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Effective Public Participation in Municipal Service Delivery: A Case of Merafong Municipality

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Effective Public Participation in Municipal Service Delivery: A Case of Merafong Municipality

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February 2024

ABSTRACT

Background

In the Republic of South Africa (SA), issues such as unemployment, poverty and inequality have plagued a nation since the dawn of democracy. Local government key mandate is to play a strategic development role especially within the context of serving people on the ground. This has to be achieved by promoting public participation, community involvement and practicing good governance.

SA comprises of 257 metropolitan, district and local municipalities. This number comprises eight metropolitans, 44 district and 205 local municipalities. Public participation is viewed as a key methodology that is effective in addressing service delivery at a local level within municipalities.

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to understand the role of public participation in addressing service delivery by examining multiple relevant scholar reviews. The study focused on the role ward committee members play in their role in public participation. The author's study advanced the notion that public participation affects service delivery and that ward committee members do have a role to play in promoting public participation within their communities.

Findings

Merafong Municipality has been plagued by many service delivery challenges and protest. Service delivery issues have been a constant challenge in the municipality, ranging from lack of refuge collection, sewage blockages, non-functionality of street lights and sinkholes etc as indicated by residents. Ward committee members are viewed to be doing their utmost albeit with limited resources to try and assist communities. The ward committee members lack capacitation in skills, training, educational framework, and financial support to be able to further carry out their mandate

Conclusion

Public participation is a relative concept that is understood by municipalities as being important in addressing the various issues they face, but it is in the implementation of this process that proves to be a serious challenge across various municipalities. Residents understand the importance of ward committee members being an important catalyst to address their problem through to the municipality, therefore, the municipality should adequately capacitate the ward committee members.

Keywords: Service Delivery, Public Participation, Ward Committees, Merafong Municipality, Local Government, Local Municipality, District Municipality

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis, that it has not been submitted before elsewhere for qualification purposes, and that I gave due credit where content or product belongs to the third party and such is known to me. Further, I declare that by submitting this thesis for purposes of Masters in Management by Governance consideration. The Witwatersrand University can reproduce and publish it for academic use.

Date: February 2024

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my mom (Nkele Kobo) for the encouragement, support and always showing up when I needed her the most. Secondly, to my sister (Lerato Kobo) for being the pillar of strength, patience and support at all times. To my brother (Jan Kobo) thanks for always being supportive. To my late uncle (Frans Kobo), thank you for your supportive efforts from day one of my academic journey.

This thesis was written in honour of the legacy for my dear father (Oom Piet Kobo). May your departed soul continue to rest in peace, you may be gone but you are not forgotten.

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Lastly, it has been a challenging journey and tough times, but these words always inspire me: Keep your face always toward the sunshine, and shadows will fall behind you.

Kgotso Kobo

February 2024

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Abbreviations Definition of Terms

AG	Auditor General
ANC	African National Congress
BLA	Black Local Authorities
CBDs	Central Business Districts
CBOs	Community Based Organisations
CDWP	Community Development Workers Programme
CDWs	Community Development Workers
CS	Community Survey
COGTA	Co-Operative Governance and Traditional Affairs
DA	Democratic Alliance
DPSA	Department of Public Service and Administration
EPWP	Expanded Public Works Programme
FFC:	Financial and Fiscal Commission
HIV:	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IDM:	iLembe District Municipality
IDP	Integrated Development Plan (for Local Government)
IFP:	Inkatha Freedom Party
ISERVICE DELIVERY&PDM:	Inclusive Service Delivery and Participatory Development Model
ISS	Institute for Security Studies
LGTAS	Local Government Turn Around Strategy
MBLAs	Management Board and Local Affairs Committees
MCLM	Merafong City Local Municipality
MFMA	Municipal Financial Management Act

NDP	National Development Plan 2030
NFP	National Freedom Party
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
NPC	National Planning Commission
NPM	New Public Management
NSG	National School of Government
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
PA	Public Administration
PFMA	Public Financial and Management Act
PPP	Public Private Partnerships
RSA	Republic of South Africa
RSERVICE DELIVERYF	Regional Spatial Development Framework
SADC	Southern African Democratic Community
SALGA	South African Local Government Association
SERVICE DELIVERYF	Spatial Development Framework
SCU	Social Change Unit
TLC	Transitional Local Council
TLGFA:	Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework Act
UJ	University of Johannesburg
UNDESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
WLA	White Local Authorities

CHAPTER ONE

1. Introduction

Local government is an essential tool that provides services to the people on the ground it is the coalface of service delivery. Currently, many municipalities are facing different challenges in the provision of service delivery (SERVICE DELIVERY) to the people they serve in their communities. Conversely, there are other municipalities that have managed to do reasonably well in these where others have struggled. Naidoo and Rampal (2018) have alluded that policy implementation gaps – the misalignment between the national government formulating policy, and the local government implementing it, might seem to be at the forefront of this challenge. Additionally, lack of resources to track progress made and reporting systems are lacking. The results have been lacking of programme and project implementation, dilapidated infrastructure, wasteful and fruitless expenditure are some of the issues faced by municipalities (Reddy, 1998).

Local government through policy, the 1998 White Paper on Local Government, is mandated to be an agent of service delivery and in doing so achieving the goals and mission that is set by the national government (Nzimakwe, 2008, 667). Yet, in the past two decades South Africa has been plagued by a lot of service delivery protest and riots because of communities' disgruntlement with the local government i.e., municipalities. Coupling this disgruntlement is poverty, inequality, unemployment and high level of crimes that have become the daily reality of some community (Maharaj, 199, 261).

According to Madumo (2012), the service delivery protests, which at times are characterised by violence, stem from various reasons. These include lack of good governance, less public participation by residents on the decisions undertaken by the municipalities at a local government level, institutional arrangement and shortages of skills at the local government level.

Taking the above into account, it is of utmost importance to examine what factors are leading to negative effects that is seen at a local government level, and understand factors that affect service delivery. This is important as citizens are given an opportunity to make inputs in the decision-making processes through public participation processes, which is a process that was highlighted by Madumo (2012) as a potential factor underpinning some of the service delivery protests in municipalities. Public participation is one of the mechanisms or methodologies that are practised globally in democratic nations to meaningfully engage

communities to have input the decision-making activities of the issues that affect them. Public participation, as highlighted by Mpanza (2007), is a fairly new phenomenon in South Africa as it was only made a legislative requirement for all to be consulted in the advent of the democratic dispensation as an attempt to reorganise decision making process within government and make the inclusive.

Furthermore, public participation in SA is interpreted to mean any action from the appointment of representatives to consultation of residents when formulating policy or legislation by both those who are elected and appointed. This view on constitutes public participation is further enhanced by Mulaudzi and Liebenberg (2013) through capturing the essence of public participation by indicating that public participation in local government is making sure that citizens of a particular municipality are involved in the decision-making activities at every stage of political, economic, and socio processes.

The above includes “planning, support, choices, and demands for implementation of programmes” (Mulaudzi and Liebenberg, 2013). Moreover, public participation at the local sphere of government is considered vital for good governance as it increases transparency and awareness to the desires of the communities which municipalities must serve (Reddy and Sekhukhune, 2008, 60).

In relation to service delivery protests and public participation, as encapsulated by Van der Waldt (2014), communities typically stage service delivery protests because they were seldomly consulted about programmes, projects and budget allocation and spending and they need accountability and or answers on how their own taxes were spent. Communities’ places emphasis on the need for them to participate in the decision-making processes as they have critical inputs to make, and more importantly they are the intended beneficiaries of the decisions taken in those processes.

With the abovementioned, the aim of the study is to explore the effective public participation in addressing service delivery in local municipalities, looking especially into bulk infrastructure provision challenges. This research uses Merafong local municipality as its case study. This assessment was by analyzing community engagements through the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) and community/citizen involvement in decision-making processes through ward councilors and ward committees.

Merafong local municipality has been identified in this study as an appropriate case study due to the fact that it has been identified be among the worst performing municipality in Gauteng by the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA) and the Auditor Generals (AG) report on local government. The study uses two areas in the Merafong municipality as cases.

In the first instance, Khutsong region has poor citizens living in those communities and are of the majority. This township was affected by the apartheid spatial planning which exacerbates some of the challenges the area faces to date. On the other hand, Carletonville is a mining heavily reliant area especially in gold mining. It was firstly an unplanned living area and was established in 1937 and only in the late 50s it was a settlement town because the mining companies developed it, and it was named after a mining executive Guy Carlton Jones who worked for Western Deep Ltd, and is regarded at the time as the deepest mining for gold. That is why to date, the area is affected by sink holes that have been wildly documented. Because of managerial issues or matters, Merafong Municipality adopted Carletonville as their demarcated area or township in the year 2000, this having been previously allocated within the Gauteng Province.

These two townships are part of the Merafong municipality in the West Rand and faces many challenges. The two regions are a bit far from the financial hub of Gauteng and that is Johannesburg. Both the townships are known as mining towns or centres (Kirsher, 2012). Both townships being mining towns, has vast number of migrants living in those communities and some migrants come as far as Lesotho and Mozambique Minnaar (2000). The focal locations of this study are two of the biggest townships in Merafong municipality, and both the townships are characterised by high level of poverty, unemployment and an alarming high rate of crime. The two areas were also hardest hit by issues of protest and uprising as a result of demarcation issues previous. The uprising is a great indicator of citizens being aware of their rights. From 2005 to 2009 the Municipality was part of the North West Province; this trailed the abolition of cross-border municipalities in the country (Misago, et al, 2010)

1.2. Purpose Statement and Objectives

According to the Public Participation Framework (2007:6) report, it is highlighted that many community members “on the ground” do not fully understand or grasp the workings of municipalities and this leads to poor public participation where people do not fully engage with the running of their municipalities or wards.

The overarching mandate of the study is to understand if citizens within the Merafong communities are aware that public participation is important for service delivery in their respective communities. Further, there is a need to assess main challenges (factors) that inhibit society to get and participate in good governance.

The objectives of the study are the following:

1) To understand infrastructure models and existing ways of public participation programs in local municipalities;
2) Secondly, to observe the extent of public participation practices in local municipalities;
3) Thirdly, to understand challenges that face in municipalities in conducting public participation, and lastly;
4) To understand the relationship between public participation and service delivery in local municipalities.

1.3. About Merafong Municipality

According to the Merafong City local municipality integrated development plan, the municipality is Category B with an Executive Mayor Governance system. The area size of the municipality is 1631, 7km² and it comprises of twenty-eight (28) wards. Merafong City Local Government (MCLM) falls under Gauteng Province and forms a part of West Rand District Municipality. The municipality has a population of almost 190 000 residents, according to the latest Statistics of South Africa (StatsSA) report 2016, Community Survey (CS).

According to the South African Local Government Association (SALGA), the Merafong City Municipality is situated in the South-West of Gauteng and the North East of North West Province, 75 km from Johannesburg and 50 km from Potchefstroom. The Municipality consist of the suburbs of Greater Carletonville, Fochville, Khutsong, Kokosi, Khutsong South, Wedela, Blybank, Welverdiend and the commercial farming areas surrounding these built-up areas (Merafong Municipality IDP 2003).

<u>Age and gender profile</u>

The male population exceeds the females by 14.2%, as opposed to the national statistics of 48.8% and 51.2% of males and females, respectively (Quantec, 2017). Most of the people in the municipality (predominately males) are within the working age population (15-64 years of age). The reason for the population is because of the residents and migrant labour the municipality relies on because of mining activity.

The above municipality has been identified be among the worst performing municipality in Gauteng by the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA), as well as by the Auditor Generals (AG) report on local government. The AG reports that the municipality faces many challenges such as:

1) **Financial management:** The municipality has been experiencing financial problems that have led to service delivery problems and non-payment of bills.
2) **Infrastructure maintenance**: roads, water supply, and sewage systems need attention and upkeep.
3) **Unemployment levels:** High unemployment levels are also a problem in the municipality, which makes it difficult to stimulate economic development.
4) **Housing backlog:** A backlog of houses needs to be built to accommodate all the residents of the municipality.

Overall, these challenges require a collaborative effort between local government officials, business leaders, and community members to address and develop appropriate solutions to address them.

Reid (2000) expands on this, arguing that, towns that place a high value on public engagement seek, and awarded, more funds than areas with lower participation. Pillitines (2011) suggests that South Africa might be experiencing a high number of service delivery related protests because of the high volume of backlogs, many competent civil servants (skilled departed government officials, and poor policy implementation because of lack of ineffective or lack of rather of public participation the municipality is meant to serve.

Community Public Participation Policy (2016) cites that public participation is optimal when concerned parties are effectively and properly consulted and the community is engaged and listened to by the stakeholders. This is because people on the ground must be informed because they are not very knowledgeable about government systems and structures.

According to the author (Masiya 2019,27), he argues that earlier studies that have been conducted in municipalities in South Africa have suggested that since 2017, public participation has decreased at a local level, and this trend has led to a massive rise in service delivery protests. Eikenberry (2009) alludes that fair public participation involving communities assists them in reducing acts of corruption, gender misrepresentation, and lower rates of service delivery protests.

The Municipal Systems Act 32, 2000 stipulates, “the role of the municipality is to empower the poor and ensure that municipalities put in place service tariffs and credit control policies that take their needs into account by providing a framework for the provision of services, service delivery agreements and municipal service districts, and to provide public participation”.

1.4. Problem Statement

The governing party has, since their ascendence into government in 1994, been trying their utmost to deliver services irrespective of race. This is unlike the previous apartheid government where mostly quality services were provided based on the recipient communities' race. Merafong municipality has been over the years plagued by service delivery challenges, ranked among the worst performing municipality by the Auditor General (2021) and has had challenges around dilapidated infrastructure. For the municipality to be able to attend to the basic service delivery matters, they would need community involvement and participation. However, as Malatji (2021:32) highlights, it is a common occurrence in South Africa for communities not to substantively participate in decision-making processes concerned with the provision of services and that tends to cause a challenge of service delivery in the respective municipalities.

Mosotho (2013) notes that despite the constitution of South Africa mandating public participation at a local level (in municipalities), there is still lower level of public participation in most municipalities in South Africa even with IDP consultations and public gathering invitations. Rankoana (2021), outlines that community members often are not able to participate in these engagements because of lack of prior consultation and being afforded a reasonable time period them to attend to the legislated consultation meetings among others. Most of the most municipalities that are affected by service delivery protests are from poor previously disadvantaged communities, where there is a level of lack of knowledge, citizens not knowing their rights and lack of understanding of local government programmes and mandates by the residence, hence they cannot effectively participate (Mosotho, 2013).

According to Pantic (2021) highlights that Covid – 19 has further made public participation challenging in the last couple of years and has left many communities not being able to publicly engage, due to number limitations or restrictions on gatherings. Involvement with municipal councils, community dialogues by using the Integrated Development Plan (IDP), and Public Hearings are only a few of these programmes for public participation.

According to the SA Constitution, municipalities are obliged to provide basic services in the local government space. Most importantly, in carrying out their duties and providing those services, they ought to - as stipulated in the Section 6 of the Systems Act (152 in the Constitution) do the following:

a) The administration of a municipality must- establish clear relationships, and facilitate co-operation and communication between it and the local community;
b) give members of the local community full and accurate information about the level and standard of municipal services they are entitled to receive, and

c) inform the local community how the municipality is managed, of the costs involved and the persons in charge.

Problem: Low levels of participation by community members in public participation-related matters. Thus, the study tries to explore the challenges and awareness about the significance of good governance in is affecting the levels of service delivery output.

Knowledge gap: The study will benefit policymakers, municipal administrators, ward committee members and councilors responsible for ensuring quality service delivery in municipalities and aid them in drawing up modified policies and reconfiguring their approach to community participation – especially in the Merafong municipality. Further, more appropriate measures to improve governance in municipalities through enabling them to attain high levels of service quality that reflect the needs of the community. Additionally, the study will serve as a source of data and reference to upcoming academics.

Context: Participants are not involved in the local government due to poor communication between the councilors, administrators, and residents, and time constraints to inform community members about budget consultative meetings attached to the poor relationship between local and central government.

Logic: The main areas that the researcher will focus on is the bulk infrastructure-related service delivery activities within the municipality of Merafong.

1.5. Research Questions

The researcher is of the notion that without proper engagement of community members by ward councilors, ward committee members and support, it is more likely that this will lead to poor service delivery. Therefore, the public participation process needs to be meaningful and supported by leaders of that ward committee to contribute positively to service delivery.

For the researcher to understand the role of public participation and its impact on service delivery, the following questions are presented:

- What impact does public participation have on service delivery on Merafong municipality?
- Are the residents of Merafong municipality consulted in the decision making of the municipality and shaping programmes?
- What are the roles of ward committee members in improving public participation?

The study addresses these questions by investigating two areas, namely Khutsong and Carletonville situated within the municipality.

1.6. Hypothesis

The main hypothesis is that effective public participation helps municipalities address issues with service delivery, but that inadequate support for public participation initiatives leads to subpar services and strained relationships among citizens and officials at the local level. The study premise is the districts' service delivery issues will not be resolved if there is nonexistent support by authorities and officials (leadership) in municipalities on matters relating to public engagement.

Significance of the Study:

This study will assist as a benchmark for persons who could work on the significance of public participation and its challenges in administering service delivery in other municipal regions as well as other parts of South Africa local government.

- It would provide an enhanced understanding about public participation role and its significance on service delivery
- It would assist to publicize work on public participation and service delivery
- It will also support the society to practice public participation practices and to understand what it means and its significance.
- It helps to solve implementation challenges of good governance

1.7. Conceptual Framework

The purpose of this chapter is to pinpoint the study in the realm of the aspect of existing facts so that the researcher would be able to examine the trend of public participation with the scope of local government sphere. Various theories of democracy are outlined that interlink to the studies relevance.

1.7.1. Democracy

The researcher would need to ascertain fundamentals of democracy and what does that mean. As a concept, there are various understandings and perspectives. However, what numerous scholars agree on is the fact that democracy stems from the view of development and peace of the state. According to Schumpeter (1947), the author argues that democracy should be understood as a way or concept that individual actors in the political space compete for votes of the masses. Further to this, Peter (2006) highlighted that democracy is a method where citizens decide who will get to be blamed.

Therefore, in broad terms, democracy can be labelled as a way in which a governance system that gives people the power to decide their fate. Former President of Tanzania Nyerere highlighted that in the African context, its democracy is a phenomenon that African people discuss their issues and settle them by adopting a discussion. Nevertheless, there are varying views on the efficiency as well as applicability of democracy, various players have consensus that it is important as it gives power to the power to the citizens, however there's disagreements on how that power ought to be practiced (Richard;1996).

Local government in SA has established much attention and interest because it is viewed as a vessel to cater to service delivery needs of the masses on the ground. Local government has a role to unite citizens and promote the notion of democracy. Further, Local government should play a key role in making sure community members participate in democracy.

1.7.2. Developmental Democracy

The principles of developmental democracy being a link that contains liberal perspectives as well as socio and or economic advancements. Within the liberal perspectives or ideals, the theory promotes active citizenry within government, and they advocate that the people must participate in the affairs of the country. Mill (1969), is of the view that, the more citizens in matters relating to governance, the more they are in a position to develop their potentials. The introduction of developmental democracy is rooted on the notion that liberal and social democracy is negative gaps (Sorensen, 1996).

Sklar (1997) highlights that the concept of developmental democracy is the best model that fit Africa and or Africans, as this democracy advances their course. Though there are scholars who opposes developmental democracy, they do however; agree that democracy as a whole should demonstrate its ability of its commitment to national and individual enhancement. These commitments can be listed as freedom of speech, citizens' involvement in decision-making, improving the living conditions of citizens and citizens empowerment.

Developmental democracy argues that since early 90s African countries and more so Southern, have went through a period of multi-party democracy, but there has not been visible evidence of progress of application of democratic values and principles. The scholars argue that democracy has been limited to just citizens voting and electing government officials and development over the decades has been poor (Robinson).

1.7.3. Participatory Democracy

Aristotle argued that since the masses are not equally educated and amass relevant experience, it is for this reason that, responsibility to lead the government should be left to the elites, educated and experienced officials. He further, highlights that citizens tasks are to just elect relevant officials that will assist in running the government (Adkins, 1991).

Public participation promotes the needs and key elements of active citizenry, and this includes political, human and social rights. These rights are set out to protect the ordinary people. Also bound the citizen to be able to participate where they see this participation as important.

