

**THE ROLE OF WARD COMMITTEES IN COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION: THE
CASE OF LEPELLE-NKUMPI LOCAL MUNICIPALITY, LIMPOPO PROVINCE**

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SUBMITTED FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ADMINISTRATION

IN THE

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC AND DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION

FACULTY OF MANAGEMENT, COMMERCE AND LAW

UNIVERSITY OF VENDA

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2023

DECLARATION

I, Aphane Calvin Sehlapelo student number: 17023642 declare that this research study titled “ The role of Ward Committees in community participation: The case of the Lepelle-Nkumpi Local Municipality, Limpopo province” hereby submitted by me for the Master of Public Administration Degree at the Faculty of Management, Commerce and Law in the University of Venda has not been previously submitted for a degree at this or any other university, and that it is my work in design and execution, and that all reference materials contained, therein, has been duly acknowledged.



28/02/2024

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to:

- To my late Grandfather Lesiba Isaac Kekana whose firm believe in education has sharpened my hunger for knowledge for the better service of human kind.
- My mother Kgaogelo Stephina Kekana and father Peter Madimetja Aphané whom I am today because of their constant support and love.
- My Supervisors, Dr Mathebula N.E and Dr Matloga S.T This has not been an easy path but with the support you gave. I would never have wished for any other mentors in truth this study would not be possible without you.
- To my whole family.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to sincere appreciation to everyone who assisted me in bringing this project to a successful conclusion.

I would like to express my gratitude to God for endowing me including all those who took part with the intelligence, knowledge and strength necessary to carry out this research.

- Sincere gratitude is extended to Dr Mathebula NE who serves as my Supervisor throughout the process of developing the proposal for this dissertation and seeing it through to completion. His contribution has been extremely important in ensuring the completion of this project.
- A special thank you goes to Ms Matloga to whom I can without fear say a mother's love is the strongest thing a child has in this world, she served as my co-supervisor and assisted both myself and my supervisor in successfully completing this dissertation.
- To Maphoso Octar who has been helpful in the process of collecting data for this study.
- To Lepell-Nkumpi Local Municipality a warm heart goes to for allowing the youth to further their studies and contribute to the knowledge of our communities.
- To traditional leadership, the support you gave shall be repaid in kindness
- Last but not least, my academic journey is indebted to the following individuals: Mrs Ramotebele, Mrs Monyepau, Mrs Kgole, Mr Mafagane, Mrs Tefu, Mr Tshoga, Mr Seolwane, Mr Maphuthuma, Mr Mphela, Mr Mabilo, Mrs Sakameala, Ms Chuene, Mr Sebanda, Dr Nembudane, Mr Mabitsela, Dr Mahole, Dr Sethu, Ms Lethuba, Mr Mathagu, Mr Mashamba, Mr Malatji, Mr Tema, Ms MT Aphane, Dr John, Dr Juta, Dr Munzhedzi, Dr Nekhavhambe, Dr Matloga, Dr Mathebula.

ABSTRACT

Participating in the community involves open dialogue and team effort to solve problems in order to make decisions that are better and more acceptable. The focus of this study is to investigate the role that ward committees play in promoting community participation in the Lepelle-Nkumpi Local Municipality, Limpopo Province. This is an attempt to learn how community participation through ward committees can aid basic service delivery which in doing so the community will be effectively playing their part in the integrated development planning. The study was conducted in the Lepelle-Nkumpi Local Municipality. For this study, mixed-method research was used.

The study adopted a pragmatism paradigm and utilized a descriptive and contextual design using questionnaires and interviews as a method of collecting data. The study population consisted of municipal officials, ward councillors, ward committee members, civic organisations, community leaders, and community development workers. Sampling methods such as non-probability sampling in the form of purposive sampling technique were adopted. International business machinery: The statistical package of social sciences (IBM: SPSS) latest version was used to analyse quantitative data collected through questionnaires. Thematic analysis was used to analyse qualitative interview data narratively. To guarantee that all respondents may participate voluntarily and without being forced or intimidated, all ethical considerations were taken into account during the data-gathering process.

Key Words: Municipal Basic Services, Local Government, community Participation, Lepelle-Nkumpi local Municipality, community, development, municipality, participation, ward committee.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CBO	-	Community-based organisation
IDP	-	Intergraded Development Plan
LED	-	Local Economic Development
LNLM	-	Lepelle-Nkumpi Local Municipality
LP	-	Limpopo Province
ANC	-	African National Congress
MFMA	-	Local Government: Municipal Finance Management Act
MSA	-	Local Government: Municipal Structures Act
WC	-	Ward Councillor
WHO	-	World Health Organisation
WPLG	-	<i>White Paper on Local Government</i>
ZB	-	Zebediela

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1.1. INTRODUCTION

This study focuses on the role of ward committees in the promotion of community participation. The Lepelle-Nkimpf Local Municipality is used as a case study to examine the function of ward committees in the Municipality and the difficulties they encounter in performing their duties or roles. A ward committee's purpose, according to Section 72 (3) of the Local Government: Municipal Structure Act (117 of 1998), is to strengthen local government's participatory democracy. How effective this actually in practice is, is still up for debate. This study specifically seeks to look into the role that ward committees have in encouraging community participation. One of the most crucial structures for involving communities in local government in South Africa is ward committees (Madumo, 2011:11).

Literature on South African ward committees was highlighted to provide a greater scope in terms of the purpose for which they exist. Secondly, a reason is given to evaluate the importance of the research topic. Thirdly, the objectives of the study are outlined in an attempt to explain the significance of the subject of the study. Fourthly, the problem statement, which acts as the main rationale for this research project, as well as the framework within which the research has been conducted, was outlined. Furthermore, the study's limitations has been outlined with an emphasis on potential unfavourable community impressions and a lack of interest in the research. Lastly, the key concepts that serve as the study's basis was explained to avoid ambiguity and to give a framework for the research to explain the content of the chapters rationally and logically.

1.2. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The Apartheid Government oppressed the rights of the majority of citizens. South Africa's first democratic elections in 1994 ushered in a new era of governance that emphasised community participation in all domains of government and public policy-making processes (Khuzwayo, 2009:21). Ward committees were established with the intention of providing and improving services that are rendered to the public and also acting as the gap between the public and municipal structures. Ward committees had been established in municipalities as community structures to play a crucial role in

connecting and informing the municipalities about the needs, aspirations, potentials and issues of the communities (Hicks, 2006:37). Ward committees act as a bridge between the community and local governments by promoting effective communication. Ward committees have an important role to play in actively participating and determining core municipal business such as Integrated Development Planning, budgeting, and municipal performance management processes, but many municipalities have struggled to establish functional ward committees (Hicks, 2006:37).

It is unknown as to how far ward committees go in bringing community feedback and proposals to bear on local government decision-making. Rather than functioning as independent community structures, some have been accused of serving as extensions of local councils (Everatt and Gwagwa, 2005:25). Masango (2009:128) contends that participation by the public in the delivery of public services is preferable to passive reliance on the government to fulfil their needs without their input. Therefore, it is essential to acknowledge societal requirements to maintain constant, long-lasting, and efficient public service delivery. For these reasons, the local government system understands the importance of creating the frameworks necessary to guarantee a healthy participatory democracy process. A well-functioning ward committee should be able to act as a municipality's point of access, ensure the strengthening and accountability of ward councillors to local residents, and help the municipal council facilitate community participation in municipalities (White Paper on Local Government, 1998:65).

