

Challenges Encountered by the Rose Hall Town Municipality and Kilcoy/Hampshire N.D.C. in Resource Management to Ensure Effective and Equitable Service Delivery

Marvin Mahendra Dindyal*, and N. S. Shanthi

Department of Management, Texila American University, Guyana

Abstract

This study investigated the challenges encountered by the Rose Hall Town Municipality and the Kilcoy/Hampshire Neighbourhood Democratic Council (N.D.C.) in managing resources for development to ensure effective and equitable service delivery. The research identified several critical obstacles, including limited financial resources, inadequate infrastructure, organizational inefficiencies, and governance issues. The study revealed a strong consensus among the surveyed population through a comprehensive analysis, indicating general agreement on the challenges and the effectiveness of current practices. This consensus underscores the need for a multifaceted approach to address these challenges, which included infrastructure upgrades, capacity building, enhanced financial management, and increased community engagement. The findings provided a solid foundation for continuing or enhancing existing strategies to improve resource management and service delivery, ultimately contributing to the well-being of all residents within these local governance frameworks.

Keywords: *Efficiency, Financial, Local Government, Management, Municipality, Neighborhood Democratic Council (N.D.C.).*

Introduction

Local government bridges the gap between citizens and the government, enabling citizens to actively fulfill their democratic roles. Local or municipal government is a group of elected individuals responsible for managing affairs and representing the people in a specific geographical area [27]. In Guyana, the debate is centered around the effectiveness of local governance in meeting the needs and expectations of those who rely on its services. These services are essential for human existence and must be efficient especially when the administration is guided by laws. Over time these services are diminishing to a level where the Local government is useless. This study will focus on two local government areas; the Rose Hall Town Municipality and the Kilcoy Hampshire Neighbourhood Democratic Council (N.D.C.) to determine whether they are

efficient and effective in the services they provide to residents.

The objective of identifying the challenges encountered by the Rose Hall Town Municipality and the Kilcoy/Hampshire Neighbourhood Democratic Council (NDC) is to understand the key obstacles these local governing bodies face in fulfilling their responsibilities. By assessing the impacts of the challenges on service delivery, the goal is to evaluate how effectively essential services are being provided, and to identify areas where improvements can be made to better meet the needs of the communities.

Local government is an elected entity responsible for implementing measures within a specific area, encompassing administrative, legislative, and executive functions [24]. In Region Number Six- East Berbice Corentyne, there are 18 N.D.C.s and 3 Municipalities [23].

The Central Government provides a yearly subvention to assist with developmental projects. Further, Local Government Organs gave provision for the collection of mandatory rates and taxes, including burial ground fees, building application fees, property tax, market landing fees, stall rentals, and machinery and equipment rentals [22]. This mandatory function cannot be overlooked since it would stifle development or service delivery. However, a financial problem exists in Region 6, 54% of property tax was collected from the residents [12]. This issue is encountered by almost all N.D.C.s and municipalities in Guyana. It is a cyclical issue as residents refuse to pay due to lack of or poor services offered while the N.D.C.s and Municipalities are unable to provide services due to financial constraints. Local governance plays a crucial role in shaping the quality of life and well-being of communities. It serves as the interface between citizens and authorities, providing a platform for community participation, representation, and effective service delivery. In the context of the Kilcoy/Hampshire N.D.C. and Rose Hall Town Municipality, understanding and enhancing local governance are vital steps toward creating vibrant and responsive communities. These entities offer a range of essential services that impact the social, health, and environmental well-being of residents within these two locales.

There is a growing discourse over the ability of local governance in Guyana to fulfill the requirements and anticipations of the individuals relying on the services they offer. Like all other N.D.C.s and Municipalities, the Kilcoy/Hampshire N.D.C. and the Rose Hall Town Municipality may be seen to have an ineffective system of service delivery. Efficiency is impacted by a variety of elements, including management, administration, legal issues, and finances. Every component may present different obstacles depending on the local policymaker's ideology and logic. Regardless of the political inclination of those

participating in the organization. The purpose of this study is to identify the key factors that affect local governance in the Kilcoy/Hampshire N.D.C. and the Rose Hall Town Municipality in resource management to ensure efficiency.

Research Questions

What are the primary challenges faced by the Rose Hall Town Municipality and Kilcoy/Hampshire N.D.C. in managing resources for development to ensure effective and equitable service delivery?

Review of Literature

The existence of any organization that provides public goods must have a firm and solid financial base that can suffice developmental works [6]. In Guyana, inefficient development and service delivery are prevalent due to residents' inability to pay rates and property taxes [17]. In Region No. 6, the majority of the residents do not pay more than 3000 Guyana dollars in taxes per year [13]. A simple calculation will show that this amount cannot suffice the daily activities of the Municipality and NDC much less provide services to the residents. This financial issue is often reflected in a high balance of payment which hinders developmental work and outstanding wages for workers [25]. The projects on the Municipality and N.D.C. work plan cannot be executed due to a continuous financial shortage. Rising prices could lead to increased project costs, requiring a balance between service demand, declining revenues, unfunded mandates, and substantial infrastructure expenses [26].