Warren (2006) argues that democracy has to be viewed in a lens of if it could improve people or progress human beings, in other words if it has positively impacted individuals. Further, if this democracy was able to apply the views and desires of individuals and interested groups. Smith (2008) opines that public participation democracy involves the participation of the ordinary masses in the public participation method and gives citizens the right to determine their affairs.

Literature on public participation is immense especially in developing nations like SA. Public participation therefore, entails that community members or local citizens must be given a chance to affect municipal decision-making processes. This is an important element process, which makes an argument that the community members govern their needs (Osborne and Strokosch 2013).

Scholar and author Pandeya (2015:93) highlights public participation is a procedure that assist the marginalised individuals to exercise their concerns and influence policy and programme outcomes. Tufte (2017:143) further assets that public participation increases service delivery and curtail malfeasance and mismanagement of funds and or budgets conducted by facilitating information distribution and enlarged public awareness of the actions of the local government. It is with the above background, municipalities are anticipated to handle its citizens as their clients and to promote participation in processes, and, express their views before, during and after the policy development process and make sure the outcomes are implemented accordingly.

1.8. Research Methodology

The study is conducted through a mixed method approach. The mixed method approach entails qualitative and quantitative. Qualitative in this instance refers to the construction of “social reality and cultural meaning; focus on interactive processes and events; authenticity is key; values are present and explicit; theory and data are fused; situationally constrained; few cases; thematic analysis and researcher is involved” (Neumann, 2006:13). Smith (2004:156) further elaborates that qualitative research is “conducted using a range of methods which use

qualifying words and descriptions to record and investigate aspects of reality". It implies that this form of research conducted to give records of what has happened and how authentic they are.

In terms of the quantitative aspect, the researcher employs this approach to establish the extent of the study based on numerical systems. This is where a statistical analysis is applied and the purpose of this research is to try and understand, describe and possibly predict the nature of a phenomenon according to Mertz (2001).

The researcher applied a descriptive study in their approach to examine the link between public participation and service delivery (Cullinan 2002). This approach was essential and appropriate based on the intricacy of the matters involved, further, the researcher needed to understand the matters and that demanded a deep dive on issues that affect service delivery.

As a means of data collection semi – structured interviews by a means of a questionnaire were applied, and where there were open ended questions, respondents could further give their input. This method allowed the researcher to interact with the respondents and be able to translate the questions that could be difficult to read in English to vernacular language. The other added advantage of interview interaction, was to allow respondents to be able to express their feelings and experience towards service delivery, Oberiri (2017).

The research applied the usage of secondary data by examining the Local Government Sphere in SA. Policies were dissected from pre apartheid to the new democratic government. Most importantly, literature on Municipal Act 2000, the Constitution, The Batho Pele Principles and White Paper on Local Government was examined. Lastly, scholars that have covered the service delivery models, public participation and good governance in terms of literature was also applied.

1.8.1. Methodological orientation and approach

The study adopted the mixed method research approach as a means of collecting data. In the Merafong municipality participants from Khutsong and Carletonville area were chosen for this study. Merafong is comprised of eight areas but the researcher focused on these two areas, as they are the two largest areas within the Merafong municipality. The population were entailed two sets of participants, first sets of participants A being the community members (residents) of different wards of the two areas. The other set of participants were comprised of ward committee members of those two identified communities.

The study applied a qualitative approach, as it needed to understand a situation as well as perceptions on a particular matter. The researcher needed to understand perceptions,

feelings, experiences, views etc. in their study and qualitative approach therefore, a qualitative approach was important as a unit tool of analysis. Furthermore, Shuttleworth (2008) indicates that this approach is also important from quantitative because it provides more that numbers. For the researcher this methodology would give a detailed understanding the role of public participation and service delivery.

1.9. Data Collection

The method of data collection is an expression of how the researcher intends to apply an approach to gather information regarding the study; this depends on the objectives of the intentions of the study (Van Zyl, 2005). The author needed to understand the level of public participation and how that affects service delivery from both the perspective of the community members and ward committee members respectively.

This explains the ways and processes the researcher intended to acquire information to be relevant to the study, ways of data collection and strategy. The researcher interviewed members of ward committees using a questionnaire that had included open-ended questions in one municipality in the areas of Khutsong and Carletonville respectively. Further, the researcher also conducted interviews with the residents of the very same municipalities and the areas highlighted.

This was to afford both sides of the spectrum and opportunity to highlight their views etc. As encapsulated by De Vos (2002,19), an interview approach as a form of data collection is highly effective when the researcher wants to understand and gather thoughts about the deep understanding of feeling community members might have and their views fully expressed.

Supplementing the interviews of ward committee members was a questionnaire. Questionnaires were distributed for data collection. According to Bless and Smith (2004,156), a questionnaire is “an instrument of data collection consisting of a standardized series of questions relating to the research topic to be answered in writing by participants”. It was important for the researcher to plan the questions and make them to understand. The author adopted a mixed method approach to conduct the study. A total of 70 ccommunity members were interviewed as respondents and ward committee members respondents were 31. Through a structured questionnaire with close-ended questions and interviewed schedule with open-ended questions.

1.10. Data Analysis

Due to the study having applied a mixed method, data analysis that focused on patterns, views, feelings and relationships and opinions, then qualitative analysis was adopted, whereas in capturing critical statistics like demographics (gender, age, race, ward district) and capturing thematic themes. The researcher used the software of SPSS software to analyse the outcome. The above data was then organised and used a descriptive tool as figures, tables and percentages had to be outlined.

1.11. Limitations of the Study

This study has various limitation. With anyone research, the researcher could only jolt down the thoughts of a particular population sample, therefore the people not represented unfortunately will create gaps, as they could not express their views and limits more insights. The researcher attempted to the best of their ability to cast the net wider to increase the population size, the higher the size, the more the insight and understanding. The researcher used available desktop data to enhance strengthening the research.

Due to time constraints, the researcher had a challenging time gathering further participants and had to reschedule more often than expected. More rescheduling means limited participants than anticipated. The researcher further could not use technology to execute the research as the population was not familiar with this process, therefore time and financial implications were of importance.

1.12. Chapter Layout

Chapter 1: Focuses on the introduction of the study, understanding the municipality and some key historic overview and principles guiding local government in the South African landscape.

Chapter 2: Zones on the problem statement, purpose and objectives of the study as well as addresses the research question and Limitation to the study

Chapter 3: Highlights the literature review and legislative framework on SERVICE DELIVERY and Public Participation

Chapter 4: Entails addressing the research methodology, how the research unpacks the methods the study was conducted and the rational thereof

Chapter 5: Covers the analysis and findings of the research from the community members and ward committee members data collection and concludes the chapters covered and implications of the study and recommendations

CHAPTER TWO

Literature review on public participation and legislative framework

2. Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

The main aim of this chapter is to sub sink and examine existing body of knowledge in order to understand public participation at a local level and further understand it in context of service delivery. The chapter begins with understanding terms that are associated with public participation as well as service delivery. Understanding the scene institutional arrangement in municipalities is also covered.

The chapter offers a summary of the body of research on how citizens can affect how services are delivered across three spheres of domains of government. This chapter was further key in determining prior academics approached the matters of public participation as an extension of local government programmes to, among other things, impact service delivery. The issue of covering the opportunities and difficulties of public engagement projects in influencing service delivery was also in detail. Reviewing the literature on the research topic is very important and beneficial because it helps to understand matters relating to SERVICE DELIVERY and public participation.

For achieving this, the researcher has reviewed a large amount of recent literature that has contributed to the sector. The author has also offered an array of concentrated readings and a calculated method to the report. This was followed by zoning into elements of municipal service delivery, including the value of public involvement and adherence to the legal frameworks.

One of the reviews is constructive examination of the phases or stages of local government in SA, as well as historical assessments that took the chronological evolution of the literature into account. As a result, chapter two reflects this.

Thematic reviews, which center on arguments between several "schools of thought," are organised around various viewpoints in the literature. This viewpoint aided the researcher in examining the public administration field's dynamism and contextualizing local government within the New Public Management movement of the postmodern era. The other one is theoretical reviews, which covers the evolution of theory across time and frequently demonstrate how each hypothesis was backed by data.

This is mirrored in later chapters, which includes the analysis and discussion of the empirical study, and empirical reviews, which presents a summary of the empirical findings and frequently focuses on the various approaches employed. To guarantee that the results were reliable and legitimate for the study, the researcher used applied relevant approaches and instruments.

2.2. Historical account of local government in South Africa - Local Government under apartheid era

Before the democratic era began, local government activities in South Africa were conducted based on race, principally under the guiding principles of social exclusion and the marginalisation of non-white groups. Jolobe (2014) claims that when the apartheid regime was established during the 1950s, the governing officials assumed more authority and exerted close local oversight. African urban administration was limited to the Bantustans policy as apartheid spread over the continent. As a result, African administration had less money to work with, particularly when it came to housing.

Every racial group had its own local government, and types of local government coincided spatially with the formal racial segregation under the terms of the Native Areas Act (1923) and later the Group Areas Act (1952), as highlighted by Zegeye (2003). This arrangement of local government furthers the agenda of racial segregation and socioeconomic exclusion.

1. Additionally, there was Management Boards and Local Affairs Committees (MBLA) that were crucial to the administration of areas populated by Coloured and Indian people. Black Local Authorities (BLAs) had juriservice deliveryiction over African communities.
2. Since 1994, a wave of democracy has swept throughout the African continent, with the Southern African region receiving high attention. This wave has made it necessary for the public sector to adopt democratic institutions that would put people at the core of development and transform its leadership.

   Despite these efforts, the crisis of service delivery, particularly for traditional communities, remained a problem in SA after 20 years of democracy, and it has forced local and national governments to strengthen democratic institutions and broaden democratic practices.

The research task is to draw attention that while inadequate service delivery can be partly blamed for the issue at the local government level, the issue further exacerbated by a lack of appropriate public participation institutions and active engagement between community members and governing officials.

Although, at least in theory, today's inhabitants are better able to demand changes to the living circumstances in rural areas than they were twenty years ago, day-to-day life demonstrates that these changes are still challenging to implement. On the one hand, government employees have not done everything they could to carry out their responsibilities in a more transparent manner, as seen by the rise in the frequency of citizen protests (Burger, 2009).

People may not have applied their democratic right to contribute vital input to the management of local government matters in their communities. This context informs the policy provisions, which call for local government administrations to foster a culture of development and for local governments that ensures civil society participation in decision-making affairs.

The study determines that it is vital to understand the relevance of the existing legislation and create an enabling environment through which democratic participation can be entrenched, this matter is highlighted by the IDP Document (2009) on the status of the Merafong municipality.

2.3. Key Concepts

The terms and concepts discussed below are key in conducting the study. It is important for the meaning and implications of these terms and concepts to be discussed to obtain clarity in their meaning as far as this study is concerned in order to aid the research in achieving its objectives.

- **Community Development Workers**

According to DPLG (2005), these entail public servants, who usually go through training so that they are in a position to engage communities and interact with residents and make sure certain services are executed. The government main aim of also employing such persons, is to address inequality and poverty issues facing these previously disadvantaged persons.

- **Public Participation**

The idea of public engagement has been frequently invoked in the development discourse throughout the past 20 years. For the majority of this time, the idea has been used to describe involvement in social activities, community activities, or development efforts. It can mean many different things. For instance, the ownership of the development process, bottom-up planning, grassroots planning, public involvement, participatory planning, democratic planning, and collaborative planning are all common terms used to describe public participation.

According to SALGA (PSA, 2013) the concept of public participation was seen as a crucial process that would enhance service delivery. This process when conducted by a municipality is seen as a credible phase to citizens of the affected communities (Cederberg Municipality 2015,3). Citizens are less likely to protest violently when they have been consulted and provided input to the crucial decisions that affect their communities. The process of public participation by the Public Service Department (2015), is seen an effective way to further decrease the possible tensions, threats and better working relation between the municipal authority and the community members.

According to the Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000, local governments are required to promote community participation through established procedures such ward meetings, Integrated Development Planning (IDP) meetings, and Imbizo initiatives. Municipal Councils must frequently consult the community to assess the quality, scope, and impact of the municipal services it offers. This is crucial in defining the degree of services the community will need.

- **Community Participation**

It implies the involvement of ward councillors, ward committee members, business people, traditional leaders and other people in local municipalities in the planning process, including strategies, performance management as well as projects implementation and evaluation (Brynard in Bekker (2004). This suggests that it is important for the community to be directly or indirectly involved through their representatives in the public policy decision-making and governance decisions. This is particularly the case at the local sphere of government as, beyond it being a legislative requirement, the decisions made and the governance actions taken ought to reflect the needs of the community.

- **Service Delivery**

Service is defined as, any act or performance that one party can offer to another that is intangible and does not result in the ownership of anything (Kotler,1999:97). While delivery is act of carrying and giving out something to be, or a giving up World Bank Dictionary (1996). In the context of this study, service delivery refers to the provision of services and goods to communities by the municipality. This is about the municipality executing what it is legislatively mandated to do.

- **Developmental local government**

Local government is committed to working with citizens and groups within the community to find ways to meet their social, economic, and material needs and improve the quality of their

lives RSA (Department of Local and Provincial Government, 1998). This concept is intertwined with the concepts of both public participation and community participation. For any form of government to be developmental, the community needs to partake in the decision-making processes. This is essentially not merely about rendering the decisions taken legitimate, but also ensuring that the needs of communities are being reflected and addressed in whatever the decisions that are made and taken.

- **Governance**

According to the World Bank (1993), governance is defined as the method through which power is exercised in the management of a country's political, economic and social resources for development. Lynn (2000), defined governance as regimes of laws, administrative rules, judicial rulings, and practices that constrain, prescribe, and enable governmental activity.

Governance and its conceptual framework, is seen as having solid governing structures and encapsulated by democracy practices especially in emerging economies of Africa (Ekundayo, 2017). This process means that citizens and its people, the government must do all its best to serve their interest and provide basic services.

In the context of this study, governance refers to the manner in which services are brought or provided to citizens. This is about the frameworks and processes that are involved in the decision-making process and the ultimate realisation of those decisions through the resultant service offered or provided. This essentially relates to the concept developmental governance and how the community is incorporated in the decision-making processes.

- **Municipality**

A corporate body, has specific roles and responsibility areas, a political structure, political office bearers and a municipal manager, and has juriservice deliveryiction in a defined geographical area as determined by the Local government demarcation act 1998 (Grayston, 2006).

According to Chapter 4 of the Municipal Systems Act, the municipality is mandated to dedicate its resources and planning to the following:

- development of a culture of community participation;
- mechanisms, processes and procedure for community participation

Therefore, municipalities should develop means or ways in how it engages the community members and ought to outline priority key areas of service delivery so that they are able to

meaningfully uplift the district or metro it serves. This is about the community and the public at large having a say in how they are governed and what services are provided to them and how those services are also provided.

- **State Institutions**

Compromise legislative bodies, including the parliamentary assemblies and subordinate law-making institutions; executive bodies, including governmental bureaux and departments of state; and judicial bodies (Boysens, 2009). In this instance, municipalities are regarded as state institutions. The existence of municipalities is a constitutional imperative. Chapter 3 of the Constitution stipulates the existence of the three different spheres of government. The role of the local sphere of government is explicitly delineated in the official government policy through the 1998 White Paper on Local Government.

- **Ward**

“A small unit of a local authority like a neighbourhood, or suburb that can elect a ward councillor to represent residents of the respective community on the local authority/ municipal council” (DPLG, 2005, 75). In the South African context, municipalities are divided into wards for effective governance. Each ward has its own representative in the municipality i.e., ward councillor.

- **Ward Councillor**

According to the People Assembly (2021), a ward councillor key role is “that of community mobilisation, he is seen as an active agent of the community, they execute tasks that affect communities at grassroots level”. They are heavily involved with communities and create collaboration on community projects and programmes.

- **Ward Committee**

A ward committee may either be a fully legitimate, fully representative ward body with full legitimacy, but lack the fundamental ability to lead community participation in development and democracy, or it can be less legitimate in terms of members belonging to sector structures, but still can effectively be at a forefront of promote participation of democracy (DPLG, 2005). In the first model, every segment of the community is identified through a process, such as youth, women, the jobless, etc. (SALGA, 2006).

Individual sector names one delegate to serve on the ward committee, which results in a ward committee that represents all interest groups in the neighbourhood (SALGA, 2006). The

council “will then set up funds for all ward committee members in the nearby municipalities to get orientation training”. The lack of organisation in some industries is one of this model's drawbacks. It will lead to a circumstance where the sector is not properly organised.

If a sector representative does not meet the sector's expectations, there will be an issue with sectors changing representatives too frequently, which will prevent group cohesion at the ward committee level from ever being accomplished. The second approach to creating a ward committee entails nominating individuals who have demonstrated potential and interest in a particular sector and assigning them the duty of representing that sector on the ward committee (SALGA, 2006). The delegates are therefore “under pressure to carry out sector organising activities while serving as a ward committee thanks to the drafting of a sector development strategy” (SALGA, 2006).

- **Consultation**

The process of consultation, according to Craythorne (1997, 99), entails contact between the government and the governed (community) when a public issue is being addressed. The act of seeking information or counsel is another definition of consultation. Participants and the local government consult each other in a two-way process where one has interests that are shared by the other. As a result, consultation is a type of involvement where information is made available and participants' opinions are sought.

When conducting public participation, it would not be possible for the municipality to include all citizens residing in the community, but the municipality should try buy all means to include the community inhabitants as wide and far reaching as possible to include them.

- **District municipalities**

They are described, as first tier local municipalities layering the bigger and more rural municipalities. They regularly execute their mandate with collaboration with smaller second tier municipalities according to the Section 155 (1) of the Constitution of the Republic of SA. A district municipality implements services of local government for a district. “The district municipality comprises several local municipalities, with which it shares the functions of local government. District municipalities are viewed as replacements to previous Regional Services Councils” (RSC). According to “Local Government Municipal Structures Act (117 of 39 1998) areas that do not fall under metro municipality should entail or have district municipality”.

With its current description, district municipalities in theory should be able to function well in the rural areas but its successes are very limited due to other constraints, reason being cited

is the dysfunctional relationship between district and councils. The leadership of the local councils is not embodied on the district councils, local councillors do not take possession of the councils, and this trend affects service delivery deeply.

- **Local municipalities**

This is a Category B municipality and it served the third tier of local government. Each district contains several local municipalities, and the affairs are then divided accordingly. SA has a total number of 226 local municipalities currently.

- **Traditional Leadership**

The SA way of governance pave way for traditional leaders in recognising them as service delivery agents according to the Chapter 12 of the Constitution. This Chapter and the Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework Act (TLGFA) made way for adoption of traditional leadership in the administration of SA. According to Cogta (2014), the role of traditional leaders is not that only of figure heads, but of an enhanced social, cohesive role among communities. They have an authoritative and are generally seen as being closer to the people and they usually preserve important traditional cultures. They have influence and, in many instances, solve important disputes of community members.

Traditional leaders have a role to play owing to their authority and proximity to the people and their primary mandate to preserve customs and traditions derived from the constitution.

- **Mayor**

The mayor of Merafong in line with the regulations and policies of Local Government according to the chapter three of Local Government the mayor is elected by the Municipal council to co-ordinate the work of the Municipality and employs the Mayoral Committee. The mayor employs the municipal manager and heads of departments upon resolution of the Council.

One of the main tasks and objectives of a Mayor is to classify and categorise main issues affecting the citizens of that particular district and understand the desires and challenges of the community and execute on that task (Cabral, 2011). Moreover, the Mayor overseas important meetings with the executive members and execute tasks and powers of the municipality and attend key ceremonial functions of the municipality. The Mayor is seen as a political figure of a municipality (Subban, 2008).

According to Van der Waldt, (2007, 72) due to the fact that the mayor is viewed as a political head of a municipality, the Mayor should not be viewed as party political leader but as part of a governmental setting. As a political head, the Mayor key tasks are those that encourage

harmony, upholding of the constitution and further to abide by the principle of the Batho Pele principles and execute mandates of the municipality.

- **Municipal council**

The “municipal council is the highest body in Merafong Municipality. In line with the Local Government Systems Act 32 of 2000”, the district municipality entrusts the municipal council with the following duties:

- Represent the entire district and its four local municipalities;
- Ensure the well-being and interests of all community members through the delivery of quality services;
- Develop and ensures policy implementation and programmes of the district municipality;
- Maintains the financial integrity of the district municipality; and
- Ensures accountability and transparency in the operations of the district municipality.