This study highlights the role of ward committees in the promotion of community participation. The local government sphere is the one that is closest to the people since it is a legally recognised structure with a clearly defined constituency and allows for meaningful community engagement. In terms of Section 16 (1) of the Local Government: Municipal System Act (32 of 2000), a municipality must foster a culture of community involvement by promoting and providing the necessary frameworks for local communities to engage in municipal affairs.

The ward committee was formed by the South African government in compliance or according to Sections 72 to 78 of the Local Government: Municipal Structures Act 177 of 1998 to strengthen democracy. By bridging the gap between the respective

communities and municipal structures, service delivery was to be improved. Ward committees, among other things, should be able to improve participatory democracy by organising communities collectively with regard to ward Jurisdiction (Smith, 2008:13).

In order to ensure efficient and responsible service delivery in a clearly defined jurisdiction, local government plays a critical role in enforcing municipal, provincial and national government regulations with municipalities. Ward committees are created as a result. A ward committee is an area-based body with assigned responsibilities, legislative authority and executive power within its bounds. Therefore, in accordance with Sections 73 and 74 of the Local Government: Municipal Structures Act 117 of 1998, they are constituted as committees that serve as the council's advisors.

Regardless of the various obstacles that municipalities face, ward committees could encourage and develop programs to enhance community participation. This can put a municipal council in a better position to make decisions that will lead to greater service delivery. Community participation is primarily a process in which communities are involved from the planning and designing through the implementation and assessment stages of a certain activity or project (Draai & Taylor, 2009:114). According to Draai and Taylor (2009:114), consultation with the community plays a vital role in every municipal development plan.

As was previously indicated, a suitable mechanism that can guarantee an efficient procedure for community engagement should be in place. The participation process should subsequently be put under the management of ward committees. As a result, the local community will receive a transfer of process-based skills, knowledge, and ownership (Draai & Taylor, 2009:114). Napier (2008:163) further suggests that the ward committee system should emphasize increasing the participation of municipal communities when decisions are made inside the local government sphere to address the issue of municipal service delivery. It is believed that the community can participate in local administration through ward-related committees.

According to Modise (2014:8), the goal of ward committees is to guarantee that communities and government institutions have the required communication. Ward committees should also assist the elected councillor in his or her efforts to speak for a specific group in the municipal council. Venter and Landsberg (2011:55) argue that

concerning their representative role, ward committees have the potential to help keep municipal leaders accountable by making them answer the views of local communities. However, Modise (2014:7) fears the more partisan ward committees are, the more their views will represent those of the local party and hence it is the local party to which municipal leaders effectively account if the local party is the same one that municipal leaders belong to then the chances of greater responsiveness is undermined.

1.3. PROBLEM STATEMENT

According to Madumo (2009:56), community involvement in local government is regarded as a fundamental democratic right of the people in a society like South Africa. According to Madumo (2009:56), participation has been planned for at every level of government and is undoubtedly included in the formulation and implementation of policies. According to Van Rooyen and Mokoena (2013:661), South Africa's Constitution (1996) requires community participation in matters of governance. Ward committees have become an important institutional structure since 2002 to promote democratic, participative and people-centered local government. Ward committee difficulties directly affect how effective they are (Nzimakwe & Reddy, 2008:677). The efficacy of ward committees may affect the effectiveness of municipal councils and other local government structures. As a result, the way a ward committee operates has an impact on the development mandate of increasing community participation in local government (Nziakwe & Reddy, 2008:677).

Ward committees serve the additional function of serving as a formalized line of communication between the community and the council in municipalities (White Paper on Local Government, 1998:65). This function is crucial because it provides a forum for citizens to participate in municipal decision-making, fostering participatory democracy. The effectiveness of a ward committee affects how the community participates in service delivery. The independence of ward committees is a must hence the effectiveness of ward committees has been a determining factor in community participation. Ward committees in the Lepelle-Nkimpf Local Municipality are confronted with among other issues in relation to community participation in promoting good governance: a lack of community participation in integrated development planning and *imbizos* and other participatory platforms (Asha & Makalela, 2020:7).

One of the core essences of community participation is the community consultation through representation which is regarded as a proven instrument for more sustainable output and successful realisation of development by, people because it is more likely to produce a set of outcomes actually desired by the community (Rashied and Begum, 2016:4). According to Madzivhandila and Asha (2012:375), it is unclear how much influence ward committees have over local government decision-making. The study was carried out to develop a mechanism to increase community participation through ward committees to promote good governance in the Lepelle-Nkumpi Local Municipality.

1.4. RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

The study investigated the role that ward committees play in community participation in the Lepelle-Nkumpi Local Municipality, Limpopo Province. The study intends to help the Municipality in educating the community on how to take part and be involved in matters that affect them. The study will also assist the Municipality in methods which will help ensure that there is a fair representation of all partaking stakeholders in the planning of the IDP in ensuring the basic delivery is taken to the communities. After the study, the findings could be able to provide workable solutions to the ward committees and the communities in general.

1.5 AIM OF THE STUDY

This study aimed to investigate the role of ward committees in promoting community participation in the Lepelle-Nkumpi Local Municipality, Limpopo Province with a view of proposing recommendations that could be used to aid the role ward committees in community participation.

1.6. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the study were to consider what is required to demonstrate an understanding that satisfies the research's intended aim (Brynard & Hanekom, 1997:29). The aforementioned aim has been achieved by fulfilling the following specific research objectives:

- To investigate whether ward committees are fulfilling their powers and functions within local government.

- To investigate the state of community participation in the Lepelle-Nkumpi Local Municipality.
- To investigate hindrances to community participation in the activities of ward committees.
- To propose recommendations for aiding community participation through ward committees.

1.7. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The questions that were used in answering the primary research objectives stated above are as follows:

- What are the powers and functions of ward committees within local government?
- What is the state of community participation in the Lepelle-Nkumpi Local Municipality?
- What are the hindrances to community participation in the activities of ward committees?
- What are the recommendations for aiding community participation through ward committees?

1.8 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Ward committees will gain knowledge from the study's findings that will help them engage their communities more effectively and improve community engagement. According to Section 152 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, which mandates that a municipal council must annually review community needs and prioritize efforts to meet those needs, the Local Government: Municipal Structures Act, 117 of 1998, states that municipalities must strive within their capacity to achieve the objectives outlined in that section. The results of this study will be useful to future researchers since they will help to provide knowledge that can be applied to places sharing the same characteristics as those revealed in this study. By instructing municipalities on how and when to consult with and include various public organizations when providing them with services to prevent community protests, the study has also added to the body of knowledge in this area. Lastly, the University of Venda has benefited by enriching its research database.

1.9. DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The study has dealt with the role played by ward committees in promoting community participation in Lepelle-Nkumpi Local Municipality. It has investigated the role that ward committees play in promoting community participation within wards which falls under the Lepelle-Nkumpi Local Municipality. The findings of the study can be generalised to wards with the same characteristics within the Municipality, other municipalities within the province and the country as a whole.

1.10. DEFINITION OF OPERATIONAL CONCEPTS

This section seeks to give clear meaning to important terms that are used in the research.

