



A Study to Determine the Implications of Budget Consultations on Service Delivery (2000-2014): A Case of Marondera Urban's Selected Suburbs

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Abstract

This mixed method study was conducted to establish the impact of the budget consultations on service delivery in Marondera urban. Mixed method research strategies were able to bring out data on people's experiences, their feelings and emotions on service delivery in Marondera's selected suburbs. Interviews were ideal in that they provided the opportunity to interact directly with the participants. Questionnaires were also used. The study population of this research was 61 998, based on the Zimbabwe Census 2012 statistics of Marondera Municipality. A random sample of 20 participants represented all the locations and stakeholders involved in the Budget Consultations in Marondera town. The study established that service delivery was improving due to budget consultations. The study established that water treatment was the best service being offered by Marondera Municipality whilst road servicing was rated the worst service. The study recommends that Marondera Municipality should channel more funds to roads, so that the services will improve and satisfy the residents in terms of communication. Public toilets should be cleaned regularly, so as to avoid health risks to the residents. The Municipality of Marondera should respond promptly to sewerage leakages, as this poses a health hazard to the public. Resources should be channelled to the Marondera Resident Trust so that they become fully operational.

Keywords: Budget consultations, Service delivery, Participatory approach.

1.0 Background to the study

Citizen participation in budgeting is not a new idea to local governance and in development planning. In small towns in New England and elsewhere, residents have long been able to decide spending through town hall meetings. In 1989, the Brazilian city of Porto Alegre launched a new kind of democratic process called Participatory Budgeting (PB), which scaled up the grassroots participation of town meetings (Baiocchi, 2006). Through P.B citizens decided how to spend part of the city budget through annual series of neighbourhood, district and city assemblies.

After emerging in Porto Alegre, Participatory Budgeting was soon adopted throughout Brazil, then elsewhere in Latin America. In the past decade, it has become popular in Europe, Africa and Asia. According to Alcantra, (1998), by 2007, over twelve hundred cities were practising it (participatory budgeting). Countries such as United Kingdom and Dominican Republic have passed laws requiring that all local governments implement PB and the United Nations and World Bank have named it a best practice of democratic governance (Baiocchi, 2006). In nearby countries, such as in South Africa, Budget Consultations are progressing well, where the government believes that to achieve economic growth, the whole nation must be involved in making decisions that affect them, hence practising democracy, thereby achieving development (www.joburg.org.za). For instance, the city of Johannesburg developed its Integrated Development Plan (IDP) as well as seeking input from various stakeholders including local communities and other organs of the state.

In Zimbabwe, prior to the mid-1990s, pre-budget consultations were largely conducted by the Ministry of Finance through the meetings with pre-selected private sector industry associations and special interest groups. This changed in the mid-1990s following the release of the Ernst and Young (EY) study on the forecasting accuracy of the Department of Finance. The EY recommended that the House of Commons Standing Committee (HCSC) on Finance hold public hearings each fall to review and comment on the government's current fiscal plan and economic outlook. In the fall of 1994, the Minister of Finance presented an Economic and Fiscal Update to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance, (Munetsi, 2001). The HCSC was asked to provide the government with an independent assessment of the economic planning assumptions used in the Update and to undertake public consultations on issues raised by the Minister as well as any other matter of importance to the Committee and to provide a report by the end of the calendar year (Munetsi, 2001). This practice has been generally followed since 1994 with the Minister of Finance providing an Economic and Fiscal Update in the fall of each year. Local authorities in Zimbabwe adopted PB over the years to increase people's participation (Munetsi 2001). The Harare City Council adopted PB with desire to promote good governance with respect to accountability, transparency, participation, responsiveness and quality service delivery to residents or ratepayers' needs gave impetus to budget consultations (Mubaira, 2011). This research sought to examine the way residents' participation is handled in the Marondera Municipality budget formulation process and assess the impact and implication of participation to policy formulation and responsiveness and also to local budget responsiveness to community needs.

The area under study is **Marondera Urban Council or Marondera Municipality**, which has a total population of 61 998 residents, involving all the stakeholders who include the business people, churches, taxi operators, flea-markets, schools and colleges, residents who are represented by the ward councillors and the government through the ministry of local government.

These stakeholders will have a full council meeting which will then present their budget to the council's finance committee which will then do the final budgeting for the service to be delivered. The researcher aims to look at selected service deliveries which entail refuse collection, water treatment and supply, road maintenance, public street lightning, sewage treatment and public toilets.

1.1 Statement of the problem

In Marondera local urban Municipality there is also a long tradition with local council budget consultations which are open to the public. However, the problem is that in spite of all these consultations the service delivery in selected Marondera suburbs (low, high and medium) still remains extremely below average. This study therefore sought to establish the impact of participatory budgeting on service delivery by the local authority.