Councillors

The “councillors are the elected members of the council. They consist of both ward councillors (WC) elected for a specific ward, and proportional representation (PR) councillors nominated by the respective political party according the proportionate percentage of votes cast in favour of the party” (Van der Waldt, 2007).

One of the key things about Councillors is that they get their mandate from communities when they are chosen to serve on the council. Because local government elections are conducted every half a decade, the decisions that councils chose, impact directly on community members. According to (Local Government in South Africa, 2005) societies evolve daily and face an array of challenges, and councils play key role in trying to make decisions that will or can have a positive spill over.

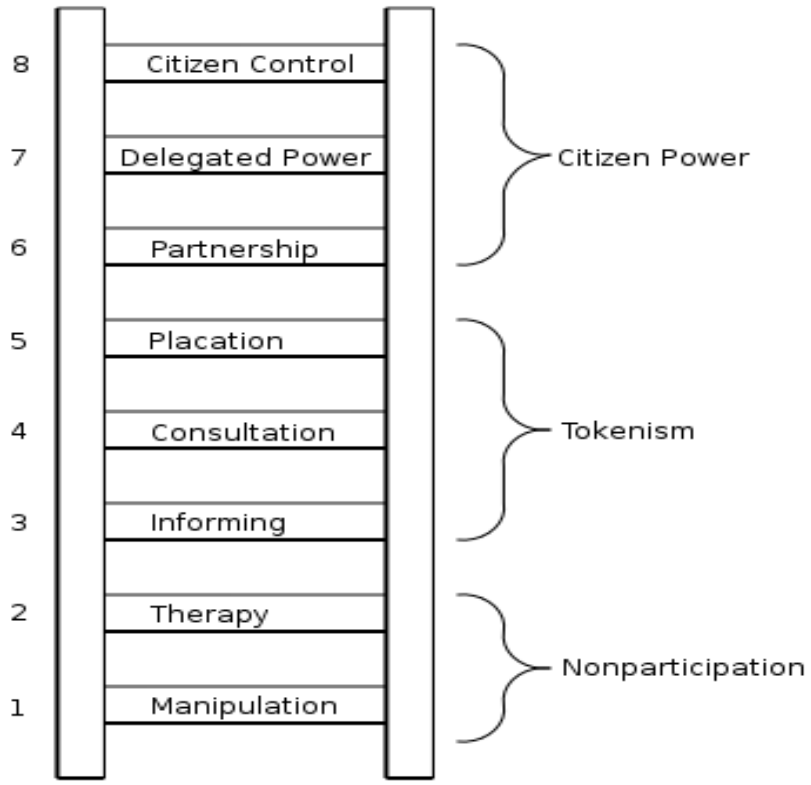
2.4. Good Governance and Public Participation

Good governance, or simply governance, plays a pivotal role throughout the world. Recently, there has been much debate about good governance and its role in development in terms of improving economic performance and financial investment. There is a growing need to implement and follow up the implementation of this concept at various departmental levels to guarantee the rights of investors and the community. Governance plays an important role in a nation's economic progress as it boosts the flow of capital (Eid, 2015).

Good governance needs the involvement of both the government and the community. Proper policies are to be put in place and monitored to make sure that they meet targets. If improper policies are in place, municipalities fail and their performance is poor. For improved service delivery, community forums must be conducted and the views of the community have to be incorporated.

Arnstein (1969) constructed eight (8) steps ladder participation model, which is vital in explaining and understanding various stages of public participation by citizens. Below is the description of detailing different levels of public participation.

Figure 2. Eight ladder of citizen participation



Source: (Arnstein, 1969)

Arnstein (1969), “proposes a level of public participation that is close to the ideal through a model, the ‘ladder’ of participation model”, which can be exploited as a guide to observe who has power when significant decisions are executed in municipal service delivery. According to this conceptual framework, the two first two participation model are deemed to be almost the same.

Public participation for good governance in local government is very important. It is however important to know the various means that participation takes form as illustrated by the table below:

Table 2: Types of Public Participation

Type	Characteristics
Token Participation	This is where people sit on official committees but have no real power to make decisions.
Passive Participation	People are told what has been decided or happened. Their options and responses are not asked for.
Consultative Participation	People are consulted or answer questions by external agents who define the problems and gather and analyse the information based on their definition. Agents are not obliged to include the views of citizens.
Participation for material gain	People only participate for financial gain. They have no real interest or interest to the process or the outcome of the process as long as they receive payments for their participation.
Functional Participation	Citizens participate at the request of external agencies to meet objectives that have already been set.
Interactive Participation	People participate in the joint analysis and the development of action plans through shared decision-making and agreeing on priorities.
Self-mobilisation	People initiate actions on their own and develop contacts with external agencies to help them realise initiatives through resources or technical advice or both.

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2.5. Local government and service delivery

Many organisations are investing in employee development to improve the quality of the services in line with that which customers expect (Jenkins 1992,13 in Moletsane 2012). Municipalities in SA have become the centre of attention for service delivery. Governing officials are seen as the front desk of service delivery institutions.

Legislation and policy methods related to effective “policy implementation, monitoring, performance evaluation and measurement by a set of values such as equity, productivity and

quality" (Moletsane, 2012). This goes to show that for improved water and road infrastructure, municipalities have to invest in their employees. On-going training for employees, performance plans that are monitored and bringing to book those who do not perform.

Good service delivery is the cornerstone of every municipality. Governance plays an important part and public participation is key. Municipalities should be willing to work together with community members and engage them in all matters that affect their livelihoods. Municipalities should have employees that put the community first. Bribery should be eliminated and services offered to everyone. The state of water and road infrastructure in both municipalities should be satisfying.

It is therefore important for municipalities to perform their responsibilities, which are as follows according to Bikink (2006):

- "Infrastructure and basic services, which includes water and sanitation, electricity and gas, reticulation, refuse removal, storm water management, municipal roads, municipal public transport, and street lighting, among others".
- "Social and welfare services, which while primarily an area of provincial responsibility, municipal functions that fall in this category may include childcare facilities, municipal health services, establishment and maintenance of public parks and other recreational facilities. Other community-based social services are often, in practice, provided by municipalities" Craythorne (1997).
- Administration and public order, which includes fire-fighting services, building regulations, control of nuisances, air and noise pollution, traffic and parking; larger municipalities often have established 'metro police' to assist with enforcement in these areas.
- Municipal planning, which involves the development plans of a municipality that "are the basis for directing and managing land use and infrastructure provision, and that should help plan for public investment whether the particular service is provided directly by the municipality or by province" White Paper on Local Government (1998).

2.6. Gauteng Provincial Government's Ten Pillars

The Gauteng Provincial Government administration has adopted ten pillars aimed at radical Socio-economic and political transformation towards the modernisation and re-industrialisation of the province's economy. The ten pillars are as follows:

1) Radical economic transformation
2) Decisive spatial transformation

3) Accelerated social transformation
4) Transformation of the state and governance
5) Modernisation of public service
6) Modernisation of the economy
7) Modernisation of human settlements and urban development
8) Modernisation of public transport infrastructure
9) Re-industrialisation of Gauteng Province
10) Taking the Lead in Africa's new industrial revolution

2.7. Ward Committees

Because local government deals with people at a grassroots level than any other form of government, it is then vital that they employ processes that will lead to better public participation according to the Constitution, section 152 (1). The municipality has a key role of encouraging public participation and key to this process is deploying good governance structures and accessible leadership to its citizens to put levers of control and rollout service delivery.

As indicated previously, ward committees are seen as essential structures to promote public participation since early 2000. The Section 16 (1) of the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, 32 of 2000, mandates the municipality to cultivate an ethos of municipal control that balances formal representative administration through a structure of participating governance. The main role of ward committee is to enhance key democratic process in the local government context, as the main role of the municipality is to have access and link up with community members, and then the institutional arrangement of having the ward committee structure serves as that linkage.

Contained in Chapter 7 of the Constitution, 1996. Section 151 (1) mandates the municipalities to implement the following:

a) Provide democratic and accountable government for local government; and
b) To encourage the involvement of communities and community organisations in the matters of local government.

The operational functioning of ward committees permits for an additional democratic local government and for the purpose of this study improves and enables public participation in addressing service delivery.

With the phenomenon of migration, most communities contain diverse demographic groups with diverse views and expectations in the communities they reside in. This poses a challenge

to ward committee further noting that they themselves are a diverse grouping. The main aim is to gather the diverse views and expectation of community members, combine pressing basics of service delivery, and encourage public participation of the community. The necessary tasks might prove to be complex if the ward committees are not properly capacitated.

The basic mandate is to encourage democratic processes even within a diverse grouping and improve accountability and transparency as well as execute service delivery challenges by listening to the citizens and promoting public participation (Bernstein1994,62). Ward committees aim is to increase useful contact between municipalities and local communities.

An array of scholars has covered the topic of public participation, but having identified ward committee members as central figures of promoting and enhancing public participation. It is then necessary to understand the many challenges that the ward committee faces. The author did mention few and, in this study, prior, and out of those ones being lack capacity. It is therefore, worth taking a deep dive into understanding further in detail some of those challenges or obstacle the ward committees' faces.

2.8. Ward Committees, their role and functions in promote Public Participation

According to Mosotho (2013,18) "from a broader view of community participation, the legislation on local government set clear mechanism for the establishment of ward committees as a structure to liaise with the municipalities. Establishing a ward committee is mandatory for municipalities, as representatives of the community. However, legislation makes it mandatory for municipalities to develop mechanisms to consult and involve communities in the affairs of the municipality and its processes. It would seem that most municipalities have chosen to establish ward committees to comply with this aspect of the legislation on citizen participation".

Taking note of the above, it is very clear that the legislation does promote public participation. The establishment of ward committee serves a bridge between the community and the local council. Ward committee members are there to always update the public on what the municipality is doing and can take back the response of community members back to the counsellor. Processes of engaging the public have to be made known to everyone and everyone in the community should be given fair chance to participate. The benefits of public participation are highlighted by the NPFPP (2007) as follows:

- Increased level of information in communities: one of the most common ways public participations improves governance is by increasing levels of information about government in communities.
- Improved need identification for communities: A second benefit of public participation is improved need identification for communities.
- Thirdly is addressed by tackling matters of SERVICE DELIVERY. It is evident that the governing party is greatly updated on citizens desires and how they should they address delivering quality services.
- Greater community empowerment: Services that “could be developed include noise and nuisance abatement, development control, aspects of management of libraries and museums, leisure and tourism, street lighting, litter control measures and parking restrictions on the street” Parliamentary Working Group (2007).
- Better answerability: This is a great benefit recorded and illustrated in developing Asian countries
- Impact of community participation on wealth distribution: A sixth and notable benefit concerns the impact of community participation on wealth distribution.
- Building a greater sense of solidarity: This benefit of community participation involves the way it helps build a greater sense of solidarity or belonging to a community among residents.
- Greater tolerance of difference: “The final benefit is greater tolerance of difference. Problems remain about to include poor and marginalised groups, or when such groups are present, more middle-class groups, but on the whole, public participation processes do seem to make people more tolerant of difference” Parliamentary Working Group (2007).

These benefits of public participation do not mean that it is only smooth sailing in participation. There are some challenges, and these are some of the barriers to participation: power relation; participatory skills; political will; consultative structure; insufficient financial resources at local level; historical factors; community disillusionment with local government ineffectiveness; accessibility and lack of trust.

There are however, strategies that can be put in place overcome participation barriers in local government. Authors Gaventa and Valderrama (1999) propose the following:

- The promotion of participatory planning;
- The empowerment of communities through education and awareness;
- Training and sensitising of local officials to deal effectively with community matters;

- The encouragement of communities to participate in the budgeting process to ensure that resources are allocated where needed most and;
- The promotion of accountability of elected officials to citizens, meaning that there must be constant feedback to the community.

2.9. Local Government

The republic has three (3) levers namely, and that is local, provincial and national government. The local government in terms of service delivery is scrutinised more as it is seen by the masses as a vehicle that serves the basic desires of community members on the ground, hence municipalities get liable if services are not implemented or executed as promised accordingly (Van der Waldt, 2014, 4). Local government is naturally the first reference core between citizens and its government in an institutional arrangement argues Thornhill (2012). Therefore, municipalities are adjacent to the citizens and that is why the communities expect more from them.

The table below highlights the different levels of governments and their descriptions according to the section 155 (1) of the Constitution, 1996 and part 1 of the Local Government: Municipal Structures Act, 117 of 1998.

Table 3: Categories of municipalities and explanation

Municipal categories	Description of category
Category A: Metropolitan municipality	A municipality that has exclusive municipal executive and legislative authority in its area.
Category B: Local municipality	A municipality that shares municipal executive and legislative authority in its area with a category C municipality whose area it falls.
Category C: District municipality	A municipality that has municipal executive and legislative authority in an area that includes more than one municipality.

Because it is at a grassroots level, local government is required to locate itself to better the lives of the community members or citizens they service. These services can range from water and sanitation, health related services, rubbish collection, infrastructure maintenance and electricity provision etc. (Venter, 2012). A municipality on its portion is defined by Reddy (2008) as the legislative unit of local government and can consequently be regarded as regionalised support for the national level of government.

Most democratic nations view public participation as a critical antidote for connecting with its citizen as it increases transparency, good governance and elected official liable for responding to the local needs. According to Botha (2007), municipalities fail on service delivery due to not conducting public participation or engaging local communities, and this lack of consultation results in failure on programmes and projects. Botha (2007) further highlights that it is a global knowledge that participation commences at a local level.

2.10. Public Participation

Many scholars have covered the topic of public participation to a great length but they do not possess a universal scope of the definition of public participation as a phenomenon. They have however devised a working understanding of what public participation should encompass at a local level of government.

Defining the nature and extent of public participation

Over the years, there had been a global trend in the direction of increased participation of the public in the affairs and resolutions of policy-setting bodies and that concept is often denoted to as public participation (Rowe, 2000,3). Post – 94, public participation has been on the core of composition that governs how society manages the landscape (Cayford, 2002, 1).

The way that the SA government used to make decisions evolved, as elected powerful officials cannot sorely decide decisions without consulting with the masses that voted for them or put them into power. Decisions have to be discussed, deliberated and agreed upon by the people and the officials, it is not for the elite politicians only like prior during apartheid.

According to Rowe (2000) in the United Kingdom (UK), for example, public participation had developed seemingly in both national and local government in spheres as varied as transport planning, the environment and health care. Progressively, public participation in government decision-making is a measured part of the very definition of democracy (Creighton, 2005,1).

In the republic of SA, public participation is regarded as a significant means of strengthening democracy (Phago, 2008, 239). Democracy permits bureaucrats to make choices on behalf of the citizens and lets the very same citizens to hold those that make choices responsible for the choices they make. In modern day SA, executive divisions of government make an array of choices daily, executive choices that have the utmost impact the people.

According to Arnstein (1969, 216), everyone in principle is noble towards the idea of public participation as it is deemed as a good deed in the democratic dispensation and is lauded by nations at large that practise democracy. Scholars such as Laduma (2014) mentions that public participation can mean different things to different people just as service delivery can have a different meaning. Therefore, it is important to have consensus on what it means.

Shepherd (1997, 725) illustrates that public participation is at the core of democracy practicing nations and has to entail consultation on the decision-making processes. Further, public participation ensures that programmes and budgets meet the desires of the people it supposed to serve. Lastly, the programmes and budget implementation is widely accepted when the masses have participated in the decision making process and will less likely turn-out in revolt.

Public participation is defined as “progressive political process of engaging communities in governmental decision-making processes” (Handbook for Municipal Councillors, 2011,232). This vary and can include being “given notice of public hearings to being actively included in critical issues that affect communities” (Handbook for Municipal Councillors, 2011, 232) The poorer communities tend to benefit if there is proper public participation process that have been followed and protests would be fewer as they were consulted in the decision-making process.

Creighton (2005,17) reviews the struggle in apprehending the principle of public participation, observing that there are various definitions. Nonetheless, several definitions include the following elements:

- Public participation applies to administrative decisions;
- Public participation is not just providing information to the public as interaction but it’s an important component;
- There is an organised process for involving the public; and
- Participants have some level of impact or influence on decisions being made.

From a more SA outlook concerning the struggle in apprehending the core of public participation, CoGTA department (2007) illustrates the basic traditions fundamental to public participation as follows:

- Public participation is designed to promote the values of good governance and human rights;
- Public participation acknowledges fundamental rights of all people to participate in the governance system;
- Public participation is designed to narrow the social distance between the electorate and the elected institutions;
- Public participation requires recognising the intrinsic value of all our people, investing in their ability to contribute to governance processes;
- People can participate as individuals, interest groups or communities more generally;

- In SA in the context of public participation community is defined as a ward, with elected ward committees;
- That is why ward committees play a central role in linking up elected institutions with the people, and other forms of communication reinforce these linkages with communities like the *Izimbizo*, road shows, the *makgotla* and so forth.

In summary, public participation can be outlined as a process that gives citizens a chance to participate in the affairs of their own communities and be consulted on their needs and desires for a positive outcome. The main aim of public participation is to ensure that processes are followed in the decisions of citizens because they will be affected by those very same decisions.

2.11. Public Participation and Service Delivery

Draai (2010) highlights that in an ideal world citizens of a democratic country should be able to provide feedback regarding service delivery, this by way of analysing them positively or negatively at a local level. This process would ensure that the national government would then implement the feedback back provided and undertake decisive action that would be beneficial to the citizens. The process of community members providing feedback will only be useful if action is taken to implement the suggestions of community members and then impact positively on service delivery.

Post democracy especially in the early 2000's SA has been plagued by service delivery protests in different communities. The unrest is due to what the citizens regards as a particular municipality not meeting residents' expectations in executing service delivery. It is worth noting though, that violent protests behaviour is not a new phenomenon in SA, as during apartheid, most community members used this mechanism to protest against the national government. The difference now is that the violent protests are now carried out at a local level to demonstrate against lack of service delivery by the local municipality.

According to Smith (2017), the most unrest and protests were from 2013 and 2014 and this was seen as inept position by the inability of government not to foresee the unrest in time to curb them and also address the concerns of community members on issues relating to service delivery. Public participation is made to reduce the gap between the constituency and the elected officials in the administration. Consequently, ordinarily if proper public participation processes were followed and adhered to, then the people would experience improved service delivery, as there would be accountability and transparency at a local government.

2.12. Public participation in improving the delivery of services: addressing service delivery protests

Members of the community need to be intricate in issues pertaining to service delivery according to the Public Service Commission (2008). They further indicate that public participation motivates and increases social cohesion and harmony between the government and its people, which leads to better service being supplied with efficiency and higher standards.

Municipalities are mandated to provide essential services for the community as per the Constitution of the Republic they serve and the services needs to be of quality output, this will limit and curb the high number of service delivery protests that plague numerous municipalities. Failure to deliver services effects in people resorting to clashes with municipal authorities which might be overwhelming service delivery remonstrations that result in infrastructure being damaged etc.

Municipal IQ highlights that majority of the protests that occur in municipalities are due to service delivery related matters. This is because the municipality in numerous cases do not provide quality standard essential services to the residents of those communities they are meant to serve. The municipality has a mandate to serve the residents. The high frequency of service delivery protests should be of great concern to the national government, and they should hold municipal representatives accountable.

Maharaj (1997, 261) states that the other reasons for the service delivery protests stems from migration, where a certain number of people leave their rural areas and migrate to urban areas seeking opportunities. This phenomenon creates service delivery backlogs and municipalities not being able to carry out quality service delivery. Maharaj lists key examples of municipalities such as Khayelitsha, Bekkerservice deliveryal and Madibeng as prime examples of the congested and backlogged municipalities battling service delivery.

Post-apartheid South Africa resulted in a lot of migration by citizens from rural areas to urban areas, this has also had negative effects on service delivery in the rural areas as they experience lacklustre quality of service and often neglected by their communities. Poor communication by elected officials and their communities also worsens the situation because they do not inform communities on issues that affect them. Further, information dissemination is minimal in most municipalities that it leads to protests, where the communities feel neglected and not being part of the decision-making process.

South Africa also suffers from severe violent protests as they usually used to apply this method during apartheid and it is a phenomenon, they are used to in letting out their frustrations in a violent manner and hence the protest goes out of hand or uncontrollable by the authorities

especially in a complex situation like the informal settlement. What is imperative is that importance is on engaging the public and making sure that they are heard when it comes to decision-making procedures.