- **Participation**

Participation is a crucial component of democracy and good governance because it encourages openness, accountability and the priority of urgent needs in the delivery of public services (Mavee, 2014:202). Additionally, according to Mavee (2014:202), participation makes it possible for the general public to have their say in local government matters through employing structures of local democracy such as public meetings, *imbizos* and ward committees' meetings.

- **Good governance**

According to Erasmus (2010:98), good governance involves the state using its authority in a way that promotes transparency, certainty, predictability and a culture of justification of its actions. For this study, good governance entails putting professional principles into practice, such as integrity, respect, ethics, responsibility and commitment with the main goal of enabling the public to actively participate in the affairs of their municipalities so that elected officials are glued to serving the needs of the people rather than their interests.

- **Local government**

Local government, according to Draai and Taylor (2009:112), is a crucial branch of government for fostering long-term accountability and public trust in governance by actively involving the people in the delivery of services. Van der Waldt (2010:04) concurs, arguing that local government is a branch of government that directly attends to the concerns of the populace at the local level. In this study, local government is the

level of government that is most accessible to the general public and has all the necessary resources to deliver essential services.

- **Community**

Swanepoel (2010:43) defines a community as a collection of individuals who live in an area and who exert some local autonomy in planning their social lives so they may meet all their daily needs from their base in that area. Homan (2008:98) defines a community as a group of individuals who are united by a shared environment, set of values, set of pursuits, and other traits that distinguish them from those who do not share those traits.

- **Community participation**

Community members can take part in activities including decision-making during project design, implementation, and sharing of benefits, according to Bayat and Meyer (1994:156). According to Mafukidze and Hoosen (2009), community participation refers to the direct involvement of the populace in local or grassroots planning, governance, and development programs. The primary characteristic that sets apart community participation from other forms of involvement is the requirement that participants belong to the community in question.

- **Municipality**

According to section 2 of the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000, the municipality is an organ of the state within the local sphere of government that exercises legislative and executive authority within a region determined in accordance with the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act and that is composed of a political structure, an administrative function, and the general public.

- **Ward Committee**

Together with the ward councillor, the ward committee is made up of elected members of the community to represent communities in the municipality. They must possess abilities connected to the empowerment of other community members to properly carry out their duties as representatives of the community (Khuzwayo, 2009:9). They are the voice of the people in the wards. According to Madumo and Thornhill (2022:131), a ward committee is an area-based committee whose borders match a ward's

boundaries. These committees lack any definite responsibilities, legislative authority, or executive authority.

1.11. ORGANISATION OF THE STUDY

This study was conducted of five chapters as presented below:

Chapter 1: Introduction and Background of the Study

The Introduction and background of the impact of ward committees on community participation are discussed in Chapter One. This was followed by a brief overview of the challenges that are faced by the ward committees. The motivation for conducting the study, the research problem, the research aims and objectives as well as the research questions were contained in this chapter. The chapter concluded with the ethical considerations and the structure of the study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The theoretical and conceptual foundation for community involvement in local governments. It has covered the literature on community involvement in local governance, covering the justification for community involvement as well as the difficulties in supporting the function of Ward Committees in carrying out their duties.

Chapter 3: Research Design and Methodology

This chapter presents the research design and methodology that the researcher will follow when conducting the research. The chapter also presents the study area, population of the study, sampling, sampling method, sampling size, data collection technique, data analysis and ethical considerations.

Chapter 4: Data Presentation, Analysis and Interpretation

Ward committees' functions, efficacy, and operation were examined. More specifically, the chapter has emphasized how to use the ward committee structure to promote the delivery of municipal services. An examination of the ward committee's founding was the focus of this chapter.

Chapter 5: Recommendations and Conclusion

In terms of improving community engagement, the last chapter has given the solutions to the issues found throughout the research and make recommendations for their implementation. This has served as an overview of the research and provide some suggestions. It has drawn a line under the investigation and offered suggestions.

1.12. CONCLUSION

The chapter outlined the follow of the study and how every chapter would be carried out, the introduction of this chapter introduced the intention of the study while the backround give a glimpse of where this study has drawn insprition,problem statement which has dealt with the problem this study seek to address. Other sub-topics dealt with in this chapter rationale of study, aim of the study, objective of the study which builds the core of the study, while the research questions has helped in achieving those study objectives, significance of the study, delimitation of the study. This chapter has provided a good view of what is expected to happen throughout this study.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Mouton (2001:48) states that a literature review is part of the proposal which provides evidence of some preliminary reading on the topic. It proves that the initial ideas have been developed and therefore provide, where appropriate, information concerning the theoretical literature on the topic. The literature was reviewed on the role of ward committees in promoting community participation in the local government sphere. A literature review entails a summary of issues and or opinions written by various authors. These are disputing and concurring opinions that scholars have on a particular subject (Babbie, 2001:59). The theory of community participation, contextualising community participation, the history of South African local government, structural arrangement of ward committees, community and community participation, the IDP as a form of community participation, tools for fostering community participation, challenges of community participation and legal guidelines supporting community participation was covered in this section.

2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

To explain and forecast events, Kivunja (2018:45) defines theory as a set of interconnected constructs (concepts), definitions, and propositions that create a systematic picture of phenomena by identifying links between variables to explain and foresee events. A theory is further described as a set of propositions made up of defined and related constructs that explain phenomena by specifying which variables are related to other variables and how they are related, allowing the researcher to make predictions from particular variables. An explanation of the relationships between the constructs in a theory provides a systematic picture of the phenomena that the variables describe.

According to Casanave and Li (2015:109), a framework is a necessary component since it shows the researcher's expertise and authority. The theoretical and theoretical framework, according to Adom, Hussen, and Agyem (2018:438), directs the course of the research and lays the groundwork for establishing its legitimacy. The theoretical framework is one of the most important components of a research process, according to Grant and Osanloo (2014:12) and is a topic that is frequently covered in PhD

courses. As a result, the public choice theory is used as the theoretical foundation for this study.

2.2.1. Public Choice Theory

To characterize and clarify political realities and their impact on the nature of public decisions, the Public Choice Theory, an economics concept, was adopted (Blankart & Koester, 2006:171). Butler (2012:21) is of the view that the Public Choice Theory is often referred to as a school of economics. In fact, it is more of an approach to political science. Baysuğ (2017: 91), supports Butler (2012) by adding that it does not try to explain how the economy works rather, the Public Choice Theory uses the methods and tools of economics to explore how politics and government work.

It is an approach that produces some surprising insights and throws up challenging questions – such as how efficient, effective and indeed legitimate the political process is. Butler (2012:21), elaborates that it may seem odd to use economics to analyse politics and government. To most people, economics is all about money, the market and business economy, and private gain. Government is supposed to be about benefiting the whole public, in non-financial ways, and through non-profit means.

Butler (2012:21), adds that economics is not just about money. The word itself comes from the Greek *oikonomia*, meaning the management of a household – where the aim is family contentment, rather than financial profit, and where many different factors, human as well as financial, have to be balanced. The theory focuses attention on both the distributional and efficiency effects of policy and the methodology of public choice is that of economics. Such can be seen from Buchanan (1989:13) who explains public choice by noting that it was a perspective, rather than a method in the traditional sense. That is, it is not a set of tools, nor is it a specific application of standard tools and procedures. 'Public choice is a political perspective that develops from an extension and application of economic tools and procedures to communal or non-market decision making.'

