

Imperatives for Good Governance: A Case Study of the Implementation Batho Pele Principles at Durban Home Affairs Regional Level

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KEYWORDS Ethics. Accountability. Corruption. Service Delivery. Attitudes

ABSTRACT Good governance, the rule of law and systems of accountability are essential elements in guaranteeing that resources are equitably shared. These resources are to be used efficiently, effectively and economically. Prior 1994, quality service was only reserved for whites. Given this legacy, the transformation of the South African Government had to be initiated. The endeavours by the African National Congress (ANC) to deal with the ills of the past gave birth to the White Paper on the Transformation of Public Service Delivery (1997). This initiative is underpinned by these principles: consultation, service standards, access, courtesy, information, openness and transparency, redress and value for money. This paper seeks to investigate the importance of good governance. The paper adopted an interpretive qualitative, quantitative methodology. The data suggests that while initiatives are in place to ensure good governance, challenges still exist. Recommendations focus on enhanced procedures relating to Batho Pele to improve good governance.

INTRODUCTION

The image of a government depends upon the conduct of its employees and the perceptions of its citizenry regarding the acceptable standards of services offered by the departments. It is, therefore of crucial importance that government departments act justly and fairly to one and all, not only paying lip service to transparency and openness.

Good governance is an elusive commodity. Bratton and Rothchild (1992) as quoted by Venter (2011:1) state that governance is the practice of good government and it remains, essentially a fragile process that depends on “*the restraint of the ruler*” and “*the tolerance of the ruled*”. The concept of governance refers in a generic sense to the task of running a government (Barkan 1992 as quoted by Venter 2011:6). Crisis on the African continent has been identified as one of governance (World Bank 1989 as quoted by Venter 2011:6).

According to Hyden, 1992 as quoted by Venter (2011:6), there are four major shortcomings that are the causes of bad governance. Firstly, it is the extensive personalisation of power which

then encourages customers’ relations on a two-person or dyadic basis, but discourages the growth of wider forms of trust and reciprocity (Callaghy 1984; Jackson and Rosberg 1982; Joseph 1987 as quoted by Venter 2011:6). Secondly, it is the denial and often widespread abuse of fundamental human rights by errant rulers. Human rights abuses cause many citizens to withdraw from politics, or evade rather than engage political authorities.

Observations

Prior 1994, the South African citizenry has been reluctant to speak out for fear of being jailed or maltreated and instead, has increasingly opted “*to vote with their feet*” in order to escape repressive political control. This can be seen from the decisions/instructions from boardrooms, where foot soldiers (policy implementers/ workers) decided (*asivume konke, kepha singenzi nokukodwa*) to agree with all decisions imposed upon them and end up not implementing any of its undertakings. Thirdly, the prominence and prevalence of an unelected and unaccountable government which manifests itself

in reluctance to decentralise or delegate authority and a tendency to curb any independent political activity outside an institutional network controlled by the ruling party-state. Fourthly, a situation in which the apparatus or resources of the state primarily become the means for elite to acquire wealth, rather than serve as a corrective mechanism to promote social justice and sustainable economic development, consequently this led to widespread and even endemic corruption.

There are three conditions that depict good governance and, by implication, effective problem-solving. Firstly, citizen influence and oversight (the means by which citizens can participate in the political process and thereby express their preferences about public policy; how well these preferences are aggregated for effective policy-making; and what means exist for holding the leadership accountable for their decisions and actions (Hyden 1992 as quoted by Venter 2011:7). Secondly, responsive and responsible leadership: the attitudes of political leaders towards their call of duty as public trustees. This directly speaks to openness of public policy-making or the readiness to share information with citizens and adherence to the rule of law. Thirdly and extremely crucial, is social reciprocity or inter-group tolerance: how far groups demonstrate tolerance of one another in the pursuit of politics and, how far voluntary associations are capable of transcending the boundaries of kinship, ethnicity or race.

Ultimately, good governance requires political reform and renewal, and a concerted attack on corruption. This can be done only by strengthening the transparency and accountability of representative bodies, by free elections in a multiparty system, by encouraging public debates, by nurturing press freedom, by developing civil society organisations and by maintaining the rule of law and an independent judiciary. Omoworare (2010), states that for a few states, good governance is conspicuously absent with visible poverty, dilapidated infrastructure, reckless abandonment of the education, health, transport, agriculture, industrial and other sectors with a direct bearing on the life of the people.

Since the advent of democracy in 1994, several policies relating to service delivery have been formulated and implemented. One such crucial policy is the Batho Pele White Paper gazetted in

1997. Batho Pele, "*People first*", is an initiative that intends to transform the public service at all levels. The democratic South Africa inherited a public service that was not people-friendly and lacked the skills and attitudes to meet the developmental challenges facing the country. In the struggle to transform the public service, there was a need to ensure that citizens are served properly, that all employees work to their full capacity and to treat state resources with respect (South Africa, White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery 1997). The government regional offices are the real delivery arms of government as they are directly in contact with government services beneficiaries and it is where corruption takes place.