Public participation is important in addressing and enhancing service delivery as illustrated through above. Democratic nations that practise effective public participation tend to have more content citizens, as they feel the local governing authorities are addressing their needs and that creates a space for good governance leading to transparency and accountability by elected officials. Protests and unrests due to service delivery would be minimal through proper public participation.

Reid (2002) expands on this, arguing that, towns that place a high value on public engagement seek, and awarded, more funds than areas with lower participation. Pillitines (2011) suggests that South Africa might be experiencing a high number of service delivery related protests because of the high volume of backlogs, many competent civil servants (skilled departed government officials, and poor policy implementation because of lack of ineffective or lack of rather of public participation the municipality is meant to serve.

Community Public Participation Policy (2016) cites that public participation is optimal when concerned parties are effectively and properly consulted and the community is engaged and listened to by the stakeholders. This is because people on the ground must be informed because they are not very knowledgeable about government systems and structures.

According to Masiya (2019, 27), earlier studies that have been conducted in municipalities in South Africa have suggested that since 2017, public participation has decreased at a local level, and this trend has led to a massive rise in service delivery protests. Eikenberry (2009) alludes that fair public participation involving communities assists them in reducing acts of corruption, gender misrepresentation, and lower rates of service delivery protests.

The Municipal Systems Act 32, 2000 stipulates, “the role of the municipality is to empower the poor and ensure that municipalities put in place service tariffs and credit control policies that take their needs into account by providing a framework for the provision of services, service delivery agreements and municipal service districts, and to provide public participation”.

2.13. Mechanism to facilitate public participation

Maphazi and Meyekiso (2013) highlight the fact that public participation is not a simple phenomenon, as community members need to be taught and also be eager engage with the local authorities or elected officials in the decision-making processes. Community members need to understand municipal processes and how local government matters are governed administratively.

The above would lead to better accountability by authorities that are meant to implement service delivery in the communities they serve as well as transparency. This phenomenon is essential especially to municipalities that have previously had to deal with service delivery challenges and protests. The community members ought to be properly inducted into the affairs of how a municipality is run.

The efficiency and effectiveness as indicated previously, depends on the effective public participation (Smith, 2008). This can be implemented using appropriate public participation methodologies such as voting, attending crucial meetings on budgets and programmes and so forth. That is active engagement and public participation. Ward committee members have a role to play in this process as they in theory should serve as a link between the people at grassroots and the municipal councillor and collate the issues of community members so that they are addressed.

Further, the ward committee members are integral in information dissemination to community members to motivate them to participate in public affairs of the municipality and encourage them to attend crucial decision-making processes of the municipality. The role of ward committee members found more premise in the early 2000s and their role being highlighted as crucial for public participation.

How can one participate?

According Mpehle (2012), he argues that in not one unit of analysis or channel available for participation but various ways and forms of methodologies of participation. The various methodologies have their own advantages and disadvantages. One may not generalise that a particular mechanism is better the other as it depends on array of factors ranging from economic, social, political and even cultural. The feasibility of these mechanisms dictates their efficiency and effectiveness.

Public hearing

Khoza, et al (2011), gives examples of public participation encompassing meetings conducted by governing officials and citizens to discuss matters that are of particular interest or might affect the citizens such as discussion of a particular bill/Act, municipal by laws or any other vital decision that the government intends to take. These hearing can be outlined as the decision-making process and in a municipal context can occur at legislative or executive level.

According to Jochen (1995), outlines the fact that public hearings benefits both the government and its people. By benefiting both parties, examples could be mentioned on the

part of community members that it gives them an opportunity to give input, critique, provide constructive feedback and influence decisions and or policy related matters. Further, citizens learn from other citizens during public hearings on issues that they might not have been privy to, like climate change, economic issues and social matters and so forth.

From the benefit of government, this can be in a form of a chance to present their proposed actions to the citizens, to highlight a range of issues, whether policy on a particular matter (social or economic) and involve community members for ideas on how to refine those proposed ideas. When authorities have public hearings, it also gives them an opportunity to learn about grassroots challenges community members face and it gives them an opportunity to "fix" or rectify the imbalances (Van der Waldt, 2007).

The land redistribution bill by Parliament can illustrate this further, where public hearings were conducted nationally in all the nine provinces to get citizens views on the land reform proposed amendment bill. By conducting public hearings, it also gives authorities credibility over the process as it is an indicator that they were transparent and consulted citizens before important decisions could be made (Draft guidelines for the Establishment and Operation of Municipal Ward Committees 2003,14).

Identification of interest groups

The municipality key strategic approach in identifying interest groups should be directly linked to the stakeholders that have direct interest of the municipality on a particular matter (Lennan 2011). This should be directly be linked to the goals that the municipality would want to achieve on a particular policy direction or project implementation plan, and this is typically outlined as Key Performance Areas (KPA).

Interest groups are the groups that should be relevant to the main objectives of the municipality business plans. Several examples are listed to this effect to highlight how can interest groups be identified, for example most municipalities have civil organisation such as Community Based Organisation (CBOs), and they serve to address particular relevance per topical issue.

An association for ratepayers would be included when a municipality have to address issues around billing problems or when they would need introduce new ways of billing and or collecting rates. This matter was highlighted and has had several protests in many areas in Soweto, therefore, the municipality would then identify those particular interest groups to get their views or input on the matter (The Soweto Concerned Residents) (SCR).

Where other structures previously enjoyed a seat on the council via political campaigns, then they would automatically be included in representation of interested groups. Most municipalities also tend to include the whole community members as part of interest groups and not necessarily chose a particular relevant group that is of concern to the particular issue or policy matter (Meintjies, 2004). Various municipalities have different methodologies on how they also identify and conduct feedback on various issues, this can range from using municipal websites, conducting surveys and having citizens have their own leaders that they can channel information to for input and feedback (Public participation in local government 2002,19).

Many civil society organisation, ward committee members and other interest groups because of power plays, could want to enforce their own interest than the other, therefore, it is vital for the municipality to choose a right mix and relevancy according to the mandate they need to execute to achieve their business plan goals according to their KPAs. The KPAs are mostly included within the IDP process of particular municipalities.

2.14. Challenges of public participation

Scholars have highlighted those democracy-practicing nations especially like SA, public participation is central in executing service delivery related matters. Therefore, communities should be engaged in matters that involve them at a local level. Essentially, community members should be intricate in the decision-making process of their local communities. This process was introduced post-apartheid as government has three layers of spheres, and the local government identified as the key lever to being the one that services people at a grassroots level. Post 94, it has emerged as key theme that that the 'active involvement and growing empowerment' of the population (Bernard, 2005).

The Public Service Commission (PSC) (2008) of SA has conducted research in trying to grasp around of the challenges regarding public participation. The following are some of the challenges as outlined by the Commission, namely:

- **Lack of government commitment to adopt a participatory approach.**

The Auditor General (2017) of SA highlighted those municipalities that receive clean audits exercises a greater level of public participation and this applies versa vice where municipalities that do not acquire clean audit are found to be poor in promoting or engaging the communities on public participation. That has led to poorly implement programmes, fruitless and waste less expenditure on budgets. It is then, imperative that national government to deeply make

municipalities adopt public participation as a methodology to address issues that pertains to service delivery.

Public participation should not be seen as a way of just a tick box exercise or wasting resources or wasteful period. Public participation must be viewed as a powerful instrument or methodology that is central to service delivery and promoting good governance within a municipality or at a local level. This phenomenon should place primarily the ward committees as main figures to promote public participation.

Municipalities differ to other municipalities and thus are not homogenous, it is thus critical that each municipality to adopt their own effective strategy in promoting public participation at a local level within communities. By adopting their own unique key way of conducting public participation, it is more probable that it could be effective and efficient in addressing service delivery matters.

- **Unwillingness of project officials to give up control over activities including not acknowledging the importance of citizen views.**

Programmes and budgets of the municipality is meant to have a positive impact on community members and uplift them according to Jochen (1995). Without proper consultation of the members of the community in making inputs illegitimates the process by the authorities and reduces transparency, therefore undermining public participation. It is essential for the local government to understand the role played by citizens and elected officials should be made aware of the importance of public involvement in the decision-making processes. The citizens should be consulted in the public participation process and this will lead to greater efficiency and lesson protest, as they would have made aware about programmes and implementation of services.

- **Limited capacity of local-level participation and insufficient investment in community capacity building.**

In most municipalities in SA according to Andoh (2011) citizens feel that their plights and needs are not met by the elected officials that should be representing them and need platforms or ways to participate and have their inputs. Lack of citizens not being heard has resulted in violent protest and riots, as people feel that is the only way the municipality will take seriously their grievances. Therefore, public participation needs to be key so that community members can be able to air their grievances and provide input on issues that affect them. Public officials have a duty to educate citizens on various platforms available to them to participate in

decision-making processes as well as attend crucial meetings, this will lead to lower level of service delivery related protests.

- **Participate too late**

At a local level, municipalities to involve community members late on implementation of projects or programmes. This often led to disgruntled community members because they were not consulted enroute to the implementation of the projects. Therefore, it is very vital for communities to be involved earlier in the decision-making process as well we be consulted. This way, the community members will be less disgruntled and less protests that are currently being experienced.

- **Mistrust between government and communities**

According to Van der Waldt (2010), municipal officials rely on citizens input to be able to understand issues on the ground. Therefore, having an open method or mechanism to allow for the free flow of information between community member and elected local officials is very important. Most protest occur as a result of mistrust, where officials do not include community members in decision making processes. Public representatives have a mandate to include community members and take accountability should there be lack of service provision. The public lose trust when promises that were made are not adhered to and there is lack of implementation on service delivery agreements.

2.15. Conclusion

The chapter illustrated the key of public participation and influence on SERVICE DELIVERY especially at a local level. Particular examples were further outlined in how lack of proper application of public participation leads to unrest or service delivery protest and in some instances they turn violent. Furthermore, the chapter outlined the role that ward committees play in facilitating and promoting public participation, especially as their mandate is meant to be a link between community members and the municipal council, and they should be a useful channel to address issues faced by citizens at a local level.

2.16. Policy and Regulatory Framework Overview: Local Government in SA

Overall, SA is classified as a Constitutional Democracy. By this, it means that the Constitution has been accepted and serves as the supreme rule of the country. Section 40 of the Constitution of the Republic of SA describes the country's organisation of government machinery as a three-tiered unitary model. Thus, the national, provincial, and local government spheres each enjoy respective constitutionally entrenched powers and functions, although

there are areas where the powers and functions are shared concurrently, as set out in Schedule 4 and 5, and Section 156, 104, and 44 (Republic of South Africa, 1996). These respective set of functions and powers are coordinated, at least in principle, through the principles of intergovernmental and cooperative governance as promulgated in the Intergovernmental Relations Framework Act 13 of 2005.

In light of the above, local government in SA is constitutionally constituted and therefore, as Visser (2005,1) concurs, the Constitution "provides it with a strong institutional status." Consequently, it does not, and should not, function in isolation; nor does it operate according to the whims of its leaders. The spirit and philosophy of local government in South Africa demands, instead, that the sphere pursue and be guided by good governance principles:

- Participatory local government (Section 152(1) (e); White Paper on Local Government 1998, 17).
- Local government that promotes local democracy and accountability, while providing services sustainably (Section 152 and 153 of the Constitution; Section 6 of Municipal Structures Act 32 of 2000).
- Sound and sustainable financial management characterized by transparency, accountability and effectiveness (Section 215(1) of the Constitution; Section 60 and 61 of Municipal Finance Management Act 56 of 2003).
- Promotion of effective and efficient governance (Section 59 of Act 32 of 2000; section 160(1) (d) of the Constitution).
- Local government that is responsive to the needs of communities through the process of needs analysis called integrated development planning (White Paper on Local Government, 1998, 22-26; 93-94).

Taking the above section into account, good governance in SA's local government is, therefore, mandatory. That is, although good governance at local government could be pursued for other considerations, such as appealing to both the voters and donors by the political elite, it essentially remains a mandate and obligation in SA. Therefore, the local government must not disregard its developmental mandate.

White Paper of Local Government

The White Paper on Local Government, describes the functions of local government in promoting community involvement. It aims to improve service provision and make sure that elected officials uphold accountability and carry out their constitutionally mandated duties. Additionally, it enables citizens to continuously contribute to the procedures used to formulate policies, particularly those that affect their daily lives. The White Paper on Local Government,

is a comprehensive policy paper that addresses the reform of the entire local government sector (Government Gazette No 18739, March 13, 1998,37).

The definition above makes it apparent that the phrase "developmental local government" sums up a new duty that will be crucial to the function of local authorities. Four interconnected traits define developmental local government:

- Enhancing social and economic development to the fullest extent;
- Integrating and coordinating;
- Democratizing development; and
- Leading and developing (White Paper on Local Government 1998,36).

2.17. Service Delivery (Provincial and local government)

According to the DPSA (2021), the concept of Batho Pele should be implemented as part of public participation. This is a Sotho translation for 'People First', "is an initiative to get public servants to be service orientated, to strive for excellence in service delivery and to commit to continuous service delivery improvement". The concept is a simple and transparent mechanism, which allows citizens to hold public servants accountable for the level of services they deliver. Batho Pele is "not an 'add-on' activity but rather, a philosophy of service deliver in which citizens are placed at the centre of public service planning and operations" DPSA (2021).

Eight (8) Batho Pele principles were established to serve as satisfactory policy and legislative framework regarding service delivery in the public service DPSA (2021). These principles "are aligned with the Constitutional ideals of promoting and maintaining high standards of professional ethics; providing service impartially, fairly, equitably and without bias; utilising resources efficiently and effectively; responding to people's needs; the citizens are encouraged to participate in policy-making; and rendering an accountable, transparent, and development-oriented public administration" DPSA (2021).

The Batho Pele principles include the following:

- Consultation
- Setting service standards
- Increasing access
- Ensuring courtesy
- Providing information
- Openness and transparency
- Redress

- Value for money

Batho Pele was seen as a an approach of the previous dispensation, which excluded the majority of South Africans from government machinery, to one that seeks to include all citizens for the achievement of a better life for all through services, products and programmes of a democratic dispensation (Education and Training Unit, 2022).

The 2017 Statistics South Africa General Household Survey (SAGHS), highlighted that the majority of country's citizens have not been "pleased with the quality of the services they receive and that the unhappiness trend had been increasing since early 2000". The 2019 South African Social Attitude Survey (SASAS) data discovered that a "hefty proportion of South Africans distrust/strongly distrust (49.2%) their local government and about a third (34.8%) trust or strongly trust local government with the delivery of basic services". A study by an organization named Institut de Publique Sondage d'Opinion Secteur (IPSOS) in 2016, observed, "That four in every ten citizens of the Republic trust the government to deliver effective services to the public" (IPSOS 2016, Online).

This indicates that, such lack of trust is the result of inhabitant dissatisfaction with services, including the manner in which their concerns are managed by the municipal officials and respective government departments. The trust eventually builds to tensions and which leads to protests erupting and taking a violent stance.

The Presidency has noted that since 2004, numerous SA municipalities have had an increase in service delivery protests. The ascending trend in protests is supported by various studies (e.g. Institute for Security Studies). For instance, the "Social Change Unit (SCU) maintains that there has been a sharp rise in service delivery protests between 2004 and 2014 (Grant 2014)". The Presidency (2015) also highlighted that "more than 78% of the municipalities had failed to perform the 12 mandated functions".

It has been apparent that over the years these protests have become gradually violent, "often resulting in the destruction of private and public property and in certain instances injuries and death(s)". The author Lolwana (2016,8), highlights that SERVICE DELIVERY protests have been growing and becoming more violent. Alexander (2012,2) has described SA as the "protest capital of the world". Swart (2013) contends that societies have been "protesting further violently and heatedly as a show of their grievances against insufficient municipal service delivery".

The above means as more and more increasingly municipalities struggle to deliver on their respective promises of mandates; the more the citizens get agitated and thus further fueling

the direction of violent protests because of lack of service delivery. Ismail and Yunan (2016,269). This phenomenon indicates that community members might not have been properly consulted or engaged about participation and providing their input. Community members turn to take violent protests when their expectations vs the outputs are not met. Usually by their community leaders, ward committee members or municipal administrators and they feel neglected Matebesi and Botes (2017,84).

If as an example, one takes an in-depth analysis of a place like the city of Cape Town, which has largely become a model city for service delivery. Violent protest hardly happens within the heart of the city itself, but “the black majority argue that they are continually marginalised, particularly in terms of service delivery in the townships” according to Shaidi (2013). The protests often happen because the communities there feel marginalised (Abbas and Ntlemela,2016). These protests raise the questions of the attributes of public participation and consultative processes at the municipal sphere. There is therefore a need to “revisit local governance to explore probable ways to improve relations between communities and their municipalities by promoting public participation in decision-making so that there is joint ownership of policies and programmes” Shaidi (2013).

Municipal officials are therefore, vital to promote the role of facilitating public participation. Therefore, the main aim of the study is to explore innovative mechanisms of refining service delivery. The relations between communities and local officials ought to be strengthened to address inadequacies widespread in current public participation format. To ventilate this perception, an in-depth study of the Merafong municipality was conducted looking into two areas of Khutsong and Carletonville respectively. The study will focus on moving public participation to higher levels of the ladder of participation by increasing collaboration between authorities and citizens around water as well as infrastructure delivery concerns.

2.18. Challenges of Batho Pele Principles

With the introduction of Batho Pele Values and its noble principles of putting citizens first, many academics and governance experts have argued that this principle faces challenges with its practical implementation and some of the challenges are have been identified as follows:

- Nzimakwe and Mpehle (2012) refer to how public civil servants interact with members they serve on day-to-day services as demoralising. This is mainly due to other issues that public servants may be going through and they take out their frustrations by not delivering adequate services to citizens.

- Mokgoro (2003) highlights that the government listed the Batho Pele principles without adequately resourcing, training and skilling the public servants. Therefore, the framework of Batho Pele has remained just pillars but lack in implantation.
- According to Smith (2007), highlights that the framework and implementation is lesser implemented in marginalised previously disadvantaged communities, and that is cohort it is mostly targeted at.
- Khoza (2011), notes that civil servants are not encouraged to be criticised and therefore, that limits their ability to improve their service or rectify a particular problem had they welcomed criticism.
- Governments, have not improved channels of improving feedback mechanisms and complaints from citizens adequately. Various platforms should be available to citizens to be able to lodge complaints about service delivery from civil servants and or officials.

The economic environment

Scholar Prefontaine illustrates that that economic atmosphere in the context of SA when it comes to matters of service delivery. Below are some of the issues to be considered when it comes to service delivery because of the economic environment and they are as follows:

- The high level of unemployment
- Lack of implementation of crucial economic reforms
- Inflation and interest rates
- Labour laws and employment trends, as post 94, there's a correlation between the economy, optimum allocation of resources and SERVICE DELIVERY.

Wasteful and fruitless expenditures by most municipalities have affected the service delivery of municipalities throughout the country (AG, 2022). Most municipalities do not have adequate governance controls in place, resulting in unqualified audits, as indicated by the AG reports (2022). The municipalities in question do not see value for money, as they are not customer driven in execution and approach. There is a gap and a need to introduce laws that will make the municipalities account and consequence management approaches to mitigate non-compliance and improve service delivery.

2.19. Implications of Public Participation

The paper desires to illustrate the matter that while many social unrest and protest facing municipalities is mainly due to service delivery matters. It is the lack of proper public participation implementation that contributes to that, community members are often not

involved and disengaged with elected officials' representatives. As opposed to during apartheid times, where unrest was particularly conducted to achieve political revolution, unrest post-94 has been characterised as demonstration against service delivery at the local government level. Currently, citizens know more about their rights and what their basic needs and entitlement of essential services (Burger, 2009)

The paper aims to illustrate the area that while part of the problem at municipal level in one instance, the government officials their best to implement "their duties more transparently; this is apparent by the amplified rates of public protests which are directed at local government operative" (Burger, 2009). It is for these occurrences that policy provisions and capacity be channelled to the authorities to be able to align and engage communities. Officials need to be encouraged to promote public participation especially in a democratic nation such as South Africa. There needs to be a deliberate people centred approach in addressing service delivery through public participation.

According to Bernstein (1994) Religious, traditional leaders, Non – Governmental Organisations (NGOs), civil society organisations and public representatives all have a role in promoting public participation and engaging communities to highlight the importance of public participation. Bernstein further highlights that governments have a role in constructing policies and legislation that will promote people centred approach to matters that has to do with public participation.