2.2.1.1. The relevance of Public Choice Theory on community participation

Public Choice Theory emerged as a result of the economic, political, social and philosophical developments experienced in the third quarter of the 20th century. The theory has been used in predicting political behaviour and modelling non-market

decisions with the help of the rational choices hypothesis (Ağırkaya, 2021: 47). According to the Public Choice Theory, people make up governments. Government acts are the consequence of decisions made by people acting in their capacities as elected officials, appointed officials, or bureaucrats. We need to look at how government officials make decisions and use resources to understand how governments functioned in the past (Becker, 1976). Public Choice Theory is important because it encourages citizens to participate in elections by voting and other means. Public Choice Theory promotes the construction of successful systems of public participation in government decision-making processes.

According to the Public Choice Theory, people, decision-makers in particular, do not act on the principle of social benefit (Kul and Yüksel, 2018:99). For the Public Choice Theory, four basic groups make up the economic and social life. These are politicians, bureaucrats, voters, pressure and interest groups in this submission considering that the politicians would be represented by ward committees while the community members are represented by the voters.

Kul and Yüksel, (2018: 99) explain that the Public Choice Theory emphasizes that all four groups will exhibit attitudes towards their benefit maximization and that the political equilibrium will be reached through an exchange in which each group will provide its benefit. Kızılboğa, (2012: 102) supported the submission made by Kul and Yüksel, (2018) by adding that the efforts of individuals to maximize their profits may cause chaos or corruption in the field of economics if the necessary stakeholders are not well consulted, in this case those stakeholders should be regarded as community members which such groups seek to serve the submission made by Kızılboğa (2012) cannot be avoided.

Buchanan, (1987) in Firidin, (2022:48) puts forward some of the principles which highlight the backbone of Public Choice Theory the two which bring light to this study are namely: methodological individualism and homo economicus:

Methodological Individualism: According to this principle, decision-makers are individuals. In social groups or other similar formations, decision-makers are individuals. Therefore, when making decisions, individuals give priority to their interests rather than the general interests of the human community. Ward committees fall within such formations and the failure of the communities to engage ward

committees can result in the interests of respective communities not being brought forth to benefit.

Homo Economicus: Public Choice Theory rejects the idea that social interest can be produced. Individuals work for their interests within the framework of certain rules and priorities. To talk about a social interest, it is necessary to calculate the total interests of people as individuals thus supporting the need for community participation in their local government affairs as that would help to consolidate the individual views into one vision for the betterment of their respective communities.

2.3. CONTEXTUALIZING COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

Various methods have been put in place in South Africa to encourage community participation. However, encouraging citizen participation remains a challenge in municipalities. Authors such as Houston and Liebenberg (2001:283), Masiya, Davids, and Mazenda (2019), Mamokhere and Meyer, (2023), Matyana and Mthethwa, (2022), Basila and Mudau, (2013), and Williams (2008) provide evidence that practitioners, analysts, and activists around the world are grappling with the issue of participation in governance. Ward committees are considered the primary route for citizen participation in local governance in South Africa. According to Williams (2006:22), participatory models of governance and decision-making are deeply influenced, if not shaped, by contradictions, tensions, conflicts, and struggle based on political power relations, as well as economic and ideological tools at the local level.

Tshoose (2015:15) asserts that community members share information about themselves (who they are, what they want, and what they need) and apply pressure on officials for a response. Community members do this in many ways such as, by voting, working in political campaigns, writing letters, and taking part in community meetings and protests, This response supports Piper and Deacon's (2008) claim that both the government and civil society in South Africa are considering the absence of community engagement. The community has been encouraged to participate through a variety of means, but institutions like the IDP representative forum and the municipal council do not follow constitutional procedures when encouraging involvement in their legislative processes. According to Matyana and Mthethwa (2022:1124), who concur with Piper and Deacon (2008), local government is the foundation of service delivery worldwide. South African municipalities are under tremendous pressure to provide

their people with effective and efficient services as a result of the rise in violent protests caused by the absence of community engagement. According to Theron and Mchunu (2013:106), ward committees should ideally serve as a link between the public, political, and administrative spheres of municipalities. Hicks (2006:38) also believes that community involvement is a key component of the South African government's strategy when developing an Integrated Development Plan (IDP) at the local government level (Van Rooyen, 2003: 126). For South African local government, integrated development planning entails new and intricate planning and governance procedures.

Recent research has indicated that it is quite challenging to meet the requirements of participatory procedures in the compilation of IDPs, as demonstrated by studies like Masiya, Davids and Mazenda's (2019); Matyana and Mthethwa's (2022); and Mamokhere and Meyer's (2023). Houston (2001:210) attributes this to a lack of prior experience with taking part in local governance. A situation where true participation is impossible is often brought on by the frequently intricate technical issues involved in planning and the municipal budget, a lack of ability among elected officials and senior local council staff, and occasionally problematic relationships between elected councilors and community participation structures (Houston, 2001:210). Participation enhances the legitimacy and popular support of the local authorities' policies and programs, ensuring democratic stability.

Municipalities can carry out their fundamental duties in a way that significantly improves the standard of living of the residents they serve over the long term. The most effective approaches to increase participatory governance, according to some researchers, may not involve official, institutionalized participatory procedures. When impacted communities are excluded from development planning, Idris, Maya, Faven, Sayeeda, Medina, Larissa, Hawkins, Brown, and Claudio (2022) say that this can result in a lack of trust and buy-in as well as a lack of community involvement in the dissemination of public policy. Friedman (2006:3), for instance, claims that the structures and channels in South Africa are "intrinsically hospitable." Rather, he suggests that participatory governance be seen as a process in which citizens have rights and use the channels and methods of their choice (within the bounds of a democratic order) to force governments to deal with them on their terms, not those that are convenient to power-holders.

Madzivhandila and Maluka (2014) contend that governments should establish attitudes and institutions conducive to citizen action rather than formal methods to encourage community engagement in government, particularly that of the poor. Van Donk (2007:43) defines appropriate participation as "improving community members' participation through knowledge distribution. People have a right to be aware of who in the municipality overseeing what, where to direct inquiries or grievances, and how decisions will affect their daily lives and neighbourhoods.

Furthermore, it is impossible to expect people to meaningfully participate in community discussions and debates without the necessary information. The local government must make means to help the community members understand the important role they need to play in a democratic country, When people are well informed, they make better decisions which in turn helps their local government give them services which are relevant to their needs thus ensuring the participation of communities in their local government affairs.

2.4. THE HISTORY OF SOUTH AFRICAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Each province had its own arrangement of local government organizations before 1994, hence there was no single, uniform system of local government throughout the nation. The institution of local government was illegitimate, discriminatory, and submissive. Local governments' submission was made clear by the fact that they were governed by provincial legislation, which also determined how they may exercise their authority and set limits on it. Under the guiding principle of "own management for own areas," the creation of separate local councils for distinct racial groups generated a clever plan of overt racial exploitation. All of the well-equipped and prosperous commercial zones with substantial income sources were set aside as white areas.

Black people were only allowed in the remote, underdeveloped areas with weak formal economies. Traditional authorities were responsible for carrying out local government duties in the homeland regions. Thus, the legacy of an "urban economic logic that systematically favoured white urban areas at the expense of black urban and peri-urban areas" was what drove local government's transformation into a full-fledged and non-racial institution of governance, with "tragic and absurd" effects.