1.2 Aims of the study

To determine the implications of budget consultation on selected service delivery namely refuse collection, water treatment, road maintenance, public toilets, public lighting and sewage treatment in Marondera urban suburbs.

1.3 Research Questions

The research sought to address the overarching question; How effective are budget consultations on service delivery in selected urban suburbs in Marondera town?

- What are the implications of budget consultations on service delivery in Marondera town?
- What are the gaps and what are the capacities of Marondera Municipality to implement budget consultations to improve service delivery in Marondera urban?
- To what extent are doing Marondera town residents participate in the budgetary process?

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Conceptual Framework

The study is guided by the concept of participatory governance which entails that good governance involves the participation of the majority in making decisions that affects them, thereby achieving democracy. Budget consultations also known as the Participatory Budgeting is framed on a pro-poor strategy that seeks to achieve social justice through improved policies and resource allocation favouring low income households and breaking the cycle of patronage politics (Steyns,1999). While seemingly successful in achieving its aims of government-civil society engagement, the participatory budgeting has its own problems. This concept of participatory governance is applicable in this study in the sense that budget consultations involve the views from the people whom (in this case) the Marondera urban city council will be delivering services to. This particular study therefore largely borrowed analytical insights from the concept of participatory

governance, participatory budgeting and citizen engagement. However, the study used a main overarching concept of participatory budgeting as the main thematic and analytical focus to analyse the study on the implications of budget consultations on service delivery in Marondera suburbs.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

This study is guided by the Basic needs Theory (introduced by the International Labour Organization's World Employment Conference in 1976) which discussed development as improving the state of national economy to meet the basic needs of its people. The basic needs approach is based on the assumption that development was not meant to develop things but men. It can be understood as a paradigm shift from property centred to men centred approaches to development thinking and planning (praxis) Development according to this theory is conceived as a state of human wellbeing rather than the state of the national economy (Conyers, 1984). Its primary concern was outlined at the Concohoc Declaration in 1978 with human basic needs such as food, shelter, accommodation and many others as well as the quality of human life being the centre of development. These ideas can only be achieved through attending to the social wellbeing of people, redistribution of wealth, quality of political structures and the state of physical environment. Kaunda (1972) preferred to call it the humanism approach, looking at some of its premises like removing exploitation and the extent to which it advocated for the basic needs to be met. Development is for man and starts with man and men's needs are paramount. The approach focuses on the establishment of the basic social services (public transport, health, education and safe water) and mass participation in making decisions that affect them. I therefore used these considerations (that is the basic social services and mass participation) as analytical themes in analysing my data against the theory of basic needs theoretical approach. This theory has valid analytical value in relation to my study mainly because of its considerations of social service needs and the participation of citizens which are all central themes that this study seeks to investigate.

2.3 The implications of budget consultations on service delivery in Marondera town.

Most scholars (who among others include Jazira, Villers and Thaddeus) have come to the consensus that the prime cause of poor service delivery in local authority is corruption and high and untenable salaries or wage bills for the council employees (Thaddeus, 2007). According to Villers (2008), Gemiston South Africa is the only council board to have initiated an audit in the past three years and it established that the council had no evidence of mismanagement of funds or corruption in any way. Service delivery is a component of business that defines the interaction between providers and clients where the provider offers a service, whether that is information or a task, and the client either finds value or loses value as a result. Good service delivery provides clients with an increase in value, (Thompsons, 2003).The concept of service delivery has received a more appealing attention

especially in the fields of budget consultations. One of the most common areas of service delivery is through information technology infrastructure library (ITIL).

Service delivery can be found in many different professions and company structures, such as medical hospitals and IT companies. Participation according to Mayoux (2005), involves significant contribution by all stakeholders (sponsors, local people and policy making authorities) in development to define and implement development plans and eradication of poverty and empowerment. According to Holmes (1973), ethically, such participation must be guided by virtues of Kant's philosophically concept of autonomous will' where participation must not be coercive on imposed development processes. The development process must be guided by the acknowledgement of no higher authority than the demands of reason which is through the public participation to achieve efficient service delivery, hence development should realize and promote human rights without treating the development community citizens as subjects or objects but equal participants whose rights should not be violated in any way (hence the right to participate in budgeting). FAO (2004) investigated on the link between participatory governance and local service delivery in local councils and they concluded that there was a direct correlation, but they did not analyse on how such translated into participatory development especially in urban suburbs. This study, therefore analyse such a gap by showing how participatory governance can help in improving service delivery in local councils through the use of budget consultations. According to Robert Chambers (1999), participation encourages commitment of the individuals in the community to work towards a common goal as a team. It further stresses that development should start from where people are in terms of desires and beliefs. It involves individuals, administrators, external agencies and national government in a dialogue. However, this interaction between people and external agencies can only be productive if people's goals and desires are placed above the objectives of the external agencies participating in plans of development. Although it is a very difficult process, involvement of people in development planning adds to the community's process of development, (Gutsa *et.al*, 2010). According to Moyo (2013), citizens are not really interested in doing budget consultations due to the fact that the budget consultations are not fully publicized, for example an attempt by the Harare City Council in 2013 to convene budget consultation meetings throughout the city failed to materialize after residents and stakeholders did not turn up, citing poor publicity on the venue of the meetings, therefore this study seeks to investigate on how the budget consultations are publicised.