Solely blaming local government or municipalities on lack of service delivery should not be the only mechanism, because in other instances it is the provincial and national spheres of government that has not adequately capacitated municipalities and provided the necessary support to carry out their mandate of servicing communities (Abegunde, 2019). The institutional arrangement by intergovernmental systems have not been adequate and have been poor and thus fails to support local governments and it's the people grassroots that get the brunt of non-service delivery because municipalities lack capacity. It is thus imperative to understand the underpinning and existing frameworks that guide municipalities when they are executing service delivery and if proper adherence to those systems and channels are being practiced

2.20. Why Public Participation?

The Advantages of Public Participation

There are at least eight significant ways, which are included in the table below, that boosting public participation in government can improve good government, according to experience from other parts of the world.

Figure 1: Benefits of Public Participation

The Benefits of Public Participation	
1	Better knowledge within communities
2	Greater awareness of community needs
3	Higher quality of service
4	Empowering residents
5	Increased responsibility
6	An improved wealth distribution
7	More cooperation within the community
8	Increased acceptance of diversity

Benefits of Public Participation

In communities, there is a higher level of information about local government, which is one of the most prevalent ways that public participation enhances governance. The public participation procedure in Brazil's municipal and district health councils serves as a suitable illustration. More than 100,000 members of Brazil's more than 500 municipal health councils, “50% of whom come from civil society, 25% from the government, and 25% from service providers”, engage in these councils (Coelho 2004, 35). Public understanding of health policy issues has increased as a direct outcome of this programme (Coelho 2004, 35).

Another illustration is the People's Campaign in the Indian state of Kerala, which rallied more than three million of the state's thirty million residents and led to bottom-up development planning in all 1052 of the province's villages and urban areas (Isaac & Franke 2002,189). In

fact, nearly every case study examined, reports improved local community knowledge of governance.

Greater accountability results in reduction in corruption was the sixth benefit, and that was particularly observed in India. According to Isaac and Franke (2002,187), the main cause of corruption in India has been the method used to choose the recipients of development-related programmes. In one of the established initiatives, transparent systems were established that guarantee the recipients stayed chosen with input encompassing public based on impartial criteria. Even though there were many reports of corruption, they largely occurred in the first year and most observers felt the system had improved.

Impact of Community Participation on Wealth Distribution: The impact of community involvement on wealth distribution is the sixth and most prominent advantage. A difference can be made by impoverished and marginalised populations participating effectively in policy changes, as evidenced by the changes in budgeting, health councils, and forest management in Brazil, Kerala, and So Paulo. Usually, but not always, the difference is negligible. So, according to advocates of the Kerala People's Campaign, "the increase in the agricultural growth rate... is attributed to the increase in land availability and the improvements in irrigation and drainage resulting from local investments fostered by the devolution of funds" (Isaac and Franke 2002, 205).

CHAPTER THREE

Research Methodology

3. Introduction

The researcher adopted a mixed method approach as termed by scholars (Sinclair, 2021) for this study. This approach comprised of qualitative study and quantitative study.

The author needed to understand the community members views, and challenges in addressing matters that affect SERVICE DELIVERY and the role of Ward Committee Members. The sample had 70 respondents (residents), and 31 Ward Committee Members. The study was conducted within the period of 05th October to 13 of October 2023, within the districts of Khutsong and Carletonville. Residents of Merafong were purposefully chosen for the study to enhance the credibility of the study and as well as residents first-hand experience with the challenges of the municipality.

SPSS was applied to analyse the data collected through a questionnaire, and themes and patterns captured to interpret data, the views and comments of respondents were further captured by qualitative approach to capture the feelings, views and perception and understand deeper level of issues affecting the communities and service delivery concerns.

Qualitative Study

Gounder (2012), describes qualitative research as being involved with qualitative experience featuring quality and its purpose is to get the meaning, and feeling and describe the situation. The researcher further explored the factors affecting public participation in service delivery impact. The researcher used interviews and questionnaires as research methods. The interviews will encompass open-ended questions on the questionnaire (semi-structured) so that more information can be gathered should a need arise.

Quantitative Study

Questionnaires were distributed so that those that want to be part of the research but do not have time for an interview could participate. Primary study was conducted with interviews and questionnaires and the secondary study applied be gathering of literature review on public participation and service delivery issues on local government as well as the municipality. Therefore, desktop research was applied.

3.1. Research Approach

The one part of the study provides a statistical analysis and deep dive into the details, whereas the other part deals with understanding perceptions and experiences of the participants (residents and ward committee members respectively.

The author conducted interviews by a form of a questionnaire where a list of questions included quantitative questions (demographics) and generating pattens for statistical analysis and open-ended questions that were grouped and had themes.

The researcher conducted a mixed method approach and that is qualitative and quantitative. With qualitative. The researcher combined both elements of qualitative and quantitative because it needed to address the aim of the research. This dual approach was instrumental for the researcher to understand broad meaning and get in-depth to the wholistic picture.

The researcher included two fundamental data methods and that was the thematic approach (qualitative) as well as statistical analysis methods (quantitative).

Purposive sampling

The researcher used the purposive sampling method in selecting the participants. This method is particular useful because the researcher had to chose the residents of Khutsong and Carletonville with the view that they understand the issues of those communities and experience everyday service delivery related matters. According to Surri (2011), when it comes to purposeful sampling, participants are chosen based on their presence in a population of interest, characteristics, experiences, or other criteria. Further, for Ward Committee Members, the researcher also chose members that serve the community within the Khutsong and Carletonville because they would have much realistic and broader view and enrich the study because they also live within those areas. In essence, the purposeful sampling was employed as there was an established criteria of who the study needs to collect data from through interviews.

By applying purposive sampling, the researcher would identify more of the in-depth social issues especially on the open-ended questions, where participants would offer their own opinions, views, feelings and relationships towards what they experience (Stratton, 2024). In most instances purposeful sampling assists with understanding the matter in question much clearer, and this method is much less resource intense.

Methodological orientation and approach

The study adopted a mixed method approach. This was in a form of conducting interviews with the residents and ward committee members respectively. The interview was administered

in a form of a questionnaire that included demographics, yes and no questions as well as open ended questions. In the Merafong municipality participants from Khutsong and Carletonville area were chosen for this study. The population were entailed two sets of participants, first sets of participants A being the community members (residents) of different wards of the two areas. The other set of participants were comprised of ward committee members of those two identified communities.

It is important to understand what is a mix method approach and that entails understanding describing what is qualitative and what is qualitative research. Below the research describes the two researches respectively:

Quantitative Research

This research method is usually applied when the researcher needs to understand or observe matters that affect a set of particular individuals, and that is found in a sample population. This is illustrated by collecting data (usually in numbers) and then the data is analysed and compared. A relationship with the data accumulated is deducted to understand this relationship. This method is mainly comprised of a questionnaire, observations that are structured and or experiments. Bias is eliminated in this approach broadly as it mainly scientific in its nature (Smith, 2008).

Post positivist usually adopt this study as it is deductive, objective as well as offers singular reality. In this phenomenon, questions are usually measured or are measurable. The data collected is analysed statistically, and this data or facts is known as raw or hard data (Creswell, 2012).

Qualitative Research

This research study which Neumann (2006,13) says it “constructs social reality and cultural meaning; focus on interactive processes and events; authenticity is key; values are present and explicit; theory and data are fused; situationally constrained; few cases; thematic analysis and researcher is involved”. This means that words add quality to the research, the truth is always important and the researcher is involved in the research so that they can verify the facts. Bless and Smith (2004,156) further elaborate that qualitative research is “research conducted using a range of methods which use qualifying words and descriptions to record and investigate aspects of reality”.

Table 3: Key in-depth outlook on the Quantitative Approach

Description/ definition	Qualitative (or naturalistic) evaluation approaches involve the use of predominantly research methods to describe and evaluate the performance of programmes in their natural settings, focusing on the process of implementation rather than on (quantifiable) outcomes.
Analysis	Qualitative and participatory methods.
Strengths	Establishing rapport and trust with research subjects; high construct validity; insider perspective. The collaboration and participatory nature of this design minimises suspicion and distrust of research with a concomitant increase in trust and credibility.
Limitations	The emphasis on naturalistic forms of inquiry makes it difficult to evaluate programme outcomes systematically and rigorously. The result is that strong casual inferences regarding programme benefits and impact are difficult, if not impossible, to make.
Main sources of error	Errors typically associated with naturalistic studies, e.g. observer and interviewer bias, as well as lack of rigorous control (no control groups or randomisation of subjects).

Source: (Mouton, 2003)

A descriptive case study was conducted to understand the relationship between public participation, good governance and service delivery (Bobbie, 2002). The study adopted a use of a mixed research method due to the complexity of the nature of problems and issues under examination, which demanded in-depth knowledge to explore factors that affect service delivery in the municipality. To collect qualitative data, semi-structured interviews were conducted since they offered the scholar with a very good opportunity to interact with the respondents and for them to freely express their feelings and experiences about the challenges affecting service delivery.

As this study was aimed at exploring factors that are affecting public participation in service delivery decision, it took an exploratory form as the researcher wants to find and bring to light these factors. The purpose of exploratory research is to “gain insight into a situation, phenomenon, community or persons” as alluded by (Van Der Waldt, 2004).

3.2. Research design and approach

This explains the ways and processes the researcher intended to acquire information to be relevant to the study, ways of data collection and strategy. The author interviewed ward committee members within the two municipalities within the areas of Khutsong and Carletonville respectively. Further, the researcher also conducted interviews with the residents of the very same municipalities and the areas highlighted. This was to afford both sides of the spectrum and opportunity to highlight their views etc.

An interview approach according to De Vos (2002) is highly effective when the researcher wants to understand and gather thoughts about the deep understanding of feeling community members might have and their views fully expressed. The researcher asked questions face-to-face and was able to read the body language and facial expressions interviewees make when they respond to the questions. Unstructured/ semi-structured interviews consist of asking respondents to comment on broadly defined issues. Those interviewed are free to expand on the topic as they see fit, and to focus on aspects, to relate their own experiences and so on Bless and Smith (2004,105).

Questionnaires were distributed for data collection. According to Bless and Smith (2004,156), “An instrument of data collection consisting of a standardized series of questions relating to the research topic to be answered in writing by participants”. This form of questioning allowed the interviewees to take their time and answer questions in the comfort of their homes and at a time most convenient to them. This method is not without fault, as some people take questionnaires and forget to answer them and response is low. Sometimes some questions were not easy to understand alone and the answers given did not respond to the questions. It was important for the researcher to plan the questions and make them to understand.

3.3. Research Methodology

Research methodology is the process of gathering data and processing it, according to Brynard & Hanekom (1997, 27). The researcher collected data from two participants respectively and that was from residents as well as ward committee members. The researchers conducted interviews that included a questionnaire that had open ended questions. The researcher needed to understand firstly if the mixed method would be applicable to address the aims of the study, then craft the rationale for the dual method as well as identify data collection strategy and type of design. A questionnaire was then developed, interviews were then conducted from two sets of participants (residents and ward committee members), and then the data was analysed, using statistical social science software and report detailed.

A much more realistic method was to apply the mixed method approach in this research to understand the fundamentals of public participation impact on service delivery. Walsh (highlights that highlights that the most fundamental and realistic approach to understanding a question at hand is to deploy both qualitative and quantitative approaches. The researcher was able to engage with residents on the ground (field study) and receive the relevant information timelessly. Clearance was sought from the municipal manager office.

3.4. Population

Merafong City Local Municipality is a Category B municipality with an Executive Mayor Governance system. About 10 full time Mayoral committee members who are responsible for heading their respective portfolios support the Executive Mayor. The Mayoral Committee members chair their respective Section 80 Committees to which specific departments report.

The area size of the municipality is 1631, 7km² and it comprises of twenty-eight (28) wards. The municipality has the areas listed below:

- Carletonville
- Khutsong
- Fochville
- Kokosi
- Greenspark
- Welverdiend
- Wedela
- Blybank

As indicated earlier in the chapters, the researchers focused their study on the two areas within Merafong and that is Carletonville and Khutsong respectively because they constitute the biggest areas by population. A census is typically used to collect population information, but because they may be quite logistically challenging, many countries only conduct them every five to ten years. Various agencies are authorised to create and use the administrative data they collect about the population, life events like births, deaths, and cross-border migration between Censuses. Since the 2011 Census took occurred approximately 7 years ago, the data is now dated and untrustworthy.

In 2016, Statistics South Africa performed a Community Survey, and more data from the Survey's findings are included in this IDP. However, several datasets from Statistics South Africa from 2016 have not been made public. In these circumstances, Quantec 2017, data

incorporates Community Surveys, such as economic statistics, to provide a fuller picture of the situation.

The foundation of any development process is its population, which influences economic growth by supplying work (employment) and skills and determining the demand for business performance. Understanding population dynamics is crucial to getting a clear picture of the people who will likely be impacted by any potential project or development.

Table 4: Demographics of Merafong Municipality

Population Data	**Statistics**
Population	188 843
Households	66 525
Household size	2.8
Gender	Male = 48.8% Female = 51.2 %

Source (Quantec 2017)

3.5. Data Collection

Since this is, a mixed research method approach there was a need for this study to adopt two data collection instruments, namely a self-administered questionnaire and an interview guide were used. Semi-structured interviews were conducted since it will be flexible and allows much data to be collected through open-ended questions (Poperwi, 2018). Piloting and testing of the survey questionnaire enabled the establishment of whether the questions would be understood and relevant to the topic (Greeff, 2011).

Document analysis was conducted in two forms. The analysis analysis included primary document analysis as well as secondary data collection analysis. The researcher needed to give the research meaning from the data collected, and that is the purpose of document analysis (Bowen, 2001). Document analysis is known as a process of analysis, reviewing as well as evaluating documents whether written, printed as well as electronically published (Bowen, 2001).

Document analysis included data examining and interpreting the data collected to give it understanding and give it a ‘voice’ as well as develop knowledge. The researcher had to further analyse data in a form of literature review and published documents. Literature provides an in-depth view and understanding on the research to give it more meaning. Academic research that was conducted was also analysed to understand the public participation and service delivery.

Community Members

The important informants were informed about the study prior to the interview in order to allow them the opportunity to reschedule their appointments; this was mainly on the part of the Ward Committee Members. They were further also informed about the purpose of the study and that their participation is voluntary, and that they can withdraw from the research at any time. Prior to the study permission was sought and granted to record their conversations during the interviews. Further, the researcher acquired permission to conduct the study by the Merafong municipality and was granted.

The survey questionnaires were distributed and collected in person as this helped to improve the completion rate (Babbie and Mouton, 2001). The respondents were granted sufficient time to complete the questionnaire.

Data collection was executed by mixed method approach methodology, this method allows the research to be indicative of exploratory as well as descriptive analysis. This research is effective when the researcher tries to understand human perspective on a particular matter as well as numerical (hard data) analysis. This approach is about quantifying the relationships between variables. During this phase of information collection, a methodological approach of mitigating against bias, and prejudices was adhered to and trust established with the participants.

The Community

The population entailed two sets of participants. The A set of participants were the community members of Merafong municipality. The B participants entailed ward committee members of the two areas of the Merafong municipality. The two areas identified as Khutsong and Carletonville. Community members that were respondents were 70 and ward committee members respondents were 31. Stratified sampling was applied to mitigate bias (Sharma, 2017), as respondents were of different demographics such as gender, age, education level, different wards, and employment and non- employment.

Since there was over 80 Ward Committees in the area of Merafong that are in charge of promoting public engagement initiatives in various wards, the researcher personally interacted with 31 of them. A questionnaire/interview scheduled with eight questions was created; including statements with the option for respondents to choose whether they agreed, and it took around 15 minutes to complete.

The researcher further interviewed 70 residents of the Merafong municipality that falls under the area of Khutsong and Carltonville. A total of 12 number of wards were represented in the study. The researcher distributed questionnaires and it took an average of 10 minutes to

complete the questions. The community members (respondents) were asked for their consent and if they agree or not with conducting of the study. The researcher has highlighted the distribution list of the wards represented in the study on table.

3.5.1. Data Collection Techniques

Questionnaire

A questionnaire with both open-ended and close-ended question items were originally prepared in English to collect information from delegates, community leaders, ward committee members, and residents filled the questionnaire.

To avoid bias and allow for independent responses, questionnaires were employed to collect data for this study. For the public, structured questionnaires can be completed on the spot where the interviews were conducted (Brynard 1997, 38). It was critical to provide participants with detailed directions on how to complete the survey. Respondents might focus their thoughts on the questions as a result.

Interview

Both structured and un-structured manner of face-to-face (personal) interview were conducted to obtain accurate information from ward committee members, and residents (community members).

3.5.2. Primary data

Semi-structured interviews with the municipal officials and the distribution of questionnaires to the public were used to collect primary data. According to Van der Wadlt (2004, 58) Primary data comes from the original sources and is collected specially to answer to the research question and objectives. Primary data, new data, collected as part of a research project may include personal interview data, group interview, and or questionnaire data. As indicated above, the researcher used interviews and questionnaires as a mode of collecting primary data.

3.5.3. Secondary data

The study's foundation was secondary data. Document analysis was utilised. This required the synthesis of information from legal papers, administrative rules, and policy texts. Council minutes, bylaws, booklets, journals, and policy documents were analysed in municipal government. Additionally, a thorough background literature review was conducted to create a coherent framework for the investigation**.**

3.6. Sampling

Taking any segment of a population or universe as typical of the population or universe is what Kerlinger (1986) defined as sampling. The population that was the study's target were chosen using the purposive sampling technique. This technique was used for this study's aims since it guaranteed that only those who are reachable and have the required data were targeted.

According to Choen and Moniona (1994) cited in Sibelo (1999), they are of the view that for statistical analysis, a minimum sample size of 30 is usually thought to be desirable. A number of factors also determined options for sample survey. These required less time and produced efficient results, more cost-effective, and detailed information and high degree of accuracy because it deals with relatively small number of respondents.

Considering the above, it is worth noting that the researcher sampled over 30 ward committee members as well as over 70 community members as respondents. This in the research field is considered desirable.

Two sets of questionnaires (see Appendix) were applied to carry out the research. A total of 70 responses from community members were captured whilst 31 responses from ward committee members were captured. This sample represents roughly just over 11% of ward committee members in the two identified areas i.e., Khutsong and Carletonville.

3.7. Data Analysis

The researcher deployed thematic analysis in the method of data analysis for the qualitative analysis and statistical analysis for the quantitative analysis. Thematic analysis is implemented mostly when a researcher conducts interviews and or transcripts (Damyanov, 2013). With the thematic approach, the researcher was able to identify pattens, themes that are in regular occurrence to interpret the data. With this approach, the researcher subjective perspective takes central role in this analysis (Hayes, 1997).

The researcher applied inductive thematic analysis approach, the researcher had no preconceptions prior the study, therefore, needed to derive meaning and identify themes without any preconceived knowledge. This theme was important to understand participants subjective experience, perceptions and opinion on the subject matter of public participation and service delivery.

For the quantitative research, the researcher applied SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) for analysing statistical data. This form of data analysis is important is

complementary to the thematic analysis as it also involves analysing data, identifying patterns and then deducting trends (Bender, 2005). This analysis was used to employ descriptive analysis approach, especially in the mean averages, median and percentages etc. Statistical analysis on quantitative analysis removes bias and deals with facts.

3.8. Validity and Reliability

Validity as Martin (2005, 85) says that validity represents the degree to which a measurement reflects the true meaning or true score of the variable or concept under consideration. Validity is compromised when there is some source of error or systematic bias in the way the study was conducted or the way a question was asked.

Reliability of a research relies on two factors, namely internal consistence and external consistency. According to Neuman (2006, 404) “internal consistency refers to whether the data are plausible given all that is known about a person or event, eliminating common forms of human deception”. He goes on to say “external consistency is achieved by verifying or cross-checking observations with other, divergent sources of data. Reliability in field research also includes what is not said or done, but is expected or anticipated” (Neuman 2006, 404).