Beginning in the early 1990s, discussions on local government between the apartheid administration and the liberation organizations became more serious. They created

the groundwork for the change of municipal governance. Adopting the 'one city, one tax base' principle; the liberation movement's motto for opposing the severely unequal distribution of resources was crucial to the outcome. Additionally, a Transition Act (the Local Government Transition Act of 1993) to direct the transition to democratic local government and a chapter on local government for the Interim Constitution were agreed upon.

2.4.1. Introduction of a New Era in Local Government

The Republic of South Africa's 1993 Interim Constitution opened the door for the country's first democratic elections in 1994 and the creation of the final Constitution by the newly elected Parliament. By recognizing local government's autonomy, ensuring its ability to earn revenue, and granting it the right to a part of revenues generated nationally, it helped bring about constitutional recognition for local government. Over 1000 racially distinct and dissimilar local government systems were merged into 842 transitional local authorities under the auspices of the Interim Constitution (Steytler, 2006:187).

Then, in the form of a progressive chapter where local government is firmly established as a mature area of government, the final Constitution of 1996 featured a definite pronouncement on local government. The Constitution also identified the "constitutional objects" and "developmental duties" of municipal government, positioning it as a crucial development agent. These focused on democracy, sustainable service delivery, social and economic development, environmental protection, community engagement, poverty alleviation, and intergovernmental cooperation (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 1993, ss. 152 and 152).

The 1998 White Paper on Local Government (Department of Constitutional Development 1998) preceded the implementation of the constitutional provisions. It turned out to be a strategy that united allies and adversaries behind fresh ideas. It began a conversation that would have an extended impact. The new mandate was defined as "local government committed to working with citizens and groups within the community to find sustainable ways to meet their social, economic, and material needs and improve the quality of their lives." It translated the constitutional objects and duties into the concept of "developmental local government." Four characteristics would define a municipal government that is developmentally oriented.

With the passage of the Local Government: Municipal Demarcation Act 27 of 1998 in 1998, which provided for the establishment of an impartial Municipal Demarcation Board (MDB) to draw municipal boundaries, the restructuring of local government institutions got underway in earnest. The requirement to establish a "wall-to-wall" network of inclusive and successful municipalities is stated in the Constitution (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 1993, s. 151(1)).

This was a departure from the past when not all areas were ruled by a local authority, especially typical rural communities. The establishing local government institutions was governed by the Local Government: Municipal Structures Act 117 of 1998. In significant urban areas, it built single-tiered metropolitan municipalities; in the rest of the country, it established a two-tiered system of district and local governments. Additionally, it offered a structure for municipalities' internal operations. Critical new aspects were the introduction of firstly, an 'executive mayor' system of municipal governance alongside the classic 'collective executive committee' system; secondly, a separate municipal speaker; and thirdly, ward committees as vehicles for community participation.

2.4.2. Institutional Framework for South African Local Government

The institutional framework for government in South Africa was established in 1996 with the adoption of the first democratic Constitution (Department of Provincial and Local Government (DPLG), 2007). National, provincial and local government were established as the three elected spheres of government, each with distinctive but interdependent and interrelated functional responsibilities (Du Plessis, 2005). The new local sphere of government was created by amalgamating over 800 municipalities into 283 municipalities (DPLG, 2007). Local government is subdivided into three categories of municipalities in terms of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. These are Metropolitan municipalities (Category A), Local municipalities (Category B) and District municipalities (Category C). Metropolitan municipalities have exclusive executive and legislative authority in their area while Local and District municipalities share the authority (RSA, 1996).

The three spheres of government are required to function as a single system of cooperative government for the country as a whole, while responsibility for refuse removal, refuse dumps and solid waste disposal are assigned to local government

(Metropolitan, District and Local municipalities). The Constitution of 1996 does not provide guidance on the division of functions between district and local municipalities. An underlying principle in allocating governance functions is the devolution to the most appropriate sphere of government.

2.5. STRUCTURAL ARRANGEMENT OF WARD COMMITTEES

Ward committees are described as committees with a maximum of 10 members chosen from inside the ward and led by a ward councillor under the Local Government: Municipal Structures Act 117 of 1998. The ward committee's responsibilities include promoting participatory democracy, disseminating information, aiding in the re-building of partnerships for improved service and development delivery, and providing assistance with issues faced by ward residents.

The Local Government: Municipal Structures Act 117 of 1998 makes it plain that creating ward committees is not required of municipalities, and as a result, not all municipalities are required to create such committees. The development of tools to consult with and involve communities in the business of the municipality and its processes is, nevertheless, required by law for municipalities.

2.6. COMMUNITY AND COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

The Municipal Government: The Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000 requires municipalities to communicate information to their communities about the available mechanisms, processes, and procedures to encourage and facilitate community participation; the issues on which community participation is encouraged; the rights and duties of members of the local community; and municipal governance, management, and development. The Lepelle-Nkumpi Local Municipality considers language preferences and usage in the municipality, as well as the unique needs of persons who cannot read or write when transmitting information (Lepelle-Nkumpi Municipal Communication Strategy, 2015/16:3).

The Lepelle-Nkumpi Local Municipality has a communication section that ensures constant internal and external communication of municipal programs to stakeholders. Municipal newsletters, public notices, and meetings, two local radio stations and regional stations, regional and national publications, a website, and phone lines are used to connect with local and external stakeholders. Community development workers from Provincial cooperative governance, human settlement, and traditional

affairs have been assigned to Lepelle-Nkumpi municipal wards to serve as conduits between the municipality and community-on-community engagement messages and service delivery concerns.

The municipal council of Lepelle-Nkumpi has also chosen a spokesperson in the mayor's office to this effect (Beyer, 2015:12). During the 2012/13 financial year, the council examined the communication and community participation plan. The main challenge for Lepelle-Nkumpi Local Municipality in terms of community participation has been low turnout at community meetings, despite the municipality arranging transportation to ferry people from their respective villages to meeting venues (Lepelle-Nkumpi Integrated Development Plan 2014/15).

2.7. IDP AS FORM OF COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

South African municipalities conceived of the IDP primarily as a mechanism to support the coordinated implementation of the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) at the national, provincial, and local levels. Municipal services were eventually incorporated into the IDPs, and this has remained a requirement for all municipalities to maintain their operational running. IDPs function as municipal business plans for the period specified (Madzivhandila and Asha, 2012), (Mathebula, 2018:564).

2.7.1 Definition of Integrated Development Planning

Mushongera and Khanyil (2019) define the IDP as a tool that allows communities and community-based organizations to articulate their intended needs and aspirations. The IDP is a primary strategic management tool for municipalities. The Local Government: Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000 enacted it. Oranje and Huyssteen in (Fox and Van Rooyen 2004:131- 132), see integrated development planning as a critical instrument of development planning in the local sphere, and as a process that assists municipalities in preparing strategic development plans over a five-year period (Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000, Section 35 (1)). According to Mathebula (2016), this IDP connects, integrates, and coordinates the municipality's numerous sectoral plans, aligning them with the budget, departmental business plans, and leadership performance plans, allowing for a clear identification of where resources and capacity will be allocated for development implementation.