Financial sufficiency can lead to tremendous development and service delivery. The Fiscal Transfer Act of 2013 commonly called a subvention, stipulates the transfer of resources from the Central Government to Local Government annually [20]. In 2020, all Municipalities and NDCs received an increased subvention [5], to ensure better service delivery

in areas of infrastructure and solid waste management. The subvention is divided into 50% conditional, with directives for its use, and 50% unconditional [20]. Municipalities and NDCs lack total budgetary freedom as the 50% unconditional funding is insufficient for the undertaking of developmental works and service delivery.

An Act of Parliament 1959 established the Valuation Division Chapter 28:04, to make provision for the Valuation of Property for Rating Purposes and matters connected therewith [21]. The current assessment rates of properties used in Guyana are outdated, so the rates paid don't accurately reflect the property's value [2].

To sustain high levels of efficiency, transparency is critical for public scrutiny of the organization's operations to be permitted [15]. Financial planning and budgetary allocations are information that should be made public to residents within the two locals under study [30]. Residents often lack participation in budget consultations and meetings, hindering the Municipality and NDC from better assessing their needs. As specified in the local government budget planning cycle, stakeholders and residents should be included in the planning process [20]. Residents must be proactive in the services they receive and when these services are inefficient or ineffective, their role is to investigate the root cause. Local councils are held accountable for monitoring initiatives, tracking financial conditions, and assessing resource availability [8]. The N.D.C.s and Municipalities' financial resources are strongly impacted by rising overhead expenditures as funds for essential activities or services will be lost [16]. Many public services, including infrastructure, healthcare, education, and more, are provided by municipalities and NDCs. A decrease in the funding allotted to these services may have an impact on their accessibility and quality.

Local government agencies require knowledgeable management to effectively

execute their mission, vision, and objectives [7]. Residents become dissatisfied with the level of services due to untrained or unqualified personnel in administrative positions. Issues are not resolved in a priority manner, which is a failure on the part of local government representatives [28]. Residents often wait days for responses or action, losing confidence in administration due to inefficiency in Municipalities and NDC's responsibilities.

Local councils manage district projects, providing direction, supervision, and control to executive organs, and assessing the effectiveness of their plans and initiatives [8]. Management and administration must be visionary in plan implementation and always be in a state of preparedness to deliver.

High staff turnover may result from poor personnel policies, poor supervision, lack of motivation, and low wages/salaries [1]. The NDC and Municipality financial challenges are not only impacting residents but also workers within these entities. In many instances, staff do not receive their salary monthly but rather whenever money is available [14]. The Municipality and NDC face a cyclical issue with uncollected rates and taxes, staff unpaid, and a shortage of staff, hindering efficient services.

The loss of a key employee can negatively impact innovation, disrupt service consistency, and cause significant delays [19], affecting basic services like garbage collection and leading to environmental and public health issues.

The Local Government Development Agenda 2019-2025 aimed to enhance service delivery by introducing vehicles and equipment to meet the unique needs and circumstances of each local government area [22]. An assessment done indicated that numerous Municipalities and NDCs lack the necessary machinery, equipment, or tools to perform basic services for their residents [22]. Mismanagement of equipment hinders adequate service delivery [13]. Illegal dumping

of garbage and temporary illegal dumpsites pose challenges for Municipalities and NDCs [11]. Illicit dumping can cause environmental harm, health risks, and cleanup costs, while roadside litter can deteriorate soil quality and air quality.

Methodology

A quantitative descriptive design was done to determine why the services offered at the Kilcoy/Hampshire N.D.C. and the Rose Hall Town Municipalities were inefficient as they related to the challenges in resource management. The study population was drawn from six villages within the N.D.C. and two wards in the Municipality. Using the Yamane formula, the number for the sample was determined. The stratified sampling technique was used as the population was divided into stratum representing their community. After that, simple random sampling was done from the 8 strata to arrive at the study sample. A subject-completed questionnaire, developed by the researcher was used to gather data. The questionnaires comprised of two sections; section 1, the biodata section, and section 2 took the format of a Likert Scale aimed at gathering data. Validity was tested through Content Criterion with the use of four experts drawn from the field of local governance, research, and administration. Pilot testing was done using five residents from each stratum who were randomly selected and were not part of the sample. Data was analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software. The mean and standard deviation were explained for easy conceptualization and understanding.