3.9. Research Ethics

Prior to the study, the researcher obtained ethics clearance from the relevant School of Ethics Committee. One of the key component of research is that ethics approval is a requirement, because the research subjects in this study involves human beings. Subjects, which means ethical protocols need to be monitored to ensure they do not experience undue harm because of their participation in this research. In addition to the ethics approval the scholar will also obtain informed consent from all the participating persons. Further to this, the researcher also got approval from the Merafong Local Municipality to conduct the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

Presentation and Discussion of Results and Research Findings

4. Introduction

This section addresses the presentation, analysis as well as findings of the study undertaken in the two areas of Merafong and that is Khutsong and Carletonville. The aim of the study was to evaluate the efficiency of public participation programmes for service delivery delivery in the highlighted areas. In preparations for study, various interview schedules were scheduled. These schedules were used to collect data via a questionnaire. This segment illustrates the findings conducted by the researcher on the effectiveness of public participation programmes towards service delivery.

It is also important for the demographics of Merafong local municipality to be given to understand the context from which and within which the data was collected. As such, the chapter will first give the demographic profile of the Merafong local municipality before giving data analysis and findings.

Table 5: Gender Split of Respondents

Gender	Percentage	Number
Male	61%	43
Female	39%	27

According to table above the were more male participants than females according to the study conducted.

4.1. Data Analysis and Research Findings

The researcher applied the field research because it was an effective way to interact with the participant on the ground and acquire relevant information from them, the participant signed a form of consent with the researcher before the questionnaires and interviews could be conducted, Wits University Ethics Department issued the clearance and ethics certificate for the study.

The researcher employed thematic analysis as well as statistical analysis for qualitative and quantitative analysis respectively. Thematic analysis is the study of patterns to give it understanding. This process was driven by the researchers aims as well as research question. This process was more exploratory phenomenon. Because the researcher applied inductive approach, the data analysis was read through (the questionnaire). Reflective thematic analysis. The themes from the data were grouped together identify themes for coding. The researcher further coded and grouped similar reoccurring answers on the open-ended questions for easier of interpretation.

In gathering the responses from participants, the researcher grouped statement responses that were similar together (thematic areas) using SPSS. The questionnaires each consisted of twelve question. The questions output was not separated by area, and instead that was grouped.

SPSS software was used to deduce numerical and statistical value (useful for demographics), the researcher could deduct mean, averages etc. The software was also useful to quantitative research and it involved inputting data, running the analysis, analysing the output and then interpreting data.

Residents

The researcher conducted interviews for the duration of two weeks – from 05 of October – 14 October 2023. The youngest person interviewed or who undertook the questionnaire was 16 years old whilst the oldest was 82 years old. The mean average of the respondent's age was 34yrs old. It was important to interview all age representatives, so that to get perspective between age and public participation. About 73% of respondents aged 22yrs older and below indicated that they do not attend meetings and they do not see the need to partake in meetings as this is for older people. Though over 52% of them new their ward councilors by name, meaning they are aware of their community leaders.

Number of Wards represented

The residents represented on the study represents over 10 Wards, with only four respondents not knowing which ward they come from. The wards and number of respondents are as follows:

Table 6: Ward represented by Khutsong and Carletonville

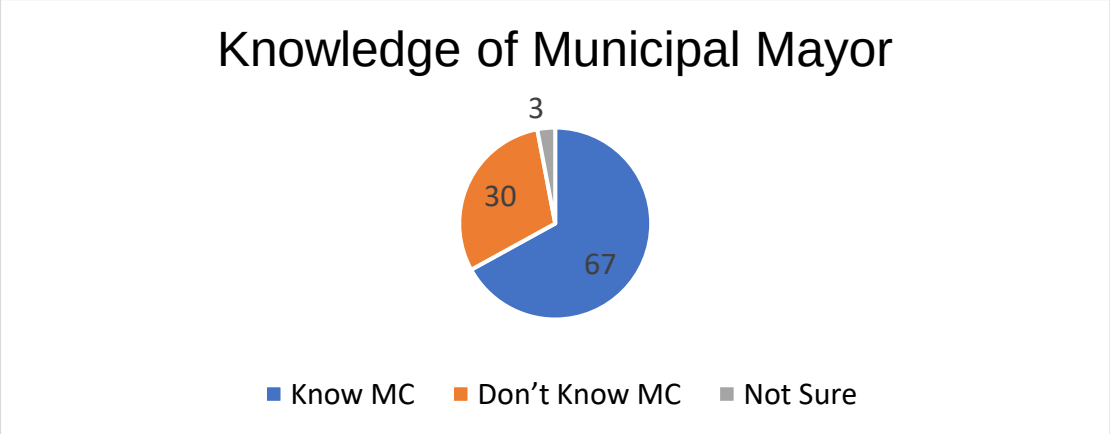
Ward Number	Number of respondents
2	23
3	9
4	7
5	5
6	4
7	6
8	6
9	4
10	2
12	4

The table below predominantly shows that more respondents came from the Khutsong Township and then followed by Carletonville. More respondents came from ward two (2).

The researcher prepared a total number of twelve set of line items for the questionnaire for the community residence, and the study conducted took two weeks in the month of October 2023. The residents that took part in the study were from the Khutsong and Carletonville areas. Below highlights the data collected and findings.

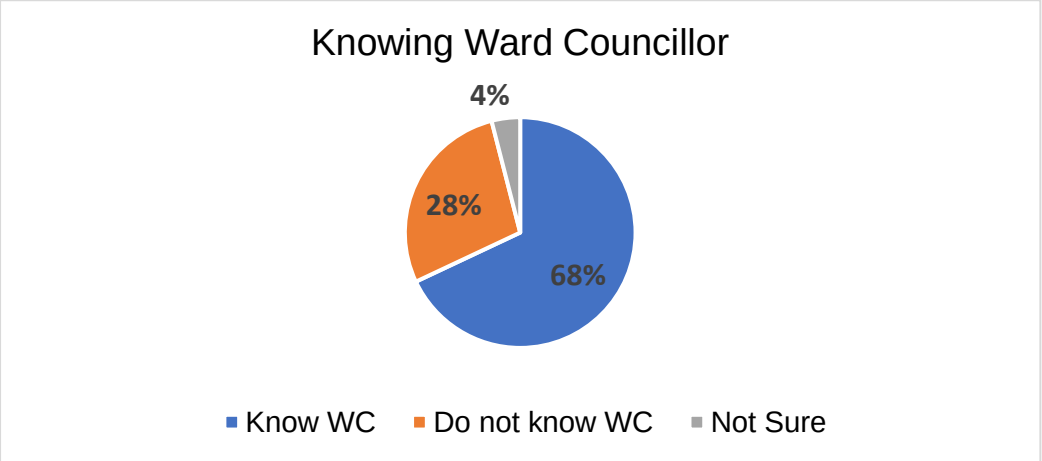
1) **On residents knowing the Municipal Mayor**

   Of the total respondents who undertook the questionnaire 67% of the respondents indicated that they know their municipal mayor, whereas 30% indicated that they do know their councilor. The remaining 3% said they were not sure, as they remember the old municipal councilor. Political considerations and as one residents puts it "chopping and changing of leadership, we lose track who is leading us".



2) Knowing the ward councilor

A total number of 68% respondents indicated that they know by name their ward councilor, with 29% indicating that they do not know their ward councilor. The remainder somewhat know their councilor but not by name.



The two of the above findings is really a good indication that majority of the people interviewed know their municipal councilor as well as ward councilors respectively. The reason offered by the respondent somewhat not knowing and knowing is because some responded that they usually keep changing due to political reasons. Reasons given especially by majority of young people is that they do not attend public meetings, therefore, they do not know who is their ward councillor. As one participant commented “the meetings involve our parents and old people” so “I do not know who is my ward councillor.

3) The issue of public participation

According to parliamentary statute, public participation at a local sphere is a process which municipality adopts and follows to consult with its citizens, and it should be interested and affected parties, civil organisations and relevant stakeholders before a decision-making process. The researcher had to apply use of participants local language at times where English was misunderstood, to thoroughly explain the questions. The respondents understood the process in this instance.

4) Residents right to contribute on how your community is governed

For the above process it was almost an even split between the residence. The respondents who know that they have a right to contribute and those that are not aware that they have a right to contribute is evenly split at 45% respectively to both parties. About 10% of the residents indicated that they somewhat know and do not know. The reasons brought forth by community members not knowing their rights to contribute range from lack of communication within the

municipality regarding decisions, communication and information sharing lacking and community members feeling excluded.

5) **Participating in any community meetings**

The response from residents to this theme was 50% indicated they attended meetings and the other 50% indicated they do not attend meetings, just like the previous question of having the right to contribute. Most community members do participate in the meetings at 46%, the 45% do not attend community meetings and whereas 9% do sometimes attend. If the researcher takes into consideration the number of residents that attend the community meetings and the number of residents that sometimes attend, then we get a combined number of 55%, and that makes up the majority number of people who attend the community meetings.

6) **The reasons for participating or not participating in the meetings.**

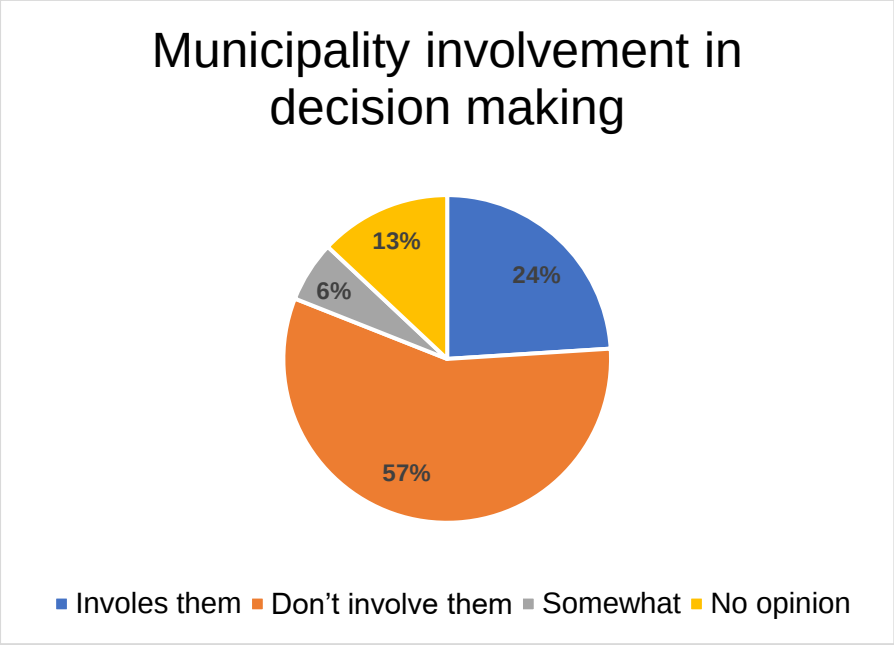
A high number of residents indicated that the reason they attending the meetings was because they find them useful and a way to voice out their opinion on pressing issues affecting the community. Respondents further indicated that the meetings serve to alert them what is happening to address the challenges within their community and also the changes being proposed.

The residents that answered that sometimes attend the meetings, 72% of them indicated that they are not able to attend the meetings because they are at work at the time and the other 28% indicated that they are attending school when the meetings are conducted. Young people (under the age of 23yrs) response for not attending is because they indicated that they feel the meetings do not ‘cater’ for young people and are meant for their parents, or older community members.

The above also illustrate that the reasons provided by respondents who said no they don’t attend the meetings is because their ward/community hardly ever hold meetings, and that if they do even hold meetings, they do not have a say on the structure of the agenda meetings. This is rather concerning, as this will deter potential interested participants not to partake on the meetings. The other reason the participants offered for not attending was that they find the meetings useless as decisions made or agreed to during the meeting, are not implemented on the ground.

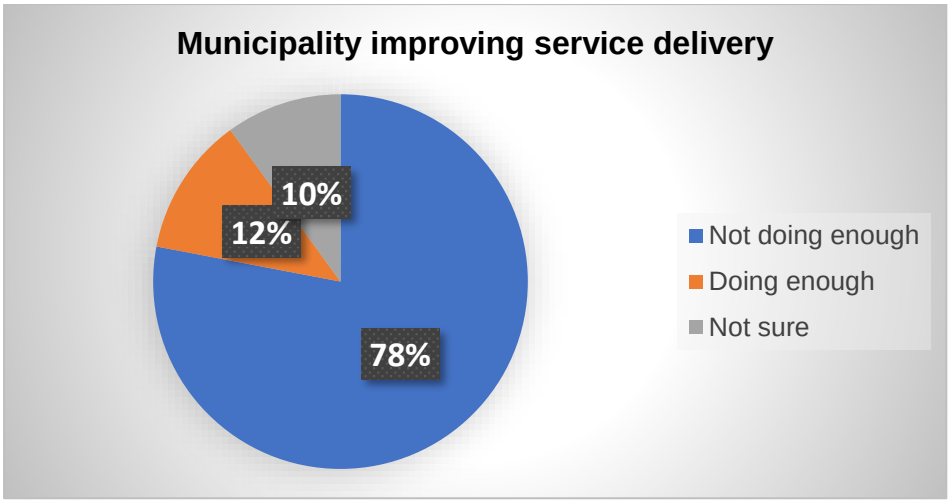
7) **Respondents on whether the municipality involves then enough on decisions they take in uplifting the community**

The respondents who believe the municipality involves them enough on the decisions they make made up of 24% and the residents that differed was 57% of the respondents. 6% of the residents feel somewhat believe that the community involves them, while the 13% indicated that they do not have an opinion on the matter. One respondent cited that “the authorities do not stick to their promises they promised in previous meetings”. While another resident alluded to the fact that “our suggestions are not considered during the public hearing meetings”. A younger participant indicated that “these meetings are meant for older people, young people like me our inputs are not considered, and we end up not attending the meetings”.



8) **Is the municipality is doing enough to improve service delivery?**

The above question was to assess residents’ views on their perceptions if the municipality is delivering on Service Delivery related outputs. The respondents indicated strongly that they do not believe the municipality is not doing enough. Overall, 78% of the respondents felt that the municipality is not doing enough. Only 12% of respondents felt that the municipality is doing enough to improve service delivery, whilst 10% indicated that they are not sure and are not in the best place to give a verdict on the question.



In the analysis, more residents indicated that public members are reluctant to attend service delivery meetings because of empty promises from the municipality officials. As a community we have" issues of sink holes, streets lights not working and electricity not working even after loadshedding schedule" as one of the community members highlights. The respondents mostly highlight sinkholes, sewage problems, crime and electricity as the reason they do not see the municipality doing enough.

9) Participant were further asked to explain their view points on the above question

About 82% of the respondents complained about the lack of consistency in rubbish collection and that having a negative impact on the environment and creating health hazards. Especially the older citizens (55 – 80yrs) respondents highlighted high crime rate and level of alcohol abuse as a concern. Sinkholes especially in Khutsong is also a cause of concern and not addressing fixing them. 16% of youth respondents complained about high unemployment, lack of opportunities and nepotism.

The respondent again has mentioned nepotism as they indicate that those in power are able to allocate jobs to their friends and families. Other respondents mentioned that lack of visible streetlights and potholes are a problem. About 8% of respondents mentioned lack of recreational infrastructure being a problem as sports related infrastructure being a problem. Water and electricity were consistent with most respondents and that on a larger scale is currently affecting most municipalities across SA landscape. The researcher should mention that most respondents from the same municipalities had similar issues affecting them on service delivery must highlight it.

10) What can be done to solve the problems of Service Delivery?

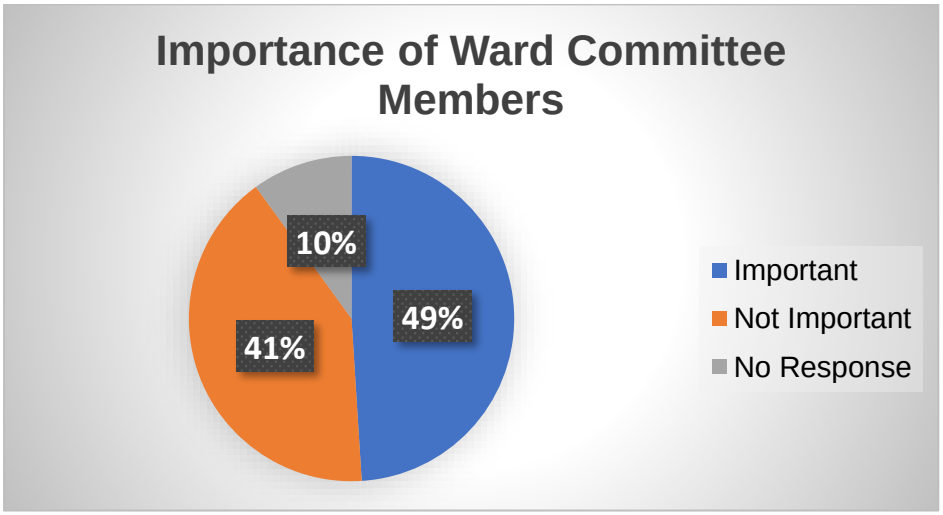
About 62% of respondents highlighted the issue of fixing the sewage (drainage system) of the municipalities they reside in. Further, 48% of the residents had challenges of ranging issues from the sinkholes, water related infrastructure matters, nonfunctional streets lights and electricity (outside stipulated loadshedding hours). The municipality should provide adequate resources as well as capacitate the ward committee members and relook at the promises made and fulfil those promises.

11) Knowing the ward members are and if they think. they are doing their job?

Of the respondents that were asked about knowing their ward members and their perceptions if they are doing a great job, 45% of the respondents indicated they do know their ward members while 46% of the respondents said they do not know them, while a total of 9% highlighted that they do not know them. A total of 35% of the respondent said they believe the ward members are not doing a good job, while 55% of the respondent believed the ward members are doing a decent job and are trying, the remainder of the respondent did not respond to the question.

12) Whether is important to have ward members

Majority of the participants indicated that it is necessary or essential to have ward members, that total was 49%, while 41% of the respondents indicated that they do not see it as important to have the ward members. The other 10% did not respond as several do not know what the role of a ward member is and do not even know their ward members.



The respondents see the benefits and some extreme measures that the Ward Committee Members do outside their mandate and task to service their communities. They mention that some ward committee members often lack capacity, blaming it on the municipality.

13) The researcher asked the respondents to qualify their responses by further explaining the above

A total of 20% could not explain their responses pertaining to the issues, while 45% felt that they are important and 35% are of the view that they do not see the roles of ward members as important. Various reasons were given to suggest why they are important, and these were ranging from residents' perception that the ward members are trying their level best. By being the pillar between residents and the councilors to be able to deliver residents' concerns and that some ward members go beyond the call of duty as they assist in patrolling (crime activities) and when there's water or potholes leakages, they try to solve the issues themselves.

4.2. Presentation of Data

The residence of Khutsong and Carletonville municipality majority have indicated that they do know their municipal councilor as well as ward councilors, that data alone is an indication of the community that is very much aware of the people who are publicly in charge within the communities and ward. With a municipality that faces many challenges as highlighted previously, it is very vital that the community members know who to hold accountable for the issues that might affect service delivery.

Presentation of the study from the community members

Most community members that were interviewed indicated to knowing their municipal councilor and ward councilor. That shows that the respondents have sight of political activities community they live in. The respondents that could not name their councilor or municipal councilor indicated to the changing nature of political campaigns in the area and changing of councilors often, that makes the lose track of who is running the office.

The majority of the respondents interviewed does not understand public participation as a concept. This is might have implications for the way in which the municipality conducts the public participation programmes and the IDP processes, they indicated of not being aware of this process if they exist. This also align with the question of the respondents being aware of their rights to participate, where yes, and no answers were almost similar and the rest

somewhat. It would mean some community members do not know the concept of public participation but then are aware that they do have a right to partake on community related issues requiring public participation.

The respondent's majority indicated that they do participate in community meetings. The respondents who answered yes and sometimes are over 55% and this is crucial at it indicates that the community members do care about the decisions that affect them in their communities. The majority of respondents who answered that they do not attend, were mostly young people as well. They are of the view that the meetings are meant for older people (their parents) and that their voices are not heard when they try to attend by the ward councilors; therefore, they opt not to attend the meetings.

The other small but impeding reason given by other respondent's lack of attendance was that the meetings clash with their work schedules and other immense reasons were that the councilors do not execute the resolutions of the meetings they previously agreed on and therefore, they lose interest to attend moving forward. The majority of the respondents further are of the view that the municipality does not involve them in important decision that involves them.

The major issue of service delivery has seen a large number of respondents indicating that they do not believe that the municipality is doing enough to address the issue of service delivery. The issues they indicate that affect their communities range from the respondents indicating not addressing sink holes, street lights, sewage, garbage collection and not maintaining infrastructure. A few of respondents further indicated corruption and high unemployment rate being a problem that is not being addressed.