2.7.2. IPD process

The planning process should be preceded by some preparatory work, such as the creation of an 'IDP process plan'. A plan like this is required to properly handle the planning process. Without going into too much detail, it is necessary to explain the IDP process to create a better understanding of the integrated development planning methodology that should be followed.

2.7.2.1. The analysis stages

The analysis stage focuses on the current conditions in the local community (DPLG, 2002: 15). During the analysis stage, it is therefore required to conduct an assessment of the present level of development, including the identification of communities that do not have access to basic services (DPLG, 2002:4). The assessment should highlight the issues that residents in the municipality face (DPLG, 2002:15). Problems or development difficulties that must be addressed typically vary from a lack of basic services to unemployment and criminality.

The fundamental underlying premise in the case is that residents affected by the problems or issues should be involved in identifying the problem and establishing its scope. Once the problems or development challenges have been discovered, they must be weighed in terms of urgency and importance to identify which ones are priorities and should be addressed first. During the analysis step, the municipality will have to assess how far the key concerns and challenges can be addressed in the IDP based on the available resources.

2.7.2.2. The strategy development stage

Following the completion of the IDP process's analytical phase; during this stage, the municipality must establish plans to address the difficulties and development challenges that were discovered during the analysis stage (DPLG, 2002:15). As a result, it is required for a municipality to define a vision and mission, development objectives, and development strategies, as well as select projects that can put them into action.

2.7.2.3. The projects stage

The projects stage normally comes after the IDP's strategy creation stage is done. Since projects were previously identified during the previous stage, it is required to

focus on project design and specification for implementation purposes, i.e. the project plan (DPLG, 2002:16). These plans should include the following information:

- The intended audience (beneficiaries)
- The project's location
- Schedule (start and end date)
- Officials responsible for managing different aspects thereof (in terms of project team and other role-players)
- Cost and budget estimates
- Performance indicators (to measure performance and impact).

2.7.2.4. The integration stage

The municipality must guarantee that the identified projects take the following factors into account as part of the integration process:

- The development goals and objectives of the municipality;
- The resource framework, as well as
- The legal standards that must be met to assure compliance.

This step also allows the municipality to align and coordinate project implementation in terms of nature, location, and timing to guarantee that consolidated and integrated programs are included in the IDP (DPLG, 2002:16). This stage's outcomes should be as follows:

- A five-year financial strategy;
- A five-year capital investment strategy;
- A framework for integrated spatial development;
- Sectoral integrated programs (such as Local Economic Development or LED);
- Poverty reduction
- A consolidated performance monitoring and management system
- A disaster management strategy
- The institutional strategy
- Inclusion of sector plans.

The following stage of the IDP process, namely the approval stage, must begin once the integration stage is done and the draft IDP is accessible. The draft IDP must be submitted to the municipal council for consideration and approval at this stage (DPLG, 2002:17). The council must first review the draft IDP in light of the following key issues:

- Whether the IDP recognizes municipal-related challenges and/or development issues.
- The extent to which the plans and projects will help to solve problems and/or address development challenges, and
- Whether the IDP meets the legal requirements.

Following that, the council must allow the public to comment on the draft IDP. The IDP should then be changed or revised in response to legitimate public comments and input. Following that, the council should evaluate the draft IDP for approval. This stage will be completed after the municipality has an authorized IDP. Within 10 days of adopting its IDP, a municipality must submit a copy to the province's MEC for local government, together with the process plan and, in the case of a district municipality, the framework for IDP.

2.7.3. Stakeholders in IDP

Thornhill (2011:16) states that while the IDP is a municipal mandate, the Municipality prioritises public participation, emphasising the role of key stakeholders in decision-making processes. The IDP consultative process bears substantial testimony to this, as there is always input from all wards, newspaper advertisements, radio talks, inviting local communities to provide inputs thereby ensuring that the process is transparent and credible, and complies with the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000.

Mamokhere (2006:27) identifies the stakeholders discovered during the IDP process. Community-Based Organizations: They understand the requirements of their community. Councillors reflect the goals and demands of the community, while Senior Management integrates the people's needs across all spectrums. Municipal Manager: ensures that the IDP is compiled and implemented, and Sector Departments: push for funds and resources. Ward Committees maintain contact between the municipality and the community. Organized business people: to facilitate public-private partnerships in service delivery. They create established lines of communication and

cooperative collaborations between the municipality and the community within a ward and Council. They also endorse and approve the IDP. Finally, many local communities participate in determining their most critical needs

2.8. CHALLENGES FACING WARD COMMITTEES

Ward committees are an important means for communities to communicate with municipal governments about their needs, expectations, and concerns. According to Naidu (2008:86), the current structure and form of ward committees in South Africa are dysfunctional. Furthermore, according to Naidu (2008), it has diminished the role of participation within the municipal organization. This failure could be attributed to several factors, including ward committees' lack of credibility in influencing decision-making and ward committee members' lack of dedication to their efforts.

Ward committee members may see ward committees as merely a stepping stone to achieving their political goals. Power dynamics (i.e., political intervention) undercut the role of ward committees; a ward councillor is a politically elected representative, and by default, he or she is head of a ward committee with the capacity to promote party interests

In analysing the design of participatory governance, the study will draw attention to Fung and Wright, (2003)'s work on successful 'invited spaces' which they term 'Empowered Deliberative Democracy' institutions. They argue that these institutions share three general principles, a focus on tangible problems, the involvement of ordinary people affected by those problems, and the deliberative development of solutions to those problems. Furthermore, institutions share three design features which are; the devolution of public decision authority to empowered local units, linkages that connect these units to each other and super-ordinate authorities, and the generation and use of new state institutions to support and guide these decentred problem-solving efforts. Last but not least, they observe that have numerous enabling conditions, but that the most important is the balance of power between actors involved such that participation is more likely when alternative strategies such as strategic domination or exist are less attractive (Mphahlele, 2010:20).

Piper and Deacon (2008) in Molaba (2016), as regards the invited spaces of participatory governance in South Africa, argues that both ward committees and mayoral *izimbizo* are poor approximations of the empowered and participatory

institutions of this sort. Ward committees and mayoral izimbizo have no decision-making authority, especially over resources. These powers, as stated above in Molaba (2016), are clearly reserved in law for politicians and may not be assigned to ward committees. Perhaps more importantly, both ward committees and izimbizo have a limited deliberative role. Although ward committees are intended to identify and reflect on critical issues impacting their ward, the failure to expressly integrate ward committees into the decision-making or delivery processes of the local municipality implies that they have little impact on deliberation.

They currently have no participation in municipal or local development planning or budgeting, nor do they have direct influence over how officials deliver on these obligations. All ward committees currently do is amplify the voice of ward councillors at monthly council meetings, confirming that communities believe municipal decisions do not adequately respond to the needs and values of the communities, particularly the poor and disadvantaged sectors; to the extent that planning, including budgets and IDPs, are not reflective of community needs (Madzivhandila and Maloka, 2014:655).

Ward committees must transmit their deliberations to the council through the ward councillor, and if the ward councillor is inept, disinterested, or marginalized for any other reason, the ward committees' deliberations are null and void. Indeed, ward councillors are the most vulnerable of all councillors because the electoral system is only half constituency-based and half proportional representation by party list (Mbhele, 2017:35). According to Marks and Erwin (2016), senior party politicians in local government are almost always elected by party list rather than by the ward, which means that the key political players, particularly those who sit on the municipal executive, do not have ward committees. Ward committees, in effect, are a participation mandate imposed on disempowered politicians.