Corruption and Its Effects

"*Corruption is the enemy of development and of good governance*" (Patil 2011 as quoted by Venter 2011:1).

Fraud and Corruption are interchangeable terms and therefore their effects on government and beneficiaries are more or less the same. Fraud is a crime of deceiving people in order to get money, while corruption is dishonest or immoral behaviour, by people in official positions.

The political cost of corruption is that it undermines democracy, weakens the developmental state and undermines responsibility, accountability and legitimacy. Corruption engenders perverse political dependencies, negates opportunities to improve the general well being of the citizenry and fosters a climate of mistrust, particularly of public officials. Corruption erodes the "*common good*" and the "*People's Contract*". In eroding the "*People's Contract*", corruption alienates citizens from the very officials they have elected and also alienates people from each other. Corruption distorts and undermines the value systems of all societies. It also overrides any sense of the common good (Fraser-Mokeleti 2008: 46).

Corruption impedes a state's ability to use its available resources to progressively achieve the full realisation of socio-economic rights as resources are instead diverted into pockets of public officials, or development aid is mismanaged, misused or misappropriated. Corruption is costly; the state loses revenue from abuse of taxes, customs levies, licensing fees and traffic fines. It also leads to high spending due to cor-

rupt loadings and fronting on state contracts. According to Mbanjwa (2011: 1-4), the most common cases of alleged corruption relate to fraud and bribery, mismanagement of government funds, abuse of government resources and procurement irregularities. The distortion of policy and resource allocations increases inefficiency.

Corruption also impacts on investment and growth, especially in countries where there is need of foreign productive capital. Foreign investors, especially those likely to make long-term contributions to development, are discouraged, although some investors looking to make fast profits through questionable schemes may try their luck. Furthermore, corruption in aid programmes means less for those most in need and may compromise future funding.

Corruption is costly, not only for the general public but mainly for the poor as resources are diverted away from them. Service delivery and related policy is distorted if allocation and prioritisation are determined by bribes. It means a few benefits at the expense of many which reinforces existing socio-economic inequality and makes the poor even more vulnerable. Structural inequality leads to many being denied access to education, information, and therefore to knowledge about their rights that could enable them to challenge abuse of power.

Good governance is a fundamental right in a democracy and it implies transparency and accountability. Good governance entails “an administration that is sensitive and responsive to the needs of the people and effective in coping with emerging challenges in society by framing and implementing appropriate laws and measures. It includes strict rules of accountability. Corruption exists in both democratic and non-democratic states, but it develops “into an automatic by-product of the latter system and the chances for corrupt practices to be exposed, protested against and punished become much diminished under it”. Mbanjwa (2011: 1-4) states that the Department of Home Affairs (DHA) and the Department of Correctional Services in the Republic of South Africa are the most corrupt departments as per reports based on calls by anonymous whistle blowers to the National Anti-Corruption Hotline between 2004 and 2010. Democratic governance is thus a necessary requirement to fight corruption.

Corruption undermines the rule of law, democratic governance, accountability and sustain-

able development. It breaches the contract between citizens and public officials, and this has grave consequences for any government. Moreover, it is a recipe for the collapse of governance and is a cause of continued failure.

Given that the Department of Home Affairs is the arm of government that is needed by everybody who naturally enters, lives and exits South Africa through various processes, fraud and corruption are quite pervasive in these departmental regional offices. Mbanjwa (2011:1-4) states that the Public Service Commission reported that the majority of cases lodged against the DHA involved the bribing of officials to obtain fraudulent identity documents, passports, marriage certificates and the sale of identity documents to illegal immigrants. Of the 3 554 cases reported to the hotline since 2004, the largest number involved the DHA, with 781 reported but only 142 resolved (Mbanjwa 2011:1-4).

The Public Service Commission expressed concern that lack of action on reported cases of corruption by senior managers and directors-generals is a “*trend*” which compromises the integrity of the hotline and weakens the public’s confidence in government’s commitment towards fighting fraud and corruption (Mbanjwa 2011: 1-4). Fraud and corruption are rife in the Department of Home Affairs and this is evidenced by the arrest of six officials and a marriage officer (Padayachee 2011:6). Padayachee stated that these arrests are part of an ongoing investigation aimed at rooting out corruption in the Department of Home Affairs. The officials arrested were suspected of facilitating “*convenience marriages*” between South Africans and foreign nationals (Padayachee 2011: 3). The Public Service Commission (2007), as quoted by Dorasamy (2009:58) states that concerns regarding service delivery can be attributed to the performance of public officials. Dorasamy (2009:58) argues that sustained efforts to improve standards while expanding services have failed in many of the government departments because of person-to-post mismatch, lack of skills and a lack of performance standards. She further argues that these contributory factors can be linked to egoistic leaders who assumed positions without giving consideration to performance based on accountability and responsibility (Dorasamy 2009:59).

The then Minister of Public Service and Administration, Fraser-Moleketi (2008:46) states that corruption violates the laws of the country.