They further recommend that the municipality should try to curb the issue of corruption and solve the issues of streetlights not functioning as this leads to crime. Further, infrastructure should be maintained and recreational parks (mainly sports to be constructed) to improve lives of community members. Further, the community member's highlights that the municipality must should try to listen to their pleas, and execute on their promises.

Almost half of the respondents indicated to knowing their ward members, whereas the other half indicated of not knowing their ward members. One of the major reasons for not knowing the ward members was because of the political reasons that includes electing a "new" councilor, and therefore this has an implication on the ward members. Younger people below the age of 25 years also are the cohort that the majority did not know their ward members.

Although about 51% of the respondents know their ward committee members. One important thing that over 67% of the respondents agree on is the issue of their importance. Overwhelmingly, most recipients agree that they are important. They give reasons such as ward committee members doing their best with little resources they have at their disposal, with some going beyond the nature of duty, and seeing them as a link between them (ward committee members) and the councilor and are able to relay their concerns.

Other reasons were that ward committee members are involved in a lot of initiatives within the communities such as clean up campaigns, crime patrol and fixing broken infrastructures and so forth. The other few who indicated that they do not see the importance of ward committee members, alluded that they deemed them non-impactful and that the previous ones did better than the current ones etc. What is clear though is that the majority do see their worth, and they could improve given resources and capacity.

4.3. Recommendations from community Members

Through interacting with respondents during the research phase, the participants indicated that the municipality could do much more to promote public participation and they recommended the following based on summary:

- The municipality should capacitate and skill ward committee members so that they effectively promote public participation efficiently.
- Community members should be educated more on being active citizens and be mobilised to participate in programmes and projects that affect them.
- The municipality should regularly provide feedback to the community members on progress made on their needs.
- Meetings and information sharing should be shared on time and through various platforms to engage citizens.
- In accordance to the Batho-Batho Principles, residents ought to be consulted in order to improve matters related to service delivery. Citizens are less likely to protest violently if they were involved in the decision-making process.
- Without members not being consulted, it makes it difficult for them to air their views in matters that affect them in service delivery. Relevant stakeholders should be consulted by the municipal authority.
- Young people feel neglected and clueless in the public participation process and it is important the municipal authority involves them especially in regards to the IDP processes.

- The working residents interviewed suggested that meetings times, plans and venues should be outlined in reasonable times to allow them to make alternative arrangements to attend the meetings. Sometimes the meetings clash with their working hours.
- Participants indicated that municipal authorities, must stick to their promises they made from previous consultation meetings. Lack of adhering to promises has affected their attendance.
- Some community members view only here late about the proposed meetings; therefore, municipalities must try innovative ways to reach them for participation. This would include social media as well as community radio stations platforms.

4.4. Research Findings from Ward Committee Members

This section entails the findings and analysis of the study conducted for the two municipalities in Khutsong and Carletonville local municipalities. The holistic objective of the research was to assess the role of public participation and service delivery in the Merafong municipality. Questionnaires were prepared for the ward committee members that entailed asking the ward committee members eight questions. Below the analysis is based on the interviews conducted with them for a period of three weeks on October the 5th to the 21st of October 2023.

4.4.1. Data Analysis Community Members

The research was conducted in 18 wards throughout two local municipalities, namely Khutsong and Carletonville, as described in the chapter, along with its presentation, analysis, and findings. Analysis of public participation in the programmes of the municipality for service was the main aim of the study. Different interview schedules were created in advance of the study, with twelve questions for community members and eight questions for ward committee Members.

Data collection was done using these schedules. The research of efficacy of public participation programmes for service delivery in the municipalities is observed in this section. Therefore, the analysis is based on conversations with various people conducted within the month of October 2023. In the Khutsong and Carletonville areas, there are over 80 ward committees which thirty-one (31) were sampled and answered the questionnaires. Every sampled ward committee member returned the completed the questionnaire, which highlights the ward committees members feedback.

Table 6: Gender split of the ward committee members responses

District	Total Number of Respondents	Male	Female
Khutsong	20	12	8
Carltonville	11	8	3

Out of 160 ward committee members in Khutsong and Carltonville, the researcher managed to sample 31 committee members. All the sampled ward members managed to complete the questionnaire. Out of 31 participants, 45% were females and 55% were males. Indicating that there were more males that responded to the study than females.

1. **The ward committee members were asked how they relate with community members**

Over 76% percent of the participants indicated that their role is to be a link between the municipal council and the community they serve. Their role is to take community issues and then present them to the municipality. This is a clear indication that the majority of the committee members understand their roles and purpose.

The other remaining members, see their roles as a more pro- active role within the community and that is of doing clean- up campaigns, fix potholes, report cable thefts, and contain criminal activities (night patrols) etc. They see themselves as community agents.

2. **Explaining how they relate to community member**

They indicated that they conduct meetings that includes input from the community they represent or wards they represents and then take minutes of those meetings and present them to the municipal council. They further note the challenges and the needs of that particular community and try to influence budget allocations to implement the challenges raised by the community, more so in crucial areas of infrastructure.

Further, with the alarming rates of loadshedding, unemployment, crime and infrastructure dilapidation, some ward members the 25% indicated that their priority is to protect the communities they represent especially in areas of crime, where they conduct night patrols and also try to attend to issues around fixing potholes and empowering young people to get access to job opportunities.

3. **On the matter of public participation programmes**

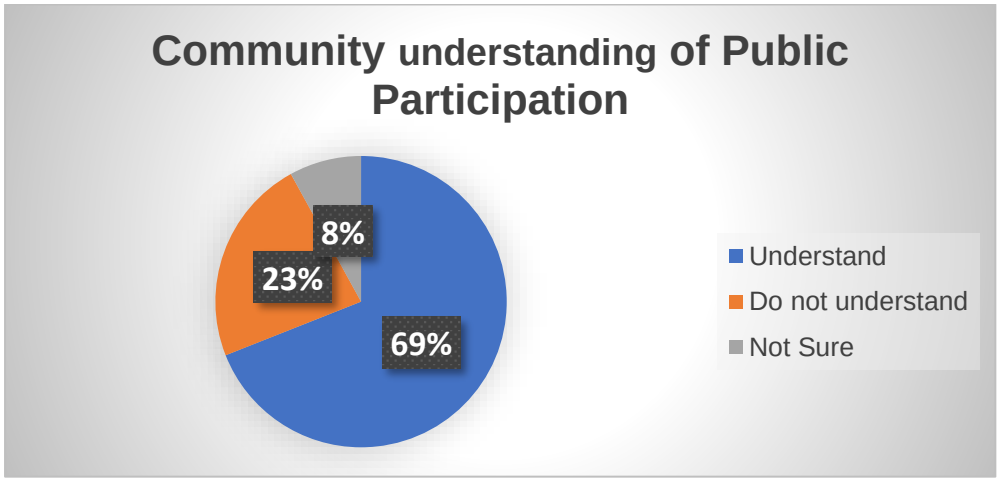
The ward committee members 89% of them indicated that they directly and or indirectly have links and contacts with the other community leaders within the community and other political

structures to implement community programmes that enhances public participation. This is in the key areas of community mobilisation, clean up campaigns as well as conducting meetings at community halls to engage communities so that they can highlight their challenges and convey those messages via the ward committee members to the municipal council. 72% of the respondent indicated they have more than six programmes they are running that involves public participation while the 16% indicated they have less than four programmes, and the remainder 12% indicated that they have one to two programmes they run that requires community involvement.

The above responses are a clear indication that the ward committee members do take public participation in a serious light and they are demonstrating that by having public participation programmes. According to the study 65% of the participants highlighted those programmes involving public participation impact positively service delivery in the wards, while the 35% said these programmes do not impact service delivery.

4. On their view if community understand the importance of public participation

A total of 69% of the ward committee members agree that the community members understand the importance of public participation. About 23% believe community members do not know the importance of public participation, while the 8% were not sure, and therefore could not give a proper answer.



5. Explaining further the above

The ward committee members who believe that the community members believe in public participation reasoning is that communities participate in meetings that the conduct, they further engage with traditional, religious and community leaders as well. They also provide

further notion that community members do actively participate in issues that affect their communities and raise concerns and are aware of the challenges that they face. The members further indicate that even schools are used as a communication tool between ward councillors and the community members to engage, therefore indicating the understanding of public participation.

The 23% of the ward committee members who indicated that they do not believe that community members understand public participation indicated that is because when they conduct meetings, attendance is very poor and at times members do not adequately engage during the meetings that are held. In addition, members do not engage other structures that are available to them to raise some of their concerns. Further to this, their perception is that it is older people (and familiar faces) that normally attend community meetings and young people do not attend these meetings. Therefore, lack of youth participation in meetings is also a significant, as the community is largely made of these very same young people.

6. What more can be done to improve public participation in this municipality?

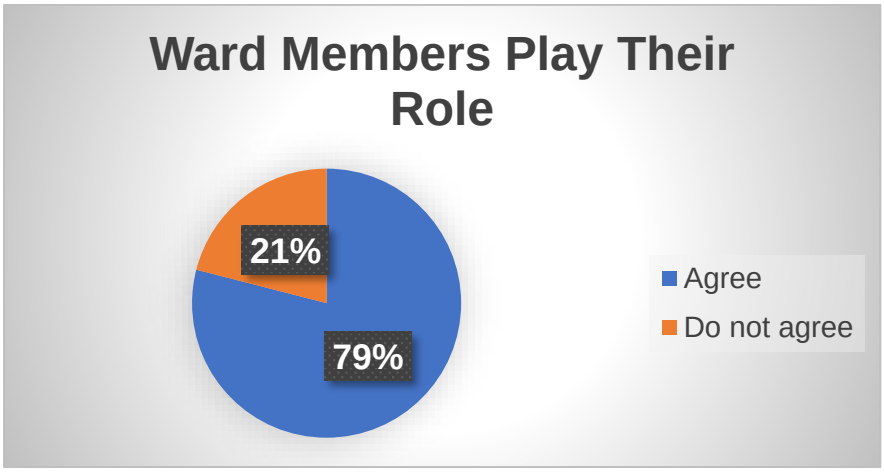
Forty-two (42%) of the respondents indicated that community members should regularly engage with ward member vice versa, and that regular meetings should be conducted with prior enough time given to community leaders to attend. Also, the new way of attracting younger people, that is of using the influence of social media, to get regular feedback about the challenges facing their municipality/ward. Younger people are using social media as a way of voicing their opinions and getting regular updates about what is happening in and around their environment, therefore this approach much be considered to bolster public participation.

Further, because of the economic conditions, the 19% of the respondents indicated that some community members have to travel, therefore, public transport should be provided to garner members to participate in the meetings. Meetings should also be conducted at times when is convenient to community members, as some members have work and school commitments if meetings are conducted during the week.

Traditional leaders and other community leader's especially religious leaders play an important role in public participation. Therefore, these structures should be effectively utilised as a mode to influence public participation. Religious, traditional leaders and general community leaders have an influence on community members; therefore, they should encourage members of communities to attend those meetings.

7. **Do you think ward members play their roles?**

Seventy-nine (79%) of the ward members highlight that they do their roles and to the best of their ability. The twenty-one (21%) are of the view that other ward members are not doing their roles but with explanation. This will be further explained and unpacked later in this chapter.



8. **The ward members were asked to explain view points**

The majority of the respondents see themselves as a link between community members and the ward councillor further they assist in taking issues that affect the ward. They see themselves as a recognised channel in which they present the issues to the municipal council. The 79% of the ward members believe that the members do their best with the limited resources they have at their disposal. Further, they believe they service their communities even beyond their 'call of duty'.

This is highlighted by examples of addressing issues of crime within their communities, doing community clean up campaigns and mobilising, and providing their own transport and resources to some community engagements.

The other remaining 21% of the respondents are of the view that the ward committee members are not adequately executing their jobs partly because of lack of resources and communities feeling despondent about their challenges. The other factor that inhibits the work of the ward committee members is politics. Ward members are unable to perform their duties when there is political change, mainly in the by election that has influence on how the municipality is run. The constant changing of political representative makes their mandate harder to achieve, this also affects their relationship with community members, which end up not knowing who their ward committee members are.

4.5. Presentation of data from Ward Committee Members

A vast number indicated that their main objectives is to mobilise community involvement and support. Further, to enlighten the participants to participate in municipal programmes. The other indicated that they serve as a link between themselves as ward committee members and the council. They advocate for communities to be uplifted and empowered through the municipality via various programmes the municipality has in place. They distribute crucial information to the community.

The ward members explained that key to their mandate is to assist the council in convening meetings. This process entails informing the community members about these important gatherings and make sure there is public participation. They indicate their roles to be to empower their communities to be aware of municipality programmes that they intend on implementing and gather community input. Further, the ward committee members, do conduct door to door visit to listen to communities and try to assist with issues on the ground e.g.; address the high-level crimes, offer programmes and job opportunities (EPWP). They fundamentally see their roles is for enhancing service delivery.

Most ward committee members indicate that thought the Integrated Development model to local government that do have the programmes. Also, further outreach programmes they possess empower communities. Majority of the ward committee members are of the view that communities do understand the importance of public participation more so because they do attend to their community meetings and give input on how to solve challenges that face them as community members.

Most members feel that attending vital community meetings addresses some of the challenges within their communities. Others ward members understand that some community members are not able to attend due to other factors outside their own control like transport availability, work commitments and other ways of communicating information. Social media has also played a key role in how communication is disseminated and therefore it is vital and attracting younger people will be of utmost importance.

Most respondents indicated that existing structures need to be capacitated to be more effective in communicating issues between ward members, councilors, traditional council and community members. Public transport must be improved to make sure community members attend the meetings. More education should be provided to community members by ward committee members to show them the importance of public participation. Outreach

programmes should benefit the communities. More workshops and capacity building will assist the ward committee members to complete their mandates.

The ward committee members are or the view that they serve as an engine of emancipating citizens on the value of public participation and serve as a crucial line of communication between the citizens and the council. Further, they assist community members with their daily challenges especially in service delivery. Some of the committee members because they might be newly elected, they are not sufficiently aware of their duties and mandate especially in the early phases. Politics, therefore, affect the momentum of ward members knowing fully their responsibilities.

According to the research findings, 75% of the participant indicated that they do receive support from the ward councilors, and they support them during mobilization with resources and also avail themselves to be supplied with reports from members of the community for improving service delivery.

4.6. Aspect of the Study Considered

There is a fair understanding by the ward committee members of knowing their mandate and their roles. The understanding that they serve as a catalyst between community members and the municipal councilor has indicated this further. Further, the fact that they also convened meetings for communities to encourage public participation. From the study, we can draw that a more efficient way of encouraging public participation is needed, as some meetings community members are not able to attend because of a variety of reasons such as transport, meetings times clashing with work and school times for residence and other community members not knowing about the meetings. Ward committee members are also crucial in mobilization and having an impact on conducting door-to-door campaigns that are crucial interacting with communities and encouraging public participation.

The research further indicates that due to some ward committee members being knew at the helm, it takes them time to adjust to their duties and therefore affecting how they execute their functions. The “new members” due seem to not understand programmes that the municipality rollout and implication on local government.

The politics also play a crucial role in the execution or mandate of the ward committee members, this was indicated by some ward committee members indicating the strain between the ward councilors and ward committee members on issues related to projects and power dynamics and therefore affecting public participation, spilling over to service delivery being affected.

Education is also a major source of lack of public participation in within the municipalities, as indicated by the ward members. Documents are mostly are disseminated in English and this affects the lesser literate or persons who are not educated. The municipality has a duty to consider persons who are illiterate and encourage them to partake in issues around public participation according to the Municipal Systems Act, as they have a right to participate in the IDP processes.

The other key areas that ward members mentioned was around the issue of ward committee members' perception of knowing community members are not participating in public participation processes due to their perceptions of not doing enough to raise their concerns to the council and their resolutions not being implement. The community members have also lack of confidence in the councilors and therefore, this affects their relationship with the ward committee members themselves.

When the ward committee members conduct door-to-door campaigns and meetings to encourage public participation, they get feedback from community members that they are of the view that programmes that were promised to be implemented are not implemented and not executed. This lack of trust and or not implementing programmes and promises, also affect communities and public participation. It further undermines the municipal council and its mandate and has an effect on citizens' public participation, further; it also can affect the authority of the local council.

The ward committee members do try with their limited resources to go above and beyond their call of duty as the majority has indicated, but these efforts are also curtailed by lack of supplying basic service delivery needs within their communities they serve. They conduct midnight patrols to curb or address the issue of crime, but streetlights are not being fixed, therefore creating another problem of trying to deal with crime. Some ward committee members do clean-up campaigns because the municipality does not collect rubbish on time.

Therefore, alignment between the municipality, the councilor and ward members are strained. The ward committee members in many instances do further keep an open-door policy with their residences; this allows community members to engage them more specifically on issues affecting service delivery. However, capacity (including financial), does have an impact on how the ward committee also executes the issues raised. Most ward committee members are not capacitated financially, trained, and lack of proper qualified education.

4.7. Recommendations from Ward Committee Members

Ward committee members indicated that the municipality and in particular councillors should accelerate the pace of addressing community issues and concerns on service delivery. The municipal officials should regularly hold community meetings and provide feedback to the citizens. Information sharing is crucial to promote public participation, therefore ward committee members majority agree that community members should be alerted on time to be able to avail themselves during community meetings.

On issues of capacitating the ward committee members the municipality should provide relevant resources to the committee members, provide adequate training and further provide financial resources to their out-of-pocket expenses they incur during mobilisation.

Politics affect service delivery and the constant changing of political affiliation hinder progress on service delivery and community members overtime disengage on knowing who is running a particular ward or district. Political parties should have a common interest and that of serving community members.

Technology and social media play a crucial role in other platforms that are available to mobilise communities. Therefore, municipalities should provide stipends to ward committee members to use data to mobilise young people to attend and publicly participation especially in issues that affect them.

Ward committee members agree that information sharing especially in time to citizens is of crucial importance. By sharing information and disseminating it in correct platforms is necessary to improve public participation. When citizens attend meetings and are engaged in IDP processes it becomes easier for creating accountability and transparency.

The respondents are of consensus that when community members attend meetings, their valuable grassroots issues get to be addressed better. Therefore, municipalities should equip the ward committee members with necessary tools, to mobilise communities to promote public participation and addressing service delivery challenges. The committee members are of the view that during meetings, communities communicate the challenges they face, and this process alerts municipal officials on a way-forward to implement and address those challenges.

Most councilors and ward committee members are also not literate and this also exacerbates the problem and challenges for the municipality. Without proper skills and education, it becomes very difficult to further engage some issues to communities, because the issues

might need a clarified strategy, innovation as well human IQ and EQ levels to comprehend the issues. Some of the ward committee members English also proves to be a challenge, and therefore, creates a problem on reports and understanding.

Allocation of resources and budget is crucial in a mobilization process or methodology. Citizens should be recruited to attend via posters, flyers, door to door campaigns, social media, radio platforms and so forth. This process requires funding, and financial resource allocation and budgets. For ward committee members to continue to carry out their jobs effectively, the municipality should allocate appropriate funds to address this process. Financial support is crucial, skills development and training all are factors to be considered for public participation to be strengthened and deliver on basic services.

CHAPTER FIVE

Conclusion and Recommendations

5. Introduction

This section is covering the conclusion of the research. The researcher in this section will summarise findings and then highlights the recommendations on motivating applying public participation in improving service delivery to citizens. The conclusion is formed based on the collection of information as well as ventilation of the various literature covered in chapter 3.

The researchers main aim for the study was based on the following:

- To understand the current or existing methods of public participation
- To develop ways of effective government wide district municipal model and applications
- To recommend various ways in which public participation can be promoted to improve service delivery and make appropriate findings.

The findings are that finances, human capacity, skills and training form a basis of better public participation. This is a ‘top-down’ implication, from municipal officials all the way to ward committee members at a grassroot level. These are all the ingredients that are needed to improve public participation to address service delivery effectively and efficiently. Merafong municipality faces some of these above challenges as a municipality. Therefore, relevant officials and authorities need to be equipped and provided with the above identified issues.

There are too many geographical challenges and structural issues that were also as a direct link to apartheid spatial planning. The communities have high number of unemployed persons, inequality that has led to poverty. Therefore, economic conditions need to be improved to create the issue of access and opportunities created. Therefore, officials should create programmes and projects that would unlock such opportunities for community members to benefit.