Butler (2004) urges that a similar set of problems with disempowerment face mayoral *izimbizo*. In the Msunduzi case study 2021, it is clear that public meetings on the development plan and budget are not decision-making forums. Again, the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000, as the law explicitly prevents this. However, they are not and indeed cannot be meaningful deliberative forums either, other than perhaps for further reflection on local needs. At these meetings,

communities are presented with a draft IDP and budget which they have not seen before the meeting.

To date, there have been no prior preparatory processes in communities, including community-based planning by ward committees, despite the presence of national policy along these lines. Given the complexities of development plans and budgets, much of it imposed by national law and policy, there really can be no expectation of much meaningful input into these core documents using public meetings. When added to the failure to use virtually any other means of public consultation around the IDP and budget.

2.9. TOOLS IN FOSTERING COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

Fourie and van der Waldt, (2021:5) state that with a particular reference to participation in the IDP process, these guideline documents pinpoint the following participation mechanisms for municipalities:

- The IDP Representative Forum

According to Khawula (2016), Nzimakwe and Reddy (2008), the IDP Representative Forum's role is to ensure representative participation in the IDP process. This forum is important because it ensures that the interests of diverse stakeholders and communities are represented in the IDP process. The forum also fosters debates, negotiations, and decision-making among diverse stakeholders and municipal governments. This Forum facilitates communication among many parties and the local administration. As a result, without community engagement, developmental local government is worthless, and any municipality's IDP is empty of actuality.

- Advertisements in local newspapers and radio stations;

One of the responsibilities of the municipal administration is to keep stakeholders informed about issues and policies under its jurisdiction. This principle also applies to municipal government. The local population is an important stakeholder, and their understanding of their environment and municipal activities is critical to the accountable and effective execution of these policies. A communication channel favoured by local municipalities is an official newsletter—a print outlet, which in most cases is being distributed for free straight to the mailboxes of all inhabitants (Bucholtz, 2017).

- Municipal websites;

According to Mdlalose (2016:33), the Constitutional mandate allows communities and residents the right to access state-held information or state-owned material that is held by another person and is in the public interest. Municipalities are required by the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act of 2000 and the Local Government: Municipal Finance Management Act of 2003 to publish certain finance-related information on their website and in local newspapers distributed throughout the province. This information comprises municipal performance reports, the IDP, the yearly budget, and any other notices required by applicable Acts. This information should be easily available on municipal digital channels.

- Notices at municipal offices;

According to the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000, all documents that a municipality is required to make public under this Act, the Local Government: Municipal Finance Management Act of 2003, or other applicable legislation must be conveyed to the local community by displaying the documents at the municipality's head and satellite offices and libraries.

- Loud-hailing;

Santucci (2005: 38) in Msibi and Penzhom (2010) believe that traditional basic communication methods imposed by the First World, namely mass media channels, are not always relevant to Third World growth. According to this viewpoint, the communication process in development must be directed by the needs of the community rather than by technology, because the goal is to meet actual and precisely defined demands based on the values of all communication process participants. Loud-hailing has proven to be a very reliable technique of relaying information within the villages of the Lepelle-Nkumpi Local Municipality.

- Information sheets distributed by ward committees;

Msibi and Penzhom (2010:12) claim that ward committee members and community development workers conduct door-to-door campaigns on a regular basis to mobilize or inform community members on development issues.

- The *imbizo* (public meeting);

According to the Department of Public Service and Administration, (2008), an *imbizo* is by far the most well-known strategy that politicians in the country have used.

- Ward committees and community development workers.

According to McKenzie and Mostafa (2017:5), individuals should be involved in a project from the beginning to the finish. It would eliminate a lot of problems where communities are only solicited for their comments on project proposals that have already been produced or their contributions only during the project/programme implementation. During the planning, budgeting, and implementation stages, participatory ways should be established. This type of planning necessitates functional ward committees that prepare plans for their own wards and link ward priorities to the municipality's integrated development planning. Councillors, administrators, and ward committees are responsible for ensuring that a municipality's programs represent the demands of its inhabitants (Heydenrych, 2008).

2.9.1. Involvement of Community in Local Affairs

The lack of interest in community members when having to partake in matters affecting their communities brings about questions around the methods being used by the local government in order to better communicate with residents of those particular communities. Harrison, Huyssteen, and Meyer (2000) further observe that in ensuring effective participation municipalities must consider that mass meetings are not always the best way to get people to talk; there are many different, creative techniques of participation (which include focus groups and participatory rural appraisal) that can be used at various stages in the process. The internet may be of use as one of a number of ways of interacting with communities and stakeholders, although it should be noted that many individuals and communities are still without access to electronic forms of communication. Participation therefore needs to be carefully and efficiently structured as it may become a very time-consuming and costly process, particularly in newly demarcated districts that are of a large physical size or have a large and highly differentiated population (Mubita, Libati and Mulonda, 2017:16).

The argument by Harrison, *et al* (2000) shows that there is a very serious need for methods of communication to be challenged in order to bring about an accepted relevant method(s) that will bring positive and well represented opinions of a

community where community participation is concerned in the Lepelle-Nkumpi Local Municipality.

Kellerman (1997), supports the above view by adding that it can make way for effective implementation of programs and projects meant for the poor through their involvement in decision making, designing, implementation and evaluation of projects for feedback thereby overcoming rigidity dilemmas of projects coordinated from the centre.

2.9.2. Local Economic Development

In terms of section 152 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, one of the key objectives of local government is to 'promote social and economic development'. The developmental role of municipalities was already indicated in the Development Facilitation Act, 67 of 1995 and is reiterated in the White Paper on Local Government, 1998. Moreover, Chapter 5 of the Local Government: Municipal Structures Act, 117 of 1998 stipulates the functions and powers of municipalities in fulfilling this obligation.

Additional details are specified in section 23(1) of the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, 32 of 2000, which emphasises the developmental role that municipalities should fulfil and prescribes the use of IDPs as the process through which a municipality should establish a development plan for the short, medium and long term. This implies that all municipalities are obligated to compile and adopt a formal IDP for a given 5-year period. This plan has to be reviewed annually and, if necessary, be amended.

IDP Representative Forums are established in municipalities in line with the IDP legal framework, to foster stakeholder participation. As per the legal provisions, the IDP forum should include the following actors: "members of the executive committee, council members (including district council and portfolio council members), traditional leaders, ward committees, department heads and senior officials, supporters of unorganized groups as well as stakeholder representatives of organized groups, resource people, and community representatives" (DPLG, 2001: 23).

Williams (2006:197) contends that the best way to understand community engagement is as active community participation in local planning, governance, and development projects. Such development initiatives must be overseen, and decisions made by the Lepelle-Nkumpi community as a whole. As a result, ward committees in

the Lepelle-Nkumpi Local Municipality are essential for establishing ties between local residents and elected institutions and for leveraging extra communication channels to fortify these connections. In order to maintain sustainable lifestyles, the Lepelle-Nkumpi Local Municipality places a strong emphasis on the active participation of community members in matters relating to their development.