She further states that it flouts international conventions and treaties and undermines democratic values and ethos (Fraser- Moleketi 2008:46). Chinua Achebe and many other writers, as quoted by Fraser-Moleketi (2008:46) point to the significance of fighting corruption because it erodes the social fabric of society like undermining communities, perpetuating poverty, inequality and underdevelopment. As a country, people must be resolute and steadfast in the fight against corruption in all spheres of society

Fraser-Moleketi (2008:46) stated the following important premises relating to corruption as outlined in the Africa Forum on Anti Corruption held in March 2007: the first premise is that while corruption manifests itself in the relationship between individuals and institutions, corruption, as a practice, is rooted in the operation of market forces, the pursuit of individual prosperity and gain as opposed to the common good. This possessive individualism has undermined the goals and objectives of national and community level development.

The second premise is that corruption is fundamentally undemocratic; it undermines the legitimacy and credibility of democratically elected governments and of responsible and accountable civil servants. The third premise is that corruption is about the interface of political and economic elites at a global, national and regional scale; The fourth premise is that the intentional preoccupation in the global corruption discourse with bribe takers and bribe givers and particularly with bribe takers is disingenuous, ideologically loaded, and simplistic and certainly serves other agendas that are not linked to developmental goals. This discourse needs to be challenged precisely because it overlooks the complexity of the social forces, systems, processes and structures which underpin acts of corruption;

The fifth premise is that corruption is a direct impediment to Africa's development. The sixth premise is that corruption distorts and undermines the value systems of all societies and their peoples and possessive individualism and overrides any sense of the common good; and the seventh premise is that an anti-corruption strategy must be articulated by leaders in the political, economic and civil society spheres and must engage all sectors of society on the basis of a core set of leadership practices and values. The anti-corruption strategy must articulate an alternative ethos and value system.

Unethical behaviour in the South African public service is characterised by the following: the lack of responsiveness to the needs of clients; tardiness in the discharge of duties; manifestations of inefficiency and ineffectiveness, and corruption (Mafunisa 2008:5). According to Mafunisa (2008:9), unethical behaviour often starts at the top of public service leadership, where public service values are not personified and promoted. He attributes this largely to lack of accountability for promoting quality public service. It can be argued that by placing greater accountability on adhering to rules and procedures instead of a similar focus on quality public services, effectiveness and efficiency in the South African public service has been negatively affected.

The White Paper on the Transformation of Public Service Delivery

The White Paper on the Transformation of Public Service Delivery (South Africa 1997:9) highlights the transformation priorities of government, which amongst other things speak of putting people first and is coined 'Batho Pele' in SeSotho. This White Paper includes transforming service delivery to meet the basic needs, while redressing past imbalances. Transformation has to ensure change in institutions or people. Furthermore, it is difficult to talk about transformative institutions without talking about transformative leaders as these are intertwined. Burns (1978) as quoted by Bhengu (2009: 5), defines transformation as, "a process of influencing major changes in the attitudes of employees, so that the goals of the organisation and the vision of the leader are realised".

The White Paper (Batho Pele) states that putting the principles into practice describes what the three spheres government in the Republic of South Africa as well as the wider public sector will be required to do when introducing their service delivery improvement programmes. Van der Waladt (2004: 88) states that Batho Pele principles are simple but ambitious. They are also sufficiently flexible to allow a department to implement them according to local conditions and circumstances. Eight principles for transforming public service delivery- Batho Pele principles- have been identified and formalised in the White Paper on Transformation of Public Service Delivery of 1997. Batho Pele prin-

ciples are in every sense part and parcel of the public sector human resource management (Erasmus et al. 2005: 68).

According to the President of the Republic of South Africa, J G Zuma (2009), by working together, we can ensure that South Africans obtain the services they are entitled to. He urged political parties and civil society to partner with the ruling party, with the common goal of improving service delivery to the public. Glynn et al. (1996: 246) state that effectiveness refers to the extent to which an activity or programme achieves its intended objectives. The exclusive focus is outputs, outcomes and impacts. According to Epstein (1992: 166), effectiveness is the degree to which goods and services meet the needs and desires of the community, client or consumers served. Members of society are not the only customers. National and provincial departments have various internal customers such as staff within their own organisations, as well as other departments and institutions to whom they provide a service (Du Toit et al. 2002: 307).

According to Mapisa-Nqakula (2009), central to the vision of the government departments are their customers, their needs, preferences and, most importantly, the obligation to serve customers in a convenient and efficient way. The twin objective for the improvement of the service systems is to ensure that departments serve their customers efficiently, and to create an identification regime that is sanitised, credible and secured (Nqakula 2009: 4).