According to Chambers, (2001), the concern with how and by whom the spaces for participation are shaped intersects as well with debates on the places, or arenas, where critical social, political and economic power resides. According to (Gaventa,2002); some work on power (especially that on gender and power) starts with an analysis of power in more private or 'intimate' spaces, much of the work on public spaces for participation involves the contest between local, national and global arenas as locations of power. Ketley; (1999) argue that participatory development practice must begin

locally, as it is in the arenas of everyday life in which people are able to resist power and to construct their own voice. Gaventa, (2002) also argues that power is shifting to more globalised actors, and struggles for participation must engage at that level. An emerging body of literature (Chantry and Curran; 2002) in the area of decentralisation, for instance, discusses the dynamics of power between the locality and the nation state. While other literature (Fowler and Armstein; 2005) argues for the importance of community or neighbourhood based associations as key locations for building power from below'. As we examine the dynamics of spaces and places for participation, we must also keep in mind this second continuum involving the locations and relationships of place, arenas and power (Gaventa, 2002). As with the earlier continuum, they show that these levels and arenas of engagement are constantly shifting in relation to the other, that they are dynamic and interwoven. Conversely, expressions of global civil society or citizenship may simply be vacuous without meaningful links to the local.

The concept of participation has received an intense scholarly analysis. Participation is mediated through what Harbermas, (1999) term the public sphere (where information is accessible, discussions are liberated or free from domination and where participation is on an equal footing) (Curran, 2002). There are various strands on the debate of participation more recently on citizen participation and engagement (Biekart, 2011) and specifically on civic driven change.

Recently there has also emerged a voluminous body of literature on participation. However, such literature has paid particular attention to the issue of participation, with notable scholars being (Chambers, 2001). On the flipside, there has emerged another strand of debate (between Cooke and Kothari, 2001) who argues that participatory development approaches have failed to bring in meaningful social change. However this study seeks to reveal the real situation for participatory development approaches by exploring the implications of budget consultations on service delivery in selected Marondera suburbs.

A more robust and critical analysis on new emerging forms of participation especially with regards to the participatory democratic governance and citizen participation has been largely missing in the existing literature. In the Zimbabwean context, there seem to be both empirical and literature gaps with regards to the analysis of participatory budgeting system. This is particularly, due to the fact that participatory budgeting is somehow a 'new' concept and practise (praxis). However, grey literature and policy briefs from NGOs, residents trust (i.e. Combined Harare Residents trust, Chitungwiza trust) and CSOs has also paid much attention to the issue. However, there seem to be lack of sustained scholarly analysis by Zimbabwean scholars on this emerging area of concern, yet participatory budgeting remains an important concept in development planning. In the words of (Hickey and Mohan, 2005; 19) 'participation should be conceptualised in terms of an expanded and radicalized understanding of citizenship'. What is also strikingly missing in several literature is the analysis of the agency and efficacy (ability to change things) of citizens. For instance the question of

whether participatory budgeting will translate into better service provision is always inadequately addressed, with the exception of literature from (Hickey and Mohan, *ibid*). Armstein (2002) only focuses on the significance of citizen participation as a way of exercising their voice and as a democratic right. In an article entitled *A ladder of citizen participation* (Gaventa, 2002), there is a three tier model and typology of citizen engagement and participation. Though such model does not relate specifically to the analysis of participatory budgeting in the Zimbabwean context in general and Marondera in particular, it nonetheless, sheds light in as much as it forms our existing analysis on the debates surrounding the citizen participation and engagement in developmental processes. In the same vein, much literature in Zimbabwe and even beyond has placed much emphasis in the role of NGOs/CSOs in bringing development and change. But, without critiquing the contradictions and effectiveness of such participatory frameworks, such arguments have therefore raised critical questions on the nurture and type of participation that is often preached by the NGO movement (Daniels, 2001). Hickey and Mohan (2005) therefore argues that most literature has failed to critically problematize the concept of participation and even the concept of participatory governance and democratic decentralisation (for example in participatory budgeting, Blair, 2000).