In its IDP Guide Packs, the DPLG (South Africa, 2001) recommends the establishment of an integrated development planning representative forum to encourage the participation of communities and other stakeholders, such as Members of the executive committee of the council, councillors, including district councillors, Traditional leaders, and Ward committee representatives. Promoting community involvement aims to improve the community's capacity to identify issues, come up with solutions, put action plans into place, monitor progress, conduct appropriate evaluations, measurements, and results analyses, and provide feedback to stakeholders, the community, and other people who are curious about the program.

Local government in South Africa is required to promote socioeconomic development under Section 152 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996 and the White Paper on Local Government of 1998, which firmly established the developmental obligations of municipalities. The White Paper and the Constitution specifically encourage municipalities to take the lead in reducing poverty and creating job opportunities through LED. Therefore, it is essential to create successful LED projects to solve the socioeconomic concerns of unemployment, poverty, and lack of access to basic commodities in local regions (Koma, 2012).

According to Meyer (2014), local governments' main duty in terms of development is to use the LED strategic plan, which adopts a balanced approach to being both "pro-poor" and "pro-growth," to create a climate that encourages the success of all of their inhabitants and businesses. The creation of jobs, a decline in poverty, and an improvement in the standard of living in local communities can all be attributed to the local government's promotion of an environment that fosters business growth and survival. Local government must identify and generate new chances in order to enhance the economic opportunities in the local communities. Given this, local governments ought to implement strategies and policies that support LED under their domain (Mumba & Van der Waldt, 2022).

The relevant local government authority is in charge of managing the IDP, however, it is subject to a few fundamental rules. The consultative process, strategic process, and implementation-oriented process, according to Gueli et al. (2007:102), serve as the IDP's guiding principles. Given the importance of community involvement in the IDP, it is essential that it be given special emphasis. These core principles reflect the significant requirements for community involvement in the IDP. The following is a discussion of the aforementioned core concepts:

2.9.2.1. Community Participation in LED

Local governments now clearly have a mandate for growth as a result of changes in global policy and the devolution of authority (Nel, 2005). Instead of being the national government's only policy domain, the development of a local area is now the responsibility of the local government, all sectors, and the community itself (Maleka, 2002: 14). Additionally, the increasingly competitive environment, rising levels of poverty, inequalities, unemployment, and limited access to basic services are all part of the new external framework that municipalities around the world must work within to address their economic status (Koma, 2013: 129). Local governments have therefore taken on a proactive role in the development of their communities as well as the responsibility to promote LED within their sphere of influence, especially those in poor countries (Maleka, 2002).

Rogerson and Rogerson (2010) as well as Qongo (2013) define LED as the procedure through which local governments collaborate with NGOs, community-based groups, the business sector, and the community to generate jobs and boost economic activity in their town. This suggests that local governments should get more involved in economic development as they are among the key players in the LED process. According to the South Australian Centre for Economic Studies (2013), local government may have a significant impact on LED through alliances with business organizations. Local governments are increasingly aware of the possible impact they could have on improving the economic viability of their communities as a result (Rogerson & Rogerson, 2010: 467).

According to Meyer (2014), local governments' main duty in terms of development is to use the LED strategic plan, which adopts a balanced approach to being both "pro-poor" and "pro-growth," to create a climate that encourages the success of all of their

inhabitants and businesses. The creation of jobs, a decline in poverty, and an improvement in the standard of living in local communities can all be attributed to the local government's promotion of an environment that fosters business growth and survival.

Therefore, the local government must identify and create new opportunities that will enhance the prospects of local enterprises. As a result, local government should implement regulations and programs that aid LED in their purview. The regulatory role, which has become increasingly important with the rise of more private businesses and is best suited for the local authority in terms of economic growth, should also be carried out by the local government (VNG International, 2007). As a result, local government as a whole has learned that it is just one of many participants in LED. The majority of local communities face the local government with a variety of planning and promotion challenges.

2.9.3. *Imbizo*

The majority of South African municipalities are gaining a negative reputation for offering poor services, being ineffective and inefficient, and having high levels of corruption (Manyaka & Madzivhandila, 2013). There are still many problems with service delivery despite the numerous attempts that have been put in place to improve it. However, a lack of horizontal integration and inadequate departmental coordination has made it challenging to plan for successful local growth, making efforts to supply services very challenging.

Since time immemorial, members of African communities would come together as a communion of people perceiving life through the eyes of collective consciousness to discuss matters of common concern (Kotze 1993: 66). The Department of Communication and Information Systems (2015) considers *imbizo* as a two-way unmediated information sharing platforms – a dialogue between government and people giving credence to a nation at work.

Mabelebele (2006:104) states that the adoption of *imbizo* as a mechanism for communication between government and its citizens bears testimony to the government's commitment to uphold the constitutional tenet of a participatory democracy where people can voice their concerns, opinions and aspirations to their elected representatives. The municipality in this study becomes a relevant case study

as it is found within rural areas which are still under traditional leaderships, which imbizo has been a tool used by African communities through ages to communicate matters concerning their respective communities according to Mabelebele (2006).

2.9.4. Local Government Elections

All elections in South Africa whether in the local sphere or the national and provincial government are overwhelmed by tense competition, first competition is between political party members themselves and the second one is between different political parties (Mbandlwa, 2021). Social media is one of the important tools supporting communication between the government and the people. Most municipalities have Twitter and Facebook accounts or groups for members of communities to engage with their respective municipalities. Wasserman and De Beer (2009) maintain that the media in South Africa acts as an opposition party judging by the way the media puts the government under serious scrutiny.

Democratic elections are by far the only tools of democracy that are used to choose governments or representatives of the people. Elections are also viewed as core components of a democratic society that encourages the active participation of citizens and they also strengthen national institutions and democratic processes (Mapuve, 2013). Madumo, (2015:155) states that participating in the election process is a constitutional right while participating in a political party is a personal choice and those who are in control of the political party can determine who they accept and who they deny access to.

These two parallel processes make it difficult for society to elect their preferred candidate. Political parties have power over the community on who must contest elections. On the other hand, traditional leadership is not taken into consideration in all these processes (Madumo, 2015: 155). The new Mayor of Lepelle-Nkumpi Local Municipality in March 2023 held a community engagement under the Ledwaba Traditional House Authority that in itself shows the importance of traditional leaders in promoting communication between the community members and the Lepelle-Nkumpi Local Municipality.

All government elections in South Africa whether in the local sphere or the national and provincial government are overwhelmed by the tense competition. The competition between political party members themselves is characterized by elements

of fake allegations, assassination, and membership removal according to Bruce (2016). Mbandlwa (2021) indicates that most ward councillor candidates that are contesting the local government elections in elections in South Africa do not have developmental ideas. Those who are nominated and contesting the elections do not have a track record of developing their communities, but they are nominated based on their popularity.

Over the years, the electorate has itself to blame for poor public service delivery but blaming solely the electorate is not fair. Voters are still loyal to the liberation movements such as the African National Congress and Inkatha Freedom Party and the history of the country is still used by the liberation movement to scare the people about what will happen should they vote for another political party and most people in South Africa vote based on which political party they like instead of which political party they think will bring change (Mdlalose, 2016).

Strong participatory democracy and effective administration are two of the most crucial elements of a society's growth, according to Kumalo (2009:246). Local government is a crucial stage of participatory democracy because it allows citizens to hold their municipal council accountable for its deeds by participating actively both as voters and as end users and customers (Bauer, 2009:29). According to Nzimakwe (2012