Analysis of Results

Participants were asked to assess whether service provision capacity depended on owned revenues. The results showed that a majority agreed with this statement, with 3.4% strongly disagreed, 5.2% disagreeing, 8.6% remained neutral, 61.6% agreed, and 21.3% strongly

agreed. The mean response was 3.92, close to Agree, indicated a positive consensus. The standard deviation was 0.90, suggested that most responses were moderately dispersed around the mean

Question 2 evaluated whether a high balance of payments hindered the developmental work. The findings showed that 0.8% strongly disagreed, 4.4% disagreed, 4.7% were neutral, 69.9% agreed, and 20.3% strongly agreed. The mean response was 4.05, which indicated a strong positive consensus. The standard deviation was 0.71, reflected fairly consistent responses that were closely clustered around the mean, suggested general agreement among respondents

Question 3 investigated the link between financial shortages and incomplete projects. The results revealed that 0.8% strongly disagreed, 4.2% disagreed, 4.4% were neutral, 65.7% agreed, and 24.9% strongly agreed. With a mean of 4.10, the responses show a strong inclination towards agreement. The standard deviation of 0.72 indicated that the responses were fairly consistent and closely clustered around the mean, reflected consensus among the respondents.

Question 4 assessed whether residents failed to pay rates and taxes. The findings showed that 0.3% strongly disagreed, 2.6% disagreed, 3.1% were neutral, 63.4% agreed, and 30.6% strongly agreed. The mean of 4.22 was recorded indicating a strong inclination toward agreement. The standard deviation of 0.65 suggested consistency around the mean.

Question 5 explored whether insufficient funds prevented the Municipality and NDC from collecting garbage. The results showed that 1.3% strongly disagreed, 4.2% disagreed, 2.3% were neutral, 58.4% agreed, and 33.8% strongly agreed. The mean response of 4.19 indicated a strong inclination toward agreement. With a standard deviation of 0.77, the responses were fairly consistent and closely clustered around the mean, reflecting high

consistency and agreement among the respondents.

Question 6 examined whether the 50% unconditional subvention was insufficient to carry out services. The findings showed that 1.3% strongly disagreed, 3.1% disagreed, 4.4% were neutral, 61.6% agreed, and 29.6% strongly agreed. The mean was 4.15, indicating a strong tendency toward agreement. The standard deviation of 0.74 reflected a high degree of agreement with minimal variability among respondents.

Question 7 examined whether the current rates of assessment were outdated. The results showed that 0.8% strongly disagreed, 3.9% disagreed, 3.4% were neutral, 51.4% agreed, and 40.5% strongly agreed. The mean response was 4.27 indicating a high level of positive consensus. The standard deviation of 0.76 suggested that the responses were fairly consistent and clustered around the mean, reflecting strong agreement among respondents.

Question 8 explored the idea that financial planning should be made public. The survey results showed that 0.8% strongly disagreed, 3.9% disagreed, 3.6% were neutral, 57.7% agreed, and 34.0% strongly agreed. The mean response was 4.21, indicating a strong positive consensus among respondents. The standard deviation of 0.76 reflected consistent responses closely clustered around the mean, suggesting a high degree of agreement with minimal variability.

Question 9 investigated whether residents participate in budgetary meetings. The results indicated that 0.5% strongly disagreed, 4.4% disagreed, 6.5% were neutral, 50.6% agreed, and 37.9% strongly agreed. With a mean of 4.21, the responses suggested a strong tendency towards agreement. The standard deviation of 0.79 indicated that responses were closely grouped around the mean, reflecting a high degree of agreement with minimal variability among respondents.

Question 10 assessed the impact of rising overhead expenditure on financial resources. The results showed that 4.2% strongly disagreed, 3.1% disagreed, 18.7% were neutral, 52.7% agreed, and 21.3% strongly agreed. The mean response of approximately 3.84 indicated a tendency towards agreement, but with a significant portion of respondents leaning towards neutrality. The standard deviation of 0.93 suggests a moderate amount of dispersion in responses, reflecting a broader range of opinions from "Neutral" to "Agree."

Question 11 explored residents' waiting periods for services. The results showed that 1.3% strongly disagreed, 6.8% disagreed, 6.0% were neutral, 69.4% agreed, and 16.6% strongly agreed. The mean response 3.93 suggested that most respondents lean towards agreement. The standard deviation of 0.78 indicated that responses were fairly consistent and closely clustered around the mean, reflecting a positive level of agreement among respondents.

Question 12 assessed the impact of high staff turnover on productivity. The results showed that 1.8% strongly disagreed, 5.5% disagreed, 4.4% were neutral, 59.7% agreed, and 28.6% strongly agreed. The mean response of 4.08 suggested a strong tendency towards agreement. The standard deviation of 0.84 indicated a moderate spread in responses, with most being close to the mean but with some variability, reflecting a consensus with slight differences in opinion.

Question 13 explored whether poor service delivery was due to inadequate machinery. The results showed that 0.3% strongly disagreed, 3.9% disagreed, 4.4% were neutral, 61.8% agreed, and 29.6% strongly agreed. The mean response of approximately 4.17 indicated a strong tendency towards agreement. The standard deviation of 0.70 suggested that responses were fairly consistent and closely clustered around the mean, reflecting a strong consensus among respondents.

Question 14 assessed the challenges posed by illegal dumping of garbage. The results showed that 1.8% disagreed, 3.4% were neutral, 57.1% agreed, and 37.7% strongly agreed. The mean response of approximately 4.31 indicated a strong tendency towards agreement. The standard deviation of 0.62 suggests that responses were fairly consistent and closely clustered around the mean, reflecting a strong consensus among respondents.

Discussion of Results

The study highlighted that both the Rose Hall Town Municipality and Kilcoy/Hampshire N.D.C. faced significant challenges in allocating resources efficiently. The data suggested that while there is a general agreement on the need for improved resource management, practical constraints often hindered the effective distribution of resources. This led to disparities in service delivery among different areas within the Municipality and NDC.

A recurring theme in the findings is the lack of adequate infrastructure and capacity to manage and deploy resources effectively. The municipalities struggled with outdated infrastructure and insufficient capacity, which impeded their ability to deliver services equitably. The mean scores across various questions reflected a consensus on the need for upgrading infrastructure and enhancing organizational capacity.

Financial limitations were a significant challenge for both locales. The survey responses indicated that budget constraints frequently impact their ability to undertake development projects and maintain existing services. The limited financial resources constrain their capacity to address the diverse needs of their communities effectively.

The study also pointed to governance and administrative issues as barriers to effective resource management. Inconsistencies in administrative practices and governance

structures contributed to inefficiencies and affect the overall effectiveness of service delivery.

Effective and equitable service delivery was further challenged by insufficient community engagement and feedback mechanisms. The data displayed a need for better engagement with residents to understand their needs and incorporate their input into resource management strategies.

The findings underscore the necessity for the Rose Hall Town Municipality and Kilcoy/Hampshire N.D.C. to address these challenges through targeted strategies. Improving infrastructure, enhancing capacity, and securing additional financial resources are critical steps towards overcoming the identified obstacles. Additionally, strengthening governance and administrative processes, along with increasing community engagement, will play a crucial role in ensuring that resources are managed effectively and services are delivered equitably.

Recommendations

Invest in modernizing infrastructure to improve service delivery and resource management capabilities.

Enhance the administrative and operational capacity of the municipalities to better handle resource allocation and service delivery.

Develop strategies to secure additional funding and optimize budget utilization to address financial constraints.

Review and refine governance and administrative processes to ensure transparency and efficiency in resource management.

Implement mechanisms for better community engagement to align resource management with the actual needs and priorities of residents.

Conclusion

The study reveals that both the Rose Hall Town Municipality and Kilcoy/Hampshire N.D.C. face significant challenges in managing

resources to ensure effective and equitable service delivery. The study reveals a strong consensus and positive feedback suggesting that the surveyed population generally agrees with the topic addressed. This uniformity implies that the current practices, policies, or conditions assessed are largely perceived favorably. This strong agreement provides a solid foundation for continuing or enhancing current strategies and practices. Addressing these challenges requires a multifaceted approach that includes upgrading infrastructure, enhancing organizational capacity, securing additional financial

resources, improving governance, and increasing community engagement. By tackling these issues, the municipality and NDC can improve their ability to manage resources effectively and deliver services that meet the needs of all residents. The study aimed to explore the primary challenges faced by the Rose Hall Town Municipality and the Kilcoy/Hampshire Neighborhood Democratic Council (N.D.C.) in managing resources to ensure effective and equitable service delivery. The findings reveal several key insights into the difficulties encountered by these local government entities.

Table 1. Characteristic of Research Population

Village	Stratum Number	Number of Participants
Rose Hall Town	1	50
Williamsburg	2	47
Hampshire	3	50
Belvidere	4	50
Nigg	5	50
Albion	6	46
Chesney	7	46
Kilcoy	8	46
Total	-	385

Table 2. Analysis of Results

Question Number	Mean	Standard Deviation
1	3.92	0.90
2	4.05	0.71
3	4.10	0.72
4	4.22	0.65
5	4.19	0.77
6	4.15	0.74
7	4.27	0.76
8	4.21	0.76
9	4.21	0.79
10	3.84	0.93
11	3.93	0.78
12	4.08	0.84
13	4.17	0.70
14	4.31	0.62

Conflict of Interest

There was no conflict of interest while conducting this study.

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