5.1. Implications of the study

SA governance and service delivery issues at a local level and human as well as financial resource constraints have been documented by the Auditor Generals (2022) report on resource management and audit report. Most municipalities fail to acquire clean audits as a

result of mismanagement of funds and wasteful expenditure as well as returning allocated funds to treasury because they did not spend on programmes and projects.

In order to create accountability and transparency, citizens should be consulted during IDPs of the municipality planning process. Community members should be consulted and their concerns should find expression in the decision-making process of Merafong municipality. Adopting the consultation approach further limits the opportunity for uprising, and violent protests as citizens would feel that they were consulted by the municipality before when they planning. Citizens have a right to be heard on issues that affect them, listening to their needs and challenges will allow the municipality to self-correct and improve issues pertaining to service delivery.

5.2. Study Findings

This phase deals with what the study found in terms of feedback from questionnaires when interviews were conducted. The main efforts of the study are not necessarily representativity, but to understand the perception of participants understanding of public participation and service delivery. If the researcher needed representability, then the researcher would be very subjective

Vast amounts of literature were ventilated ranging from acclaimed scholars on the subject, policy on the matter and different legislation applicable to this topic. SA has three levers of government, and that is national, provincial and local sphere of government, for this area of study, the researcher focused on the local government context.

Though SA has available legislation as well as identified methodologies to promote public participation at a local level, especially during the IDP process. Most municipalities do not adequately apply this process and involve adequately the residents, this leads to disengagement and protest in municipalities. The citizens interviewed in the two areas, highlighted the lack of service delivery in the municipalities, and this is caused by lack of community involvement.

Participation is important by citizens, and that was covered in the study findings, due to high level of unemployment and illiteracy levels, some of the community members are not able to make meaning contribution as they are not well versed on those particular matters. Improving the quality of education of community members should be of key importance, as this will lead to meaningful participation.

Some residents during the study finds further revealed that when they raise a particular issue during hearings or meetings, officials take the minutes and document them, and then no

further action is taken and no feedback is provided. This has led to community members disengaging and or not attending vital meetings as their needs are not being heard.

The more communities are involved in decision-making processes, the more officials will get a grasp of challenges at a grassroot level, and then addressing those particular issues with informed knowledge. This will lead to better service delivery, satisfied community members, harmony in the community as well as general sense of governance in the municipality. Public participation should be views as a means to an end, bot an end itself.

Community members, civil society, and relevant stakeholders should all be consulted, be involved, encouraged to participate as they have the power to can influence decisions that can benefit the community as a whole. Officials and the general authorities, greatly benefit when there's community involvement as it leads to accountability and transparency according to Masango (2002, 52).

Citizens also have the opportunity to engage and get feedback on proposed programmes, projects and budget. When citizens feel or are of the view that their issues are not being considered, they are the first ones to disengage and not participate, this then leads in some worst instance violent protests.

Public participation is an indication of responsible citizens and active citizenry and promotes that. When citizens, show characteristics of active citizenship, they in turn are more likely to get better good governance, accountability and better response from the municipality (Taylor 2009). Without proper public participation, democracy values and pillars are threated, therefore for democracy to thrive, public participation is the centre of that piece.

The high level of inequality, poverty and unemployment is documented in SA. This is further exacerbated by some municipalities underspending. This phenomenon is highlighted by officials fighting for service delivery turf, where officials being under pressure to achieve targets, spend on the things that are not to the benefit of the municipality residents. Example of this nature is seen where programmes are duplicated, officials working in silos and some projects not being adequately executed.

Political parties further fuel the issue of service delivery being affected, with acts of sabotage as well as political party competition especially for controlling resources. Most parties do not have citizens interest at heart, but they thrive in scoring political points to retain or acquire ruling power. Provincial and local government are run by array of political parties, and fighting for resource becomes paramount to political representative officials. They are fighting for voters' attention, and thus likely leads to service delivery being affected as they do not carry out on mandates of community members. Political parties know and understand that they will

be in power for a particular set time, therefore, during office occupation, they address their own vision and interest without taking into consideration the broader picture of Batho Pele principles.

Leadership vacuum also cripples municipalities. There needs to be an understanding relationship between the mayor, municipal manager, councillors and ward committee members. The political head the mayor needs to have a good relationship with the manager as an administrator of being task to execute matters of service delivery. In vast municipalities, it has been highlighted that the infighting of Mayor and municipal manager has been documented, and this leads to citizens being affected because of projects and programmes not being implemented.

Therefore, leadership is essential in running an effective municipality and respecting and acknowledgement of roles and expectations is paramount. When a great relationship exists between a manager and mayor, positive spillover in terms of service delivery is realised and good governance is realised. This by in large, limits tension and political turmoil and service delivery protests.

5.3. Implications for Local Government

It is not because of the municipality that a high number of citizens experienced poverty, high unemployment rate and inequality over the last decades, but it is because a municipality has been tasked with the ability to mobilise, gather relevant and key stakeholders, hold meetings that are critical to the community and address service delivery, it is then them who are mostly held to account. Because a municipality is seen as a developmental sphere of government, then much is expected from addressing grassroots issues that are faced by community members. Some municipalities have been great in addressing these gaps and majority of others have not had the same results.

Population growth and migration has led to population migration and higher access or demands to few resources. Access to basic infrastructures like housing, roads, electricity and public goods, politics outside SA control have more people trying to access them than prior during apartheid days. Therefore, that is why we have seen a large number of informal settlements within the country. Access to these basic services needs to be increased to service the community members.

5.4. Conclusion

Throughout the chapters, emphases have been placed on the importance of public participation being essential as a methodology to adopt to impact service delivery. What the researcher has noted is the actual understanding of the concepts and acceptance of it exist, but it’s the execution of the concept itself that is proving to be a monumental task. Most basic

projects and programmes are not completed if not delivered in some point in some municipalities that leads.

It is then evident from the research study conducted that municipalities play a key role in making sure that citizens desires, needs and challenges are met, as they are the first pot of call on the ground for service delivery. But for these efforts to be affected, the needs to be a greater execution in public participation. From the study that the researcher conducted, various key outputs can be outlined on service delivery and public participation and are thus as follows:

- Despite the role appreciated by the ward committee members by residents sampled during the study, there is still a huge gap in implementing or solving the basic service delivery issues the community members view that they haven't been addressed. Therefore, it means ward committee members, need further capacitation to be able to execute their functions effectively and efficiently to address service delivery.
- Majority community members agree that they view the work of ward committee members as important vehicle to address their challenges even though others differed and had another view on their purpose. It is this significant response that should motivate municipalities, to utilise ward committee members role in mobilising and promoting public participation to impact or address service delivery. The respondents indicated that the ward councillors do conduct door to door campaigns and sometimes go beyond their limited powers and resources and try assist community members.
- The respondent further highlighted via their feedback that ward committee members are critical in being the bridge between their councillors and themselves in addressing their needs. Therefore, the municipality out to encourage harmony and good working relationship between ward committee members and municipal councillors.
- Residents pointed out to the fact that when public participations meetings are conducted, there municipality just acknowledge the issues and notes but no implementation or even feedback on the issues raised. It would then mean municipalities should do more to improve communication between themselves and community members in general and further stick to their promises they had committed to citizens
- Financial resources and planning: The ward committee members highlighted that they do experience out of pocket expenses and in some instances go beyond the call of duty, it is imperative that adequate compensation model or strategy be crafted to support the work of ward committee members.
- Conduction of meetings must accommodate all members of the community, some poor areas, where many people are often unemployed, are not able to participate during

these public meetings, therefore, so meeting venues should try to be as often and cover more areas so that most community members are able to attend.

- Party politics is one of the factors is also one of the key importance, the local government contestation and by elections results in some cases in instability and local residence not knowing who to consult when challenges arise as there is change of personnel. In addition, political scoring of points is also a factor as most parties are worried about pleasing their own constituency and or divert resources for electioneering.

  Political parties tend to divert priorities and resources in communities they serve, and this phenomenon is escalated when elections are closer. Diverting of priorities results in riots or protests because the municipalities are neglecting the other promised projects and projects.
- Education is also key in the mobilisation and public participation, most community members due to illiteracy levels being down, they do not understand their roles as citizens to effectively participate, this is a challenge for the municipality. So, the municipality ought to be intentional about their drive for mobilisation in informing community members about their important role they play in public participation and more importantly when it comes to the IPD planning process.

Municipalities ought to exercise a level of professionalism in their approach of serving their citizens, this includes transparency, accountability, better spending on the budgetary systems and high level of community engagement (The Star, 2009). As indicated extensively by the researcher, public participation is supported by various policy and legislation and key to these are the framework of Batho Pele as well as Municipal Systems Act etc. This Act mandates municipalities to capacitate their citizens at a local level of governance. The important role of public participation has been illustrated, but this concept is still difficult to implement by underperforming municipalities.

5.5. Recommendations of the Study

The following are recommendations that have been developed based on the findings of the study:

Perspective of Residents

Innovative ways of promoting public partnerships, this would include a mixed method approach like community events, IDP forums to spread the message, Imbizo as well s church gatherings, can be useful way to encourage participation. Hiring skilled and qualified personnel

at the municipal offices would further help in implementing the Batho- Batho principles and promote service delivery.

Political stability and political self-serving hampers the service delivery mandate to communities, residents indicated that closer to the election cycle, funds that are meant to serve the poor often get diverted for own party-political interest and this hampers service delivery. As civil servants, municipal office bearers need to be educated on their roles as to be apolitical and serve the needs of community members.

Community members seem to acknowledge the role played by the ward committee members. Therefore, municipalities should be able to capacitate them, so that they are able to address matters related to service delivery in the affected communities. Municipalities should also encourage young, including persons with disabilities, to be involved in all matters of municipal development through workshops and the establishment of youth directorate offices.

Municipalities should support and address challenges of the residents, as even with the respondents, they highlighted that they still of the view that lack of service delivery is because of lack of support from the municipalities. They indicated that they participate in meeting, raise their concerns and issues, but minimal is being done in terms of implementation of feedback.

The are various innovative ways these days to engage communities and promote public participation and they include from a variety of ways in which communities can address their views to officials and raise important issues such as social media platforms, websites, opinion polls, mainstream media, phone calls, and face to face meetings. The municipalities should be able to adapt to the new ways of doing things and apply some of the array of strategies to engage communities than one traditional way.

<u>Ward Committee Members:</u>

Recommendation 1: Capacity building

It has been deeply highlighted that most ward committee members require capacitation, therefore, municipalities, councillors need to capacitate ward committee members through various forms, and this can range from skills, workshops, training and improving their levels of literacy or education. The local governs scene and environment keeps evolving.

Recommendation 2: Participation of Ward Committee Members in compiling the IDP, Budgets and Performance Management System of the Municipality

Ward committee members should be given more role to play a role during the IDP process, this includes, compilation and developing of the IPD process, further citizens should be mobilised and educated about their essential role in developing and having input in the IDP process.

Recommendation 3: The relationship between Ward Committee members and the Community

As previously highlighted, the community members view their relationship with ward committee members being key, as they bridge this gap to the top officials.

Recommendation 4: The Ward Committee members and the Municipality

Ward committee members view their own relationship with their municipalities and key officials as significant, and therefore, improving this relation to work optimally is vital. Political power plays in some instances negatively affect these relationships, but citizens should come first in the spirit of Batho Pele.

Recommendation 5: Financial Compensation for Ward Committees

Municipalities should try and compensate the ward committee members through an agreed model by both parties. Some ward committee members do encounter out of pocket expenses and lack motivation if there's lack of incentive. In their budgets, municipalities have to budget for this significant line item, as ward committee members are very useful in promoting public participation.

Recommendation 6: Systems of Ward Committees

- Ward committee members should be encouraged to have a structured reporting systems and approaches in their reporting structures. Councillors should constantly engage these reports and give feedback on implementation.
- Meetings with communities and the regularity of them needs to be clarified
- Yealy meetings and feedback on the financial year report must be conducted.

Recommendation 7: Functionality of all the Ward Committees

- Indicators that outline the KPA of the municipality should be detailed to understand if the municipality is on the right path to achieving their goals and targets. Quarterly updates should be reported, so that mitigation risks against performance is strategized.

- Officials from the municipality, ward councillors and ward committee members should meet quarterly to elaborate on the municipality performance outlook and progress.

Recommendation 8: A range of public participation strategies should be promoted.

A one-size-fits-all approach to public participation must not be implemented. It is imperative to recognise that citizens have various ways and desires on matters of public participation. As an example, previously disadvantaged areas would need far greater level of support and engagement in acquiring economic, social and service development, while richer, better-resourced areas might require a dissimilar, less concentrated, mode of response.

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Letter to Participants

Dear Sir / Madam

I am a Masters student Management at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. My supervisor is Senior Lecturer Matlala Setlhalogile. I am conducting a research study about *Effective Public Participation in Municipal Service Delivery: A case of Merafong Municipality*.

I am inviting you to take part of the interview. If you decide to take part, your participation in this research study will last about 10 to 15 minutes. The interview research activity will take place at the place of your convenience. With your permission, I would like to record the interview. This data will be stored safety for 10 years. Only the researcher will have access to the data.

During the research activity, I will need to ask for some personal information about you, including role in the municipality. The interview will be confidential and anonymous. When I share the results of the research study, I will not include your name or anything else that could identify you. With your permission, other researchers may use the data collected from this research study, but your name and any personal information will not be used or passed on.

If you decide to take part in the research study, it should be because you want to volunteer. You do not have to take part. You can stop being in the study at any time. You do not have to answer any questions if you do not want to. You will not get any direct benefits if you choose to join the research study. You will not lose any services, benefits or rights you would normally have if you decide not to join. Taking part in the research study will not cost you anything. You will not be paid for being in this research study. Your travel/data costs to attend the interview will be reimbursed.

The risks for this research study are no more than what happens in everyday life. OR Some of the questions asked may make you feel sad or upset. If this happens, I will stop the interview and continue another time. If you need some support or counselling services following the interview, these are available free of charge at Wits University.

This research study will be written up as a research report. The report will be available on the university library website. If you would like to receive a summary of this report, I will be happy to send it to you.

If you have any questions during or afterwards about this research study, feel free to contact me or my supervisor on the details listed below. If you have any concerns or complaints about

the ethical procedures of this research study, you are welcome to contact the University Human Research Ethics Committee (Non-Medical).

Guidelines to participants

This research survey is aimed at studying and identifying the perception of ward on the effectiveness of public participation programmes in the municipality. There are no right or wrong answers and your honest, anonymous opinion will be appreciated.

Municipality Approval Letter

MERAFONG CITY LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

P.O. Box 3, CARLETONVILLE, 2500 Halite Street, Carletonville
Tel: (018) 788 9521
Fax: (018) 787 2146
Email:bmjiwu@merafong.onmicrosoft.com

FROM : MANAGER OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

: MS B. MJIWU

TO : MR K. KOBO

DATE : 25/08/2023

RE : LETTER OF AUTHORIZATION TO CUNDUCT A RESEARCH AT MERAFONG CITY LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

Dear sir

This letter will serve as authorization of Mr. Kgotso Kobo to conduct the research project titled "Effective Public Participation in Municipal Service Delivery and Using Merafong City Local Municipality". Upon a review of the letter sent to us by yourself, we are glad to offer you an opportunity to conduct the study in our institution. All interviews, field surveys, observations around Merafong and distribution of questioners are approved.

If you have any concerns or require additional information, feel free to contact the Office of The Speaker.

Yours Faithfully,

.....

Balakazi Mjiwu

Manager: Office of The Speaker

ANNEXTURE A

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR THE COMMUNITY MEMBERS

Municipality: _____

Village ward: _____

Date: _____

1. Do you know the name of your municipal mayor? _____
2. Do you know who your ward councilor is?

   _____
3. Do you know what public participation is?

   _____
4. Do you know that you have the right to contribute on how your community is run?

   _____
5. Have you ever participated in any community meetings?

   _____
6. If yes why, if no why not?

   _____

_____

___

7. Do you think the municipality involves you enough in the decisions they make for up-lifting the community?

   _____

_____

8. Do you think the municipality is doing enough to improve service delivery? _____
9. Explain _____

_____

10. What do you think the municipality has to do to improve service delivery? _____

_____

11. Do you know who your ward committee members are and do you think they are doing their job?

_____

_____

12. Do you think it is important to have ward committee?

    _____

Explain

_____

QUESTIONS FOR WARD COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Municipality: _____

Village ward: _____

Date: _____

1. How do you relate with community members? _____
2. Explain _____

   _____

   _____

3. Do you have any public participation programmes?

   _____

   _____

4. Do you think the community understand the importance of public participation?

   _____
5. Explain _____

   _____

6. What more can be done to improve public participation in this municipality?

   _____

   _____

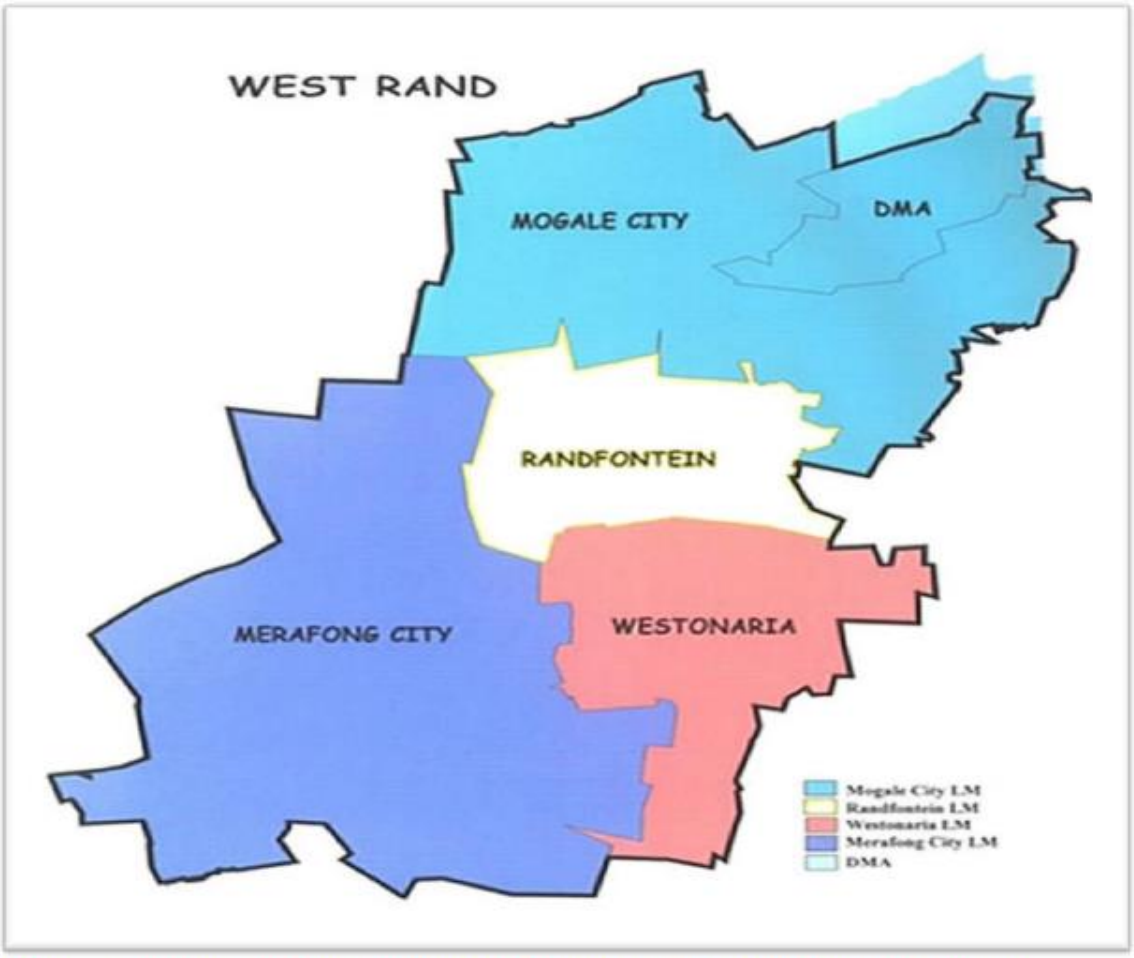
   _____

7. Do you think ward members play their roles? _____
8. Explain _____

   _____

Annexure C (MAP Merafong Municipality)

The following map depicts the location of Merafong City Local Municipality within the West Rand District Area:



The following map represents the 28 wards within the jurisdiction of Merafong City Local Municipality: