021). Poor service delivery in municipalities is caused by several reasons, for example, municipalities are not monetarily self-sufficient and lack the essential infrastructure and resources to bring out their responsibilities to the larger public. Service delivery in South Africa continues to be a big problem for municipalities. Lacking in infrastructure, resources, and maintenance, municipalities are incapable to supply the citizens with quality services in fast improvement time (Mamokhere, 2021).

The numbers and stages of service delivery protests in the country provide a clear clarification on the catastrophe of the government's determination to restructuring the public sector and also the ineptitude of the Batho Pele plan. It has been argued by Mbecke (2014); Zehirun & Mashingo (2022), that some of the issues manipulating the service delivery are undoubtedly exceeding the control of municipalities. Eventually the service delivery protests display the catastrophes of the supportive governance system, not just local government. The government's nod of its deteriorating service delivery system generates a persistent need for origination to recover and sustain the service delivery system (Zehirun & Mashingo, 2022).

## 5. Methodology

This is a theoretical paper which relied on desktop study to acquire information. Government documents, Scholarly articles and newspapers were reviewed to analyse the democracy and development in the post-apartheid South Africa.

## 6. Results

Theoretically, democratisation is taking place in South Africa since pressures from subordinate classes have become strong enough to make demands for their inclusion credible. Even though there is democracy, there is still a huge backlog in the services delivery. The delivery process has the tendency of being biased to a certain group of people, particularly the people in rural areas. This paper reviewed the 2021/2022 Integrated Development Plan of different municipalities in South Africa such as the Musina Local Municipality based in Limpopo Province. According to the Constitution of South Africa of 1996, everyone has the right to clean water and good sanitation. However, the paper found that majority of the areas under the Musina Local Municipality are still finding it a challenge to access basic service delivery such as water and sanitation (Musina Local Municipality, 2021). There are people in some of the areas who walk long distances to get water for survival. The paper also found that most areas located under the Musina Local Municipality are experiencing shortage of sewage systems (Musina Local Municipality, 2021). This is because of lack of experienced and qualified staff to operate the plant. In addition, there is a high number of people residing in the areas under Musina Local Municipality who still depend on forests or pit toilets with poor conditions to ease themselves. Load shedding remains a continuous problem not only in Musina Local Municipality but a national problem in the democratic country (Musina Local Municipality, 2021). The energy needs of poor households are still enormous, original goal of universal access to electricity by 2014 is not feasible and there is a need to review the target and planning (Musina Local Municipality, 2021). “The encounters are Energy supply and disruption, lack of capacity to supply the demand, inadequate capacity of the power station to supply all areas in the district, cable theft, Illegal connections, poor project management PSPs and slow rate of building” (Musina Local Municipality, 2021:75).

## 7. Discussion

The advent of democracy was brought to address the imbalances brought by the past apartheid (Delius, 2021; koelble, 2022; Rulashe & Ijeoma, 2022). It was believed that if democracy is introduced and endorsed, issues such as inequity and discrimination between the citizens and their political leaders would be resolved. Democracy was brought with another belief that every citizen will have easy access to basic services such as clean water, proper sanitation, energy and electricity, proper shelter among others (koelble, 2022). However, it remains a tremor today that the same democracy introduced did not deliver all if not most of its promises. The likes of water shortage in most areas of South Africa remains a continuous dilemma (Delius, 2021). There are still many areas with shortage of clean water and at some point, most of the residents end up travelling long distances to access clean water for survival. In these recent times, there are still areas with no access to electricity at all. They rely on collecting firewood to prepare fire for cooking, boiling water among others (Delius, 2021). It is evident that, the democracy brought is for certain people not everyone. For instance, there are certain areas (particularly the urban areas) that are quickly attended to whenever they lay complaints with regards to the problems, they would have face at that time: Problems such as water and power cut (Sithole & Mathonsi, 2021). However, rural areas are most likely to be considered last or completely ignored whenever they lay complaints. Democracy was fought for to ensure that every citizen is freed from the past devastating living conditions. Seemingly, there are still citizens living in those past apartheid conditions (koelble, 2022).

Most rural areas in South Africa do not have proper sanitation (Rulashe & Ijeoma, 2022). They are relying on pit toilets to ease themselves. This in turn affect their health conditions since they breathe the same air coming from those pit toilets. Most schools around the areas laid complaints that some of the young learners fall and or drown in those pit toilets (Sithole & Mathonsi, 2021). Till date, their cry was never attended too. It is rare to find schools with proper sanitation unless they are privately owned or publicly owned and dominated by white people. Furthermore, lack of or poor infrastructure continues to be a norm in some rural areas. Their roads are characterized by potholes, and they happen to worsen up during rainy seasons. Some areas do not even have bridges and learners together with people working in other areas have to cross through the rivers even during rainy seasons. It is quite surprisingly that political leaders of the country continue to make promises of ensuring effective and efficient service delivery to their citizens with an aim of encouraging them to vote (Sithole & Mathonsi, 2021).

### **8. Conclusion and Recommendations**

This paper concludes that, the apartheid regime left both of its footprints and legacy of disparities associated with service delivery that triumph up to date. However, looking at some positive progress that were noted, it is also evident that the government of the country South Africa has not taken a step back in terms of fighting against footprints and legacy of apartheid. Based on the conclusion, the paper recommends the need for government to ensure that policies about democracy and service delivery are continuously reviewed and updated until all the goals of development are achieved. Local Municipalities with the help of the government of the country should provide, operate, and maintain the socio-economic infrastructures for all the areas in the country. All leaders, politicians and authorities should adhere to the constitution of the country. All promises from the office of the presidency made to the citizens should be fulfilled. The authorities should ensure that all the Batho Pele principles are indeed practiced. This will create a sense of belonging to citizens who might have started to feel like they were abandoned by the authority. The state should encourage and believe in the truth to reduce fraud and corruption. Authorities and politicians together with the country in one accord should ensure that core values are strengthened and protected, and human rights are fulfilled. Laws and legislatures that guard against bad influences over voting periods should be strengthened by the authority. Furthermore, politicians and authorities in the office of the presidency should serve precisely the period given to them. There should never be favours of extension of service years done to the politicians and authorities.

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