It is also fair to argue that most NGOs have therefore used the concept of ‘participation’ as a buzzword in order to lure donors or as a way of legitimising their NGO interventions. The same has also happened at state level as evidenced by the constant referral of participatory budgeting in emerging economies namely South Africa, India and Brazil. It is fair to argue that in most cases the citizens have been ‘participated’. As the genuineness of their participation is always a cause of concern and worry, most NGO literature has simplistically discussed about participation through the ticking and checking of boxes as has often become common with NGO reporting, monitoring and evaluation exercise.

Also in the broad literature of participatory development there has also emerged a critique on how participation models (participatory budgeting) has failed to address socio – economic disparities within/amongst some local authority administration structures and also due to the risks of elite capture thereby undermining and eroding the transformative potential of such participatory models (Francis and James, 2003). Though writing on the case of Uganda, there exists similarities with the situation in Zimbabwe. Writing on the concept of *right to development* (Patel and Mitlin, 2009) also analyses how communities can exercise and claim their citizenship rights from the state through participating in national developmental processes, though on a global level such themes relates with the study of participatory budgeting in Zimbabwe. However, in the case of Zimbabwe there has been a lack of sustained literature that addresses the linkage between citizenship and rights.

As a result most citizens both in the urban and rural spaces have failed to exercise their agency in participating in mainstream development processes such as in participatory budgeting (which is the focus of this study). This study therefore seeks to plug in such an existing lacuna/gap in

the literature. Although there is an emerging body of knowledge on the issue of participatory development, the case of citizen engagement in participatory budgeting remains under explored.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The study data was conducted using the mixed method design because one method (qualitative or quantitative alone) or strategy could not comprehensively address the research problem so the multiple research methods (that is, mixed method design) were preferred. The combined methods were less likely to affect validity in multiple-method design as each method is complete in itself. Mixed method research strategies are able to bring out data on people's experiences, their feelings and emotions which is easily understood (both by the researcher and the respondents) using flexible language for example how the respondents view service delivery in Marondera's selected suburbs. Keyton (2001) views field interviewing as a qualitative research method as it is semi-directed form of discourse or conversation with goal of uncovering the participant's point of view. Interviews were ideal in that they provided the opportunity to interact directly with the participants. Questionnaires were also used. Respondants responded precisely to the same questions in the same order without copying other people's views thereby getting reliable and reducing chances of getting biased information. All were responding to the same stimuli and reliability was high since figures produced can be checked by other researchers (Munetsi, 2001).

3.2 Population

Thomas and Nelson (2001) defines population as any group of individuals that have one or more characteristics in common, that are of interest to the research. Nkala (2004) further postulated it as a group of people with common characteristic at a given place and time that are of interest to the researcher. The study population of this research was 61 998, which was based on the Zimbabwe Census 2012 statistics of Marondera Municipality drawn from the different residential areas of the town namely Lower Paradise, Winston Park, Paradise Park, Cherutombo (medium density), Cherutombo (high density) and Nyameni.

3.3 Sampling procedure

Random sampling, whereby each item in the population has the same probability of being selected as part of the sample as any other was used in this research (Anderson, 2001). For the purpose of this study, the sample size was 20, of which was reached when the researcher was trying to have a minimum number of participants but covering or representing all the locations and stakeholders involved in the Budget Consultations in Marondera town. Two residents (as samples) were drawn from each of the residential areas (high, medium and low density suburbs), flea markets,

taxi operators, church and the school were chosen in trying to get a true representation of the area under study.

4. DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

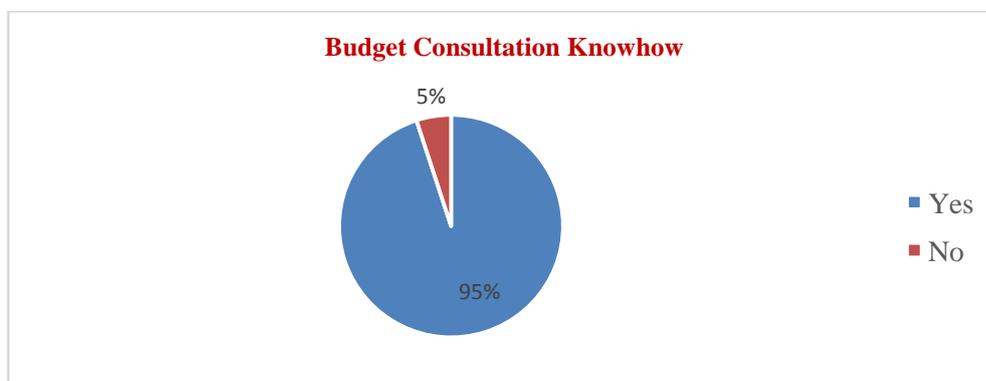
Data presentation, analysis and interpretation was done through the use of qualitative explanations and through diagrammatic presentations in the form of tables, pie-charts, histograms and graphs as a way of presenting the findings that I got from all the respondents from my sample.