Batho Pele principles have the major role in ensuring effective public service delivery and illustrating how the actions of public officials could be regulated. These principles require that customers: be consulted; receive services that comply with set standards; access services; be treated with courtesy; get information about services; be informed of all the costs (transparency); get their problems addressed immediately and receive an apology where due (redress) and receive value for money.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

For the purpose of this study, a case study using the mixed method was used. The study was qualitative and quantitative in nature, using questionnaires, interviews, journals and government publications. According to Sekaran

(2007: 125), case studies are useful in applying solutions to current problems based on past problem-solving experiences. He further states that they are also useful in understanding certain phenomena and generating further theories for empirical testing (Sekaran 2007: 125).

The Department of Home Affairs Durban regional office was used as a case study. Implementation of Batho Pele principles in government departments is bound to differ with each regional office. This means that the findings of a study of this nature may not necessarily apply to all regional offices in a generalised manner. Therefore, a case study approach is most appropriate as it strives to portray 'what it is like' to be in a particular situation, to catch the close up reality and 'thick description' of participants' experiences of thoughts (Geertz 1973). It also reinforces the use of multiple sources of data which, in turn, facilitates the validation of data (Denscombe 2003: 38).

Quantitative research aims to determine how one thing affects another in a population, by quantifying the relationship between variables (Altinay and Paraskevas 2008: 75). The study used questionnaires distributed to staff at the DHA Durban regional office to identify and analyse the various factors impacting on effective and efficient public service delivery.

According to Cooper and Schindler (2008: 162), qualitative research is designed to tell the researcher how (process) and why (meaning) things happen as they do. It aims to achieve an in-depth understanding of a situation. Penzhorn (2002: 244) stated that the qualitative approach involves investigating individuals and phenomena in their natural settings to gain a better understanding of the area under research. The study interviewed customers and some employees at the regional office to determine their perception of customer service.

Data Collection Method

The data collection methods used in this study were questionnaires combined with interviews. These served as primary data collection methods. Leedy (1993: 117) stated that primary data is the information closest to the source of the ultimate truth underlying the phenomenon. He further stated that primary data reflects truth more faithfully than any other approach to truth. These served as primary data collection meth-

ods. The main point here was that the data collected was unique to the researcher and confidentiality of the respondent was guaranteed. A covering letter assured respondents of their anonymity. A consent form was attached to the questionnaire.

Questionnaires are data collection instruments that enable the researcher to pose questions to participants in his or her research for answers to the research questions. The questionnaire gathered primary data. A field worker assisted in the distribution and collection of questionnaires to and from the regional office staff. Qualitative research for this study included interviews. As with any summary information, a pattern may be apparent. This can only be satisfactorily explored by some kind of interview technique (Gillham 2005: 166). Saunders et al. (2003: 280) suggested that it is generally good practice not to rely solely on questionnaire data but to use the questionnaire in conjunction with at least one other data collection instrument.

Therefore, the interview was used as a technique for discourse or interaction between two or more people, in which verbal communication was used to achieve a certain purpose such as gathering or giving information or influencing behaviour (Ziel and Antoinette 2003). In this study the Department of Home Affairs Durban regional office customers were interviewed. Open-ended interviews took the form of a conversation with the intention that the researcher explores with the participants his or her views, ideas, beliefs and attitudes about certain events or phenomena. Interviews were conducted with customers and some members of management at this Durban Home Affairs regional office in order to establish their concerns regarding service delivery and to ascertain whether or not they are treated as the real customers in line with the Batho Pele principles.

Documentary analysis and informal observations were also used for triangulation purposes. Document analysis comprised looking at displayed charts, annual reports and newspaper articles. Informal observations were meant to assist in obtaining a sense of the pressure the employees and customers face in their daily interaction.

Profiling the Case Study: Regional Government Office

There have been numerous reports on poor service delivery by the regional government

offices, thus violating and defeating the sole purpose of the Batho Pele principles of treating citizens more like customers hence the “*people first*” approach. The study is drawn from a case study of the Department of Home Affairs Durban regional office. This is the office, where even foreigners get enabling documents to live and work in South Africa. It is imperative that quality service delivery is not compromised in the said office, since it services densely populated areas such as Durban Central, Durban North and Durban South, thereby making it the largest regional office in KwaZulu-Natal. This office serves approximately 1500 customers per day. It used to have 65 employees but now it is operating with about 50 employees because 10 employees absconded, were suspended, expelled or retired. Furthermore, since the researcher is based in Durban, accessibility to the regional office was not compromised.

The Department of Home Affairs Durban Regional office is at the heart of the city, close to the railway station and the Durban International Convention Centre and the central business district. The geographical location is an important consideration in terms of the extensive area that the regional office is servicing, since it is the only regional office in Durban. This has implications for human resource, material and physical capacity to provide effective and efficient service.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Charting a New Direction for the Regional Office

Leadership literature maintain that effective organisational change begins with the adoption of and adherence to a new vision and mission (Calitz 2002; Clarke 2007 as quoted by Bhengu 2009). Change process in the regional government office started with the management inviting both external and internal customers to participate in decision making and to air their views on service provision. The regional manager had a new vision for institutional change and this was based on five pillars, namely effective, efficient, economical, user friendly and quick service. All these were responsive to all stakeholders in the regional office.

The Impact of Effectiveness in an Organisation

According to Robbins and Coulter (2005: 8), *effectiveness* means completing activities so that

organisational goals are attained, that is, doing the right things. The right things, in this case, refer to those work activities that will help the organisation reach its goals. It is concerned with the means of getting things done; the attainment of organisational goals and can be judged in terms of output and impact. Organisational effectiveness is a measure of how appropriate organisational goals are and how well an organisation is achieving those goals (Robbins and Coulter 2005: 466).

The Department of Home Affairs Durban regional office to be effective in its dealing with customers and stakeholders is now operating during certain weekends and they close later than other offices. This undertaking emanated from the outcry from both external customers and internal customers. The internal customers could not bear pressure of long queues from sunrise to sunset. This was aggravated by the fact that customers would rush to get services from this office before going to their work places, and late in the afternoon they would rush to the offices to get service before the regional office is closed. Another important factor that improved effectiveness in the regional office was separation of functions and sections. This meant that each section would have their own supervisor and its team. Further, the introduction of floor managers made service provision effective in the sense that customers are quickly directed to the relevant section.

The Impact of Efficiency in an Organisation

Efficiency refers to getting the most output from the least amount of inputs. An organisation is considered efficient when it is able to produce the most goods and services using the least amount of inputs. It is also termed doing things right (Robbins and Coulter 2005: 7). It relates to the degree to which outputs are achieved in terms of productivity and input. The Department of Home Affairs Durban regional office managed to be efficient despite, being understaffed, and managed to provide efficient service through restructuring of functions and sections.

Impact of Being Economic in an Organisation

Economical means using the minimum amount of time, effort, or language that is neces-

sary (Collins 2009). This pillar has been beneficial to both employees and customers. Availability of floor managers has impacted on service delivery because this has reduced loitering of customers in the office not knowing where to go.

Impact of a User Friendly System and Quick Service in an Institution

Collins (2009) describes a user friendly system as one that is well designed and easy to use. The regional government office is now user friendly and produces quick service on certain functions. This is evident by well displayed information charts, electronic queuing system, and ability to issue temporal identification documents, ability to issue birth and death certificates within a day of occurrence of entering (birth) and exiting natural processes (death) in South Africa.

DISCUSSION

Implementation of Batho Pele Principles at the Department of Home Affairs Durban Regional Office

According to the White Paper on Transforming Public Delivery, (South Africa, 1997: 15), the Batho Pele policy framework consists of eight service delivery principles as follows:

1. Consultation

Citizens should be consulted about the level and quality of the public services they receive and, where possible, should be given a choice about the services that are offered. Matoti (2011: 1) argues that, on the contrary, like many other public policies, the desired outcome of Batho Pele principles has not been achieved. The first principle recommends that the public be consulted concerning all public service developments. Consultation is interlinked with all eight principles. For example, the promotion of the principles of access requires that consultation takes place with citizens to better understand their needs and to ensure services can be accessible to them. Consultation is critical in the deepening of good governance and democracy. The implementation of the consultative principle should, therefore, transcend mere technical compliance and become an integral part of service

delivery in the Public Service. If departments want to put their customers first, they should listen and take account of their views (consultation).

According to the survey conducted around consultation principle, only 49.09% indicated that consultative mechanisms were used for staff, while 34.55% remained neutral. Majority of the respondents (65.45%) agreed that survey forms contributed to improved service delivery. It was also important to note that 52.73 % of respondents indicated that the public do complete survey forms, which provided important feedback on standards of service at the regional government office.

Although 70.91% of the respondents believed that consultative mechanisms were effective in improving service delivery, only 52.73% indicated that it was used. 80% of the respondents indicated that a suggestion box was available.

Barriers to consultation as cited by management include staff shortage, lack of appropriate monitoring, incapacity and budgetary constraints. Budgetary constraints ranked high as a barrier to consultation, language barrier and literacy featured second. Surprisingly, poor participation emerged as a barrier. Consultation has been described by the respondents as a time consuming principle, but they agreed that if correctly adhered to, it minimises conflicts among the employees and customers.

Amongst the factors that make respondents to be perceived as being not sensitive to needs of public are delays in the processing of enabling documents over which they have no control as they are processed at Head Office. It can be argued that consultation causes unnecessary delays in implementing or taking action. Management is quick to come up with solutions in any given challenge to promote efficient and effective service delivery, but this is always hindered by consultation which is time consuming and which might end up being rejected. The “*us and them*” attitude always makes any decision taken by management to be challenged. For example, the system that one government institution uses to issue reports in 2012 failed, the management instead of writing an instructional circular, decided to go through the consultation process only to discover that the decision they had taken was rejected outright, because the staff did not want to report manually and that

consultation process delayed the issuing of reports by five solid weeks, the intended recipients of reports suffered, because they could not access services that they were going to receive within three days. This would not have occurred if the consultation principle was not observed.