4.1 Findings

4.1.1 Budget Consultations Knowhow Distribution

Sample size (N) = 20

Figure 4.1: Budget Consultation Knowhow



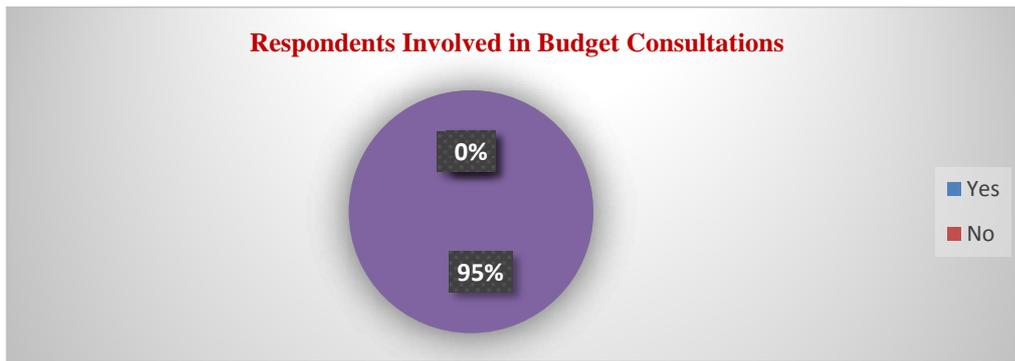
Source: Primary Data (2015)

The pie chart above shows that almost 95% of the respondents had knowledge on Budget Consultations whilst 5% indicates that the interviewees did not know these budget consultations. The findings proved that the majority had some ideas of what budget consultations were and they got this knowledge from the meetings which they attended. When they were invited for budget consultations meetings, they were first educated on budget consultations before the whole process began. One respondent had no idea of what budget consultations was and he justified himself saying that he was staying abroad since the time he completed his O-Level until he came back and started the taxi operating business. The research showed that the budget consultations are publicized enough to reach all stakeholders although some citizens choose to ignore.

4.1.2 Respondents Involved in Budget Consultations

Sample size (N) = 20

Figure 4.2: Respondents Involved in Budget Consultations



Source: Primary Data (2015)

Figure 4.2 above shows that almost 95% of the respondents were involved in Budget Consultations whilst 5% indicates that the interviewee were not involved. This indicates that the majority of the respondents participate and this is because the public really want to be involved in making decisions that affect them, as they are the ones who knows what is best for them or what they expect and not in their lives. For instance in this study, the respondents pointed out that they participated in budget consultations so that the Municipality of Marondera would know what the citizens expected, how the service delivery was done, how much was allocated to each of the selected service. This participation by the majority is appraised and emphasised. This is in line with Chambers (2001) who postulated that there is the PRA (participatory rural appraisal) and the BUA (Bottom-Up Approach) which emphasises the majority’s participation to achieve development which in this case is to have improved service delivery.

4.1.3 Frequency of the Respondents Involvement in Budget Consultations

Sample size (N) = 20

Table 4.4: Frequency of the respondents’ involvement in Budget Consultations

Times Respondent Involved	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Once	10	50
Twice	6	30
Thrice	1	5
Fourth and above	2	10
Total	19	95

Source: Primary Data (2015)

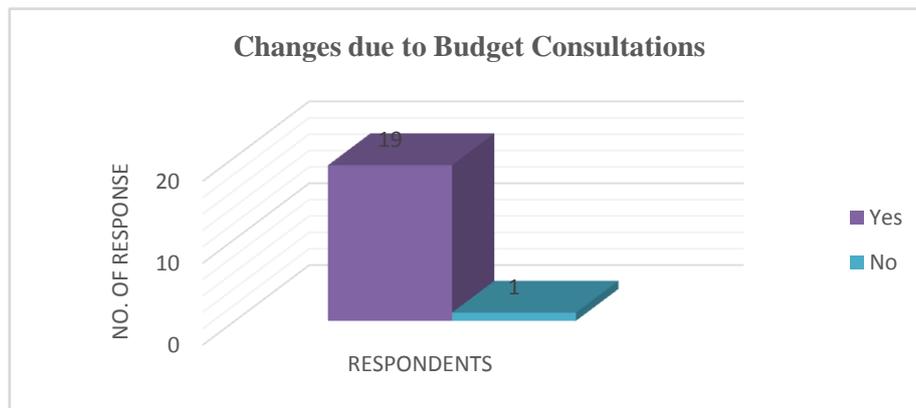
Table 4.4 above shows that 50% of the respondents were involved once in the consultation of the budgets. The reason being that, when they were consulted, they did not see any changes to service delivery. They thought their suggestions were not taken on board, and said it was now a waste of time.

Some respondents were not free to air their views as they felt the meetings were politicised while some indicated that the budget allocations differed from they would have been agreed on during the meetings, hence the majority distanced themselves from attending the meetings. Furthermore, 30% participated twice in the budget consultation, whilst 5% took part thrice and lastly about 10% of the respondents participated four times and above. This showed that maybe the meetings were not fully publicised.

4.1.4 Changes due to Budget Consultations

Sample size (N) = 20

Figure 4.3: Changes in service delivery due to Budget Consultat



Source: Primary Data (2015)

Figure 4.3 above shows that almost 95% of the respondents admitted that there were changes in delivery of selected services due to Budget Consultations whilst 5% indicates that the interviewees did not admit that there were changes. This may be because for instance in water treatment, the majority were not able to drink water directly from the tap, since it was not well purified as this caused a great danger to the health of the people who would suffer from diarrhoea once they consume the tapped water, so they had to boil it first before taking it or they had to use water purifying tablets which is an added expense to the public.

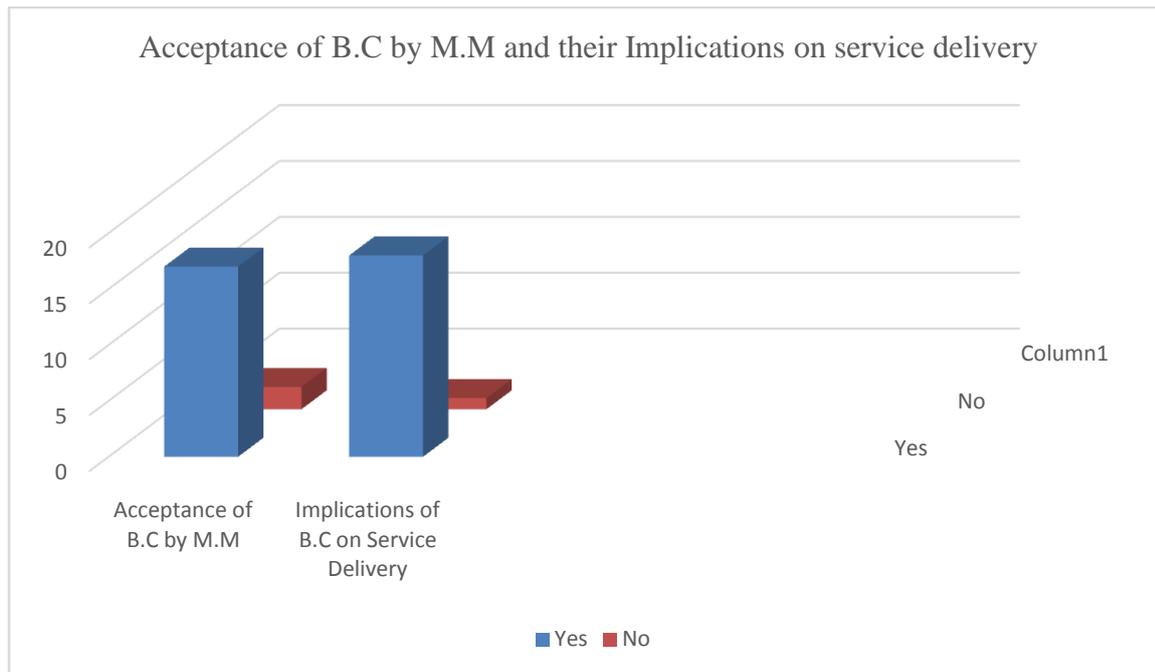
More so, another improvement was on sewerage systems, where residents admitted that they were no longer perennial sewage blockages, which they thought the Marondera Municipality passed a blind eye. But involvement of the residents through budget consultations pointed out that the repairs of these blockages were now done sooner than later, though the respondents understood the current economic situation which the whole nation is experiencing. The minority failed to see the changes, as they felt they were still experiencing poor refuse collection, no road rehabilitation especially in the high density areas, where the municipality did not fill potholes, or where they were filled but with sand, which was easily eroded away by the rains. The study however discovered that

although there are economic challenges, the service delivery in Marondera town improved due to Budget consultations.

4.1.5 Suggestions of Respondents accepted on Budget Consultation and their Implications on service delivery

Sample size (N) = 20

Figure 4.5: Acceptance and Implications of Budget Consultations



Source: Primary Data (2015)

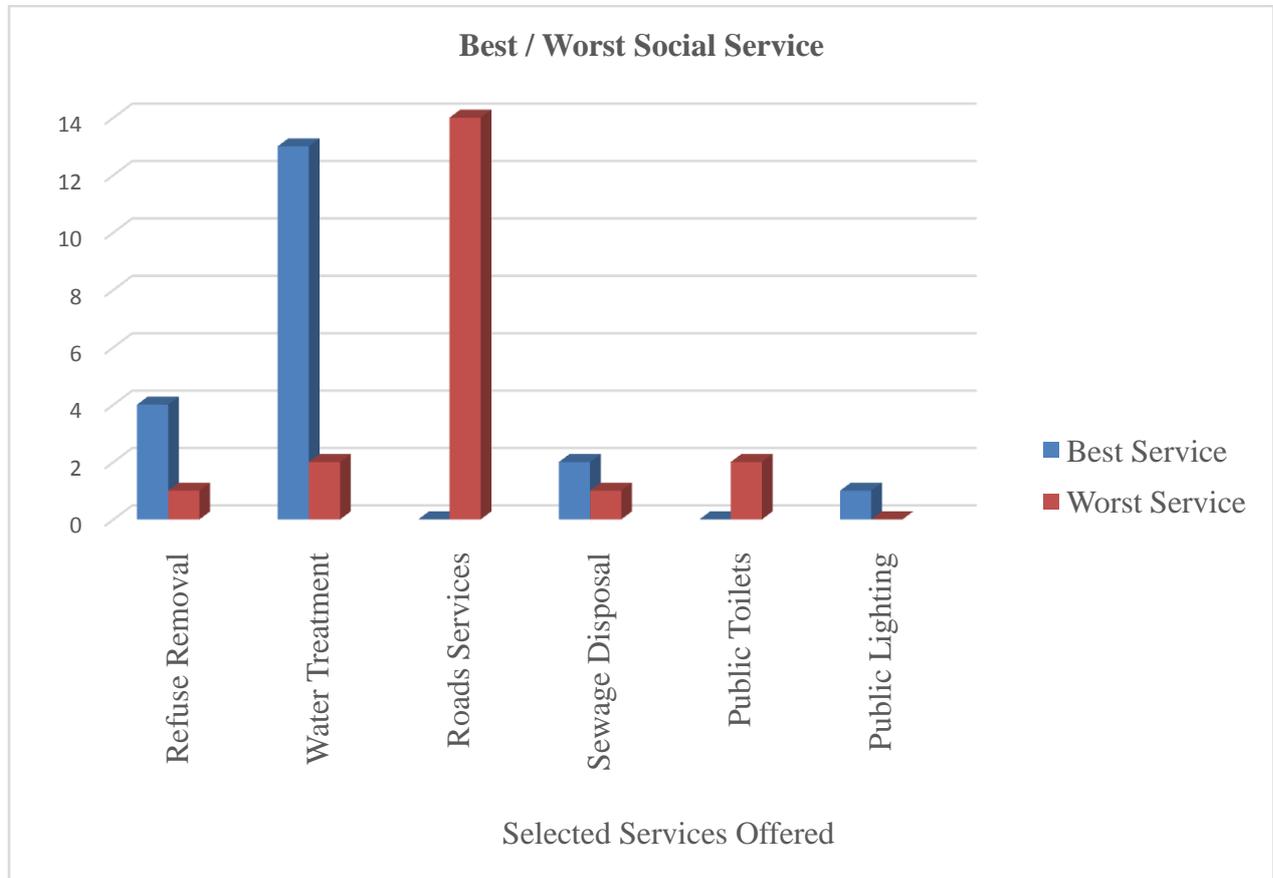
The Figure 4.5 above shows that almost 85% of the suggestions by the respondents towards budget consultations were considered by Marondera Municipality, whilst about 10% were in doubt, as their suggestions were indeed considered. It also shows that about 90% admitted that the budget consultations has helped them in improving service delivery in Marondera suburbs, whilst 5% did not see the implications of these budget consultations on service delivery. This study however established that the majority believed that the Marondera Municipality accepted and considered the people's views, the involvement of these people indeed brought positive implications on service delivery due to budget consultations though there were challenges which included corruption, mismanagement of funds and the current poor economy of the country, as a whole and this hindered development.

Most people agreed that more money should be channelled towards reviving industries and the mining sector in order to create employment for youths. Some participants said treasury should allocate more resources to local authorities in order to improve service delivery. Most cities are facing acute shortages of water, among them Marondera Municipality.

4.1.6 Response on the Best and Worst Selected Social Services

Sample Size (N) = 20

Figure 4.6: Response on Best and Worst Selected Social Services



Source: Primary Data (2015)

Figure 4.6 above shows that 65% - 70% (13 and 14) of the respondents thought social services such as Water treatment was the best and Road services were currently the worst services offered in Marondera Municipality, whilst Public lightning and Public toilets were in Marondera Municipality were also rated as poor.

This study established that the respondents had different views on what were the current and worst social services that were being offered by the Marondera Municipality. The majority of the respondents indicated on the questionnaires that water treatment was currently the best, while other few respondents said that refuse collection, sewerage disposal and public lighting were the best. Respondents' views differed depending with the stakeholder's residential area or occupation for example, taxi operators and the flea market traders rated the public toilets and refuse removal as the worst, whilst residents from the low density suburbs rated road services as the worst and the majority of the high density residents indicated that the worst service were on refuse collection and road rehabilitations.

4.1.7 Public Budget Tracking and Monitoring

There are some respondents who said that there were no monitoring and budget tracking mechanisms to establish if the municipality would have taken into consideration and factored in the people's views, so it was difficult for the residents to know if their views were incorporated. However, there is the Marondera Residents Trust, which is supposed to do the tracking and monitoring of the budgets but due to the limited resources; the trust was not fully functional because the members were not so committed. The Marondera Municipality does not have an open audit to the public and this affects the level of participation from the public since they will not be able to see the real budget and compare with what would have been agreed to by the stakeholders in the budget consultation meetings.

5. SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Discussion

The implications of Budget Consultations on service delivery in selected suburbs in Marondera urban was looked at focusing on the research questions of this study, which was centred on a few selected services, which were refuse removal, water treatment to mention a few. The majority of the respondents revealed that there was a change on service delivery by the Municipality of Marondera due to budget consultations. This could be the fact that their suggestions, during their interaction and consultation times, were considered and hence the improvement in the service delivery. This then proved that budget consultations had positive implication on service delivery by Marondera urban suburbs. This is supported by Thompsons (2005) who posits that service delivery is a component of business that defines the interaction between providers and clients, where the provider offers service, whether that be information or a task, and the client finds value, will be improved due to that interaction. By considering their plights, this continued to cement their relationships between the service provider and the respondents. Farrels (2000) further cited that taking care of the customer and considering their plights anywhere helps to establish a lasting relationship between the company and the client.

The study focused on the specific services and the respondents had different views, as they differentiated the services between the best and the worst. The majority of the respondents indicated that water treatment services were the best being offered by the Municipality of Marondera (through ZINWA), whilst road services were rated the worst. However, according to all the responses in the study, it established that service delivery in Marondera Municipality improved due to budget consultation, since the respondents believed that their suggestions were taken into consideration, considering the current economic situation the country plunged in.

5.2 Conclusion

The study established that Budget Consultations had an influence on service delivery, to a greater extent. There was evidence to show a nexus/link between budget consultations and service delivery in Marondera urban suburbs since most of the respondents mentioned that service delivery was improving due to budget consultations. It can therefore be concluded from this study, among the selected services (refuse collection, water treatment, public lighting, public toilets, sewerage disposal and road services) the researcher focused on, that the majority of the respondents mentioned that water treatment, during that particular period of study, was the best service being offered by Marondera Municipality (and other parastatals such as ZINWA for water and ZINARA for roads), whilst road servicing was rated the worst service.

5.3 Recommendations

The views of the findings of this study were made in an attempt to improve service delivery of selected services in Marondera Municipality, so the researcher recommends that:

- ✚ The Marondera Municipality (together with other parastatals such as ZINARA) should channel more funds to the roads, so that the services will improve and satisfy the residents in terms of communication.
- ✚ Public toilets should be cleaned regularly, so as to avoid health risks to the residents
- ✚ The Municipality of Marondera should respond promptly to sewerage leakages, as this poses a health hazard to the public
- ✚ Resources should be channelled to the Marondera Resident Trust so that they become fully operational.
- ✚ The Marondera Municipality should have an open audit to the public, so as to increase the level of resident participation in budget consultations.
- ✚ Citizen views should be incorporated in the final budget allocations and design.

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