2. Service Standards

Citizens should be told what level and quality of public services they will receive so that they are aware of what to expect;

The survey conducted around level and quality service, reveals that more than a third of the respondents were uncertain or neutral for this section. Apart from the first statement which showed a high level of disagreement, most of the other statements had low levels of disagreement.

Employees responded quite differently to the principle regarding service standards compared to consultation. A higher percentage for each of the statements in this section (service standards) remained neutral compared to the section on consultation. Nicklaus (undated), as quoted by Michelli (2008: 256), is correct when he says that achievement is largely the product of steadily raising one's level of aspiration and expectation.

With regard to the regional government office having its own service standards, the same percentage (34.55%) of respondents agreed and disagreed. It can be argued that there is a lack of consensus on the existence of service standards, which is a cause for concern.

With regard to the involvement of staff members in the development and review of service standards, about 49.09% of the respondents were uncertain regarding involvement and 5.45% disagreed. This reveals that information is shared by a few and possibly not all staff members are involved in this activity. This shows lack of consultation and information sharing in this office.

Regarding performance indicators being linked to service standards, about 60% of the respondents agreed, and about 30.91 % were uncertain. This can have a negative bearing on service delivery in this office. Consistent staff development is an imperative so that all staff members are aware of the service standards and the linkage to performance indicators. With regard to service delivery / commitment charter, about 36.36% of the respondents were uncertain whether the office had a service delivery or

a commitment charter. This possibly may not have been communicated. It can be suggested that gaps in staff awareness of such a charter did exist and this needs to be considered for attention.

Survey conducted around the implementation of service delivery standards, shows that while only 30% indicated that service delivery standards are set well, twice the number of respondents 60% believed that service delivery is efficient. While the majority agreed that service delivery is efficient, the majority did not agree that service standards are set well. It can be argued that if service standards are set well, then service delivery ought to be efficient. However, the responses do not reflect this.

In terms of the White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery (1997), the first step should be to consult customers so as to identify their needs, followed by the setting of service standards based on the identified needs so that customers know what to expect from the departments (South Africa 1997: 15). An accepted standard of service is a necessity, so is equal access to services (Matoti 2011: 1). Matoti (2011: 1) stated that the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) vowed to be transparent in all its dealings. Matoti further argues that, previously, ethics were primarily guaranteed by section 32(a), 42(c and h) of the RSA Constitution, 1996. Such provisions become mere words on paper when the promise is not delivered; and a policy gap exists. Ahmad et al. (2004), as quoted by Matoti (2011: 1), stated that the success of service delivery depends on whether institutions of service provision are accountable to citizens. The public ought to exercise its lawful right, as endorsed by the Constitution's section 41(c), 152(a b, e), and 195(e, f, g). Service standards also speak of a service commitment charter, which is provided by the Head office as the guide which demands that each office designs its own. The Service commitment charter is not a one man's document but it is a collectively designed document that communicates who is in charge, how to deal with complaints and the response time.

3. Access

All citizens should have access to the services to which they are entitled to; the location of the regional office provides adequate access

to services, but due to corruption, people who get quick access and receive favours over the rest of the customers are those who bribe officials in this office. Corruption then becomes a barrier to applying this principle

4. Courtesy

Citizens should be treated with courtesy and consideration. This principle is adequately practised in this office, where customers who are physically challenged, pregnant, and mothers of new born babies are given first priority. The challenge in applying this principle is when people begin to share wheel chairs and babies. This now makes employees to be perceived as inconsiderate when they happen to notice the habit of sharing items that makes them get preferential treatment.

5. Information

Citizens should be given full, accurate information about the public services they are entitled to receive.

Survey conducted around provision of information indicates that there is a general pattern of agreement with the statements in this section regarding the cascading of information to staff and customers. On average, about two-thirds of the respondents are happy with the manner in which information is cascaded. Shorter queues has been cited as the evidence that information provision is adequate because customers they don't stand in wrong queues for hours, but with this automatic queuing system, customers are directed to the relevant queues with the assistance of floor managers.

The presence of floor managers in this office has improved service delivery, since they are directly accessible to customers. As they walk in to the regional office, customers are given an opportunity to declare the purpose of their visits, and then they are directed to the relevant section.

Regarding long queues, the queuing system has made processing easier for both customers and staff. When one enters the office, the floor manager asks the purpose of the visit, and one is then given a queuing ticket, with the number that will appear on the information screens which then directs the customer to the next available teller.

Information sharing and access to latest circulars has a positive bearing on service delivery in the regional government office. The long queues cited as amongst the problems hindering service delivery at the regional government office in the literature review has been addressed. This is confirmed by customers interviewed and observations by the researcher. Accessibility to information is imperative for staff to execute their duties, while recognising that they need to be informed to address queries from customers. More so, well informed employees can contribute to processing applications and queries more effectively and efficiently, thereby reducing the waiting time in queues.

The following paragraph relates to survey conducted around general comments regarding information provided by the regional government office.

18.2% of respondents believed that information provided to the public is adequate. The public has different mindsets about the regional government office. The public perception will always differ. The reason for different perception emanates from bad past experiences, current positive experiences and wide negative media publications. Usefulness of the information system reflects that customers know about the services offered by the regional government office in the case study. This has also been confirmed by customers interviewed, they stated that even the posters displayed at this office, often minimises the stay at the office. The introduction of cell phone enquiries, informs the customer of the stages in the processing of enabling documents and marital status as inconvenience and fraudulent marriages have occurred in this office and whether one is still alive or not (Padayachee 2009: 4). The introduction of different forms of media coverage promotes the principle of access to information. Information must be published in all languages, amongst the wall charts and posters displayed there are English and isiZulu publications. About 36.4 % of respondents stated that there is lack of staff training and availability of modern technology. For this office to be effective and deliver services efficiently, Human Resource and Development has to take a lead in empowering personnel.

About 20 % of respondents indicated that there is a big change in the offices. The offices are now clean, information on the walls in the form of charts and information brochures is dis-

played. Over-crowding in this office has been adequately addressed through the introduction of the electronic queuing system. The time one spends in this office is now reduced because of visibility of floor managers and cell phone enquiries. One respondent said in her last visit, she spent almost 3 hours queuing to enquire about her identity book, but now she is able to enquire about the stages of enabling document processing from the comfort of her home.

One respondent from Africa highlighted that there are big changes in the manner that the office is being managed, and he spoke of the reduction in overcrowding and tighter controls in accessing enabling documents. This suggests that the regional government office is now Batho Pele compliant. However, major intervention still needs to be considered to cater for the deaf and blind people, as amongst the staff there is no one who interprets sign language and Braille forms are not available. As a result for these people to receive and access service through information principle, they have to be accompanied by friends and family members.

6. Openness and Transparency

Citizens should be told how national and provincial departments are run, how much they cost, and who is in charge; This is a very dicey principle; it protects the accounting officer from temptation and insults which may lead to expulsion due to theft or mismanagement of resources. It protects only if correctly adhered to it. If it is not adhered to it becomes a territory of fraud and corruption, thereby leading to poor service delivery. According to Maseko (2008: 16), public servants have degenerated into think tanks for the vulnerable. Sometimes, they think that delivering a service is like a favour that they are doing for their communities. He suggested that extensive consultation should be done in ensuring that public funds are effectively and efficiently utilised for the benefit of those who need government services. The White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery, (South Africa 1997), states that openness and transparency are the hallmarks of a democratic government and are fundamental to the public service transformation process. According to Crous (2004: 582), transparency in the public service helps keep the public service clean, effective, and free from nepotism and corruption. Maseko (2008:

16) believes that the gap between managers and foot soldiers creates a void which impacts negatively on service delivery.

7. Redress

If the promised standard of service is not delivered, citizens should be offered an apology, a full explanation and a speedy and effective remedy; and when complaints are made, citizens should receive a sympathetic, positive response; and apology.

Survey conducted around redress measures depicts that the average level of disagreement for this section was 14%. An agreement level is slightly more than half regarding complaint mechanisms. The levels of uncertainty (neutrality) were about a third. It seemed that staff members' uncertainty about whether the complaints mechanisms and procedures were effectively and efficiently implemented showed a lack of information to staff regarding redress.

Regarding the regional government's complaint management system, about a third of respondents were uncertain whether this office had a complaint management system. This indicates that information sharing in this office is inadequate. It also reveals that only a few employees knew of this system and it is likely to be employees in management. About 57 % of respondents were uncertain about the effectiveness and efficiency of handling complaints and mechanisms and implementing policies and procedures. This also highlights that "foot soldiers" are not given information. Maseko (2008: 16) suggested that leadership and management should always strive to increase interaction with stakeholders. He further stated that staff members in government departments do not even know the vision, mission and strategic objectives of their departments, but they are expected to deliver.

Survey conducted around suggestions to improve service delivery depicts that two-thirds (66.7%) of the respondents indicated that employees' concerns should be investigated. If employees' concerns are not addressed, this can negatively impact on their performance and can possibly hinder effective and efficient service delivery.

The White Paper speaks of how customers should be treated and development of the redress mechanism in cases where the actual de-

livery of services falls short of the promised standard. Respondents stated that to follow up on redress cases take forever because calls are not answered in Head Office timeously and yet they are dealing with continuous queues of people eagerly waiting to be assisted. One respondent reported that technological challenges as indicated below impact negatively on effective and efficient service delivery.

"As I speak to you now, we are off-line and customers have been waiting for the past 20 minutes. Some are in the queues for temporary identity documents, which can be processed at this office but if technology is giving us problems, how can we then be expected to deliver at our utmost best?"

The respondent suggested that the Head office must provide and devise strategies to deal with frequent off-line situations, bearing in mind that customers travel from far and wide to the department. Redress is a difficult principle to apply as it involves all levels in the hierarchy in any given department or institution.

Respondents in management reported that they have undergone specialised training and some have been in the department for quite some time. In relation to Batho Pele principles, they do understand the concepts, but somehow it becomes difficult for them to adhere to them, due to centralisation of functions. With regard to the principle of redress, they stated that while they are able to apologise on behalf of the department, they are not able to quick fix the problem or errors in enabling documents. They are not even able to tell customers the turnaround time as these are referred to the Head Office in Pretoria.

8. Value for Money

Public services should be provided economically and efficiently in order to give citizens the best possible value for money. Public servants never or hardly think why they are paid a salary or why they are given appointment letters when given the position that they occupy in government. Some think they are appointed to improve their lifestyles (Maseko 2008: 17).

According to Maseko (2008: 17), public servants need to ensure that they strengthen the organisational culture specifically, and to uphold set standards by ensuring that budgets are spent as per strategic plan. He highlighted that

the Public Finance Management Act 1 of 1999 is explicit in terms of expenditure patterns (do not spend a cent if you do not have a plan).

The foremost challenge that makes government departments seem to be dysfunctional is the fact that employees tend to forget their core duties and focus on scrutinising each and every decision that the top management takes.

CONCLUSION

The Department of Home Affairs has long been considered as one of the weakest arms of government. At the same time, its mandate makes it an essential component of a full service package for bonafide citizenry and international visitors. Based on tireless endeavours by various Department Ministers, governed by the Public Service Act 103 of 1994 and various pieces of legislation since 1994, the department has made tremendous progress regarding service delivery. The findings of this study reflect that while employees in the office of study do understand the concept of Batho Pele, the benefits of the comprehensive application of all the principles still needs to be realised if service delivery is to be enhanced. The regional government office has made an improvement on service delivery, but there are still factors that require consideration to eradicate the gaps in effective and efficient service provision.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The office of study is the only regional office in an urban area. Out of 65 employees, only 40 are on duty, due to the fact that the rest are unavailable as a result of expulsion, abscondment and suspension. This has a negative impact on service delivery. To enhance an effective and efficient service delivery in this office, additional staff (casuals and interns) needs to be employed until staff problems have been resolved.

The implementation of Batho Pele principles should be incorporated in the performance contract of all the employees of the Department. The job description of the employees should reflect the standards so that implementation is guaranteed as the job description informs the performance contract. Every employee of the Department should be assessed and evaluated on the implementation of the principles in their

daily duties. An effective monitoring and evaluating tool must be used to ensure the effectiveness of Batho Pele principles application in the government regional office.

There should be greater awareness of the presence of service standards within the regional government office, so that all employees are educated on its value and relevance for public service delivery. This can be achieved through displays, workshops and development programmes.

A Service Charter should be developed to give details about the type, quality and quantity of services to be provided by the Department. The Charter will also give details regarding location of service access points and contact details of responsible staff. Information about the Complaint Management Systems utilised in the Department and responsible staff should also be reflected on the Charter.

Communication with staff regarding the important levels of service delivery is necessary to ensure that all staff and not just a few are aware of procedures and processes guiding effective and efficient service delivery.

Feedback mechanisms should be regulated to inform staff on challenges facing service delivery, so that staff can be part of the process to improve services at the Department and what specific initiatives are institutionalised to address this.

Mechanisms to monitor levels of service, apart from survey forms need to be considered. A multi-dimensional approach to determine effective and efficient service delivery will provide vital information such as whether people's needs are responded to within reasonable time. For example, an analysis of the number of customers that are attended to within a specific time, using the electronic queuing system, can provide important information to set targets to increase the rate of processing queries.

There is a need for training and development of staff, which is important not only for career development, but also for motivation of staff in respect of service delivery initiatives. There is a need to consider staff complaints as this provides valuable input that can turnaround performance in the department. Since staff are also customers and are often directly involved with the public, their complaints often constitute primary data which should not be ignored for any service delivery improvement initiatives.

The Department's internal customers' concern of redress is impossible to apply fully because some of the functions are centralised and they really don't have a say and yet those functions are the ones that have many errors in enabling documents and turnaround time cannot be predicted. So decentralisation of functions may be the solution, because the regional office will be able to take ownership of errors. Management teams play a pivotal role in providing strategic leadership and leading by example. There should be greater monitoring in terms of management "walking the talk". This will motivate staff to follow the principles underpinning the "people first" approach.

Awards or incentives should be provided to diligent and committed employees. This can be done through the introduction of "*Employee of the Month*", where the regional government office customers will be given a chance to choose the best employee who is fully Batho Pele compliant. Capacity building workshops around adherence to Batho Pele principles must be instilled in all stakeholders, more importantly the "*foot soldiers*" (implementers). The do's and don'ts must also be instilled. This will minimise challenges on application of Batho Pele principles and enhance an effective and efficient public service driven by leadership which prioritises the needs of the public.

Effective, efficient and economical service provision can also be improved if Batho Pele principles can be aligned to employment contracts and employees be evaluated against them. Management should also be given powers to suspend and expel if the need arises, this will eradicate the attitude of lazy employees who regard government managers as "*toothless dogs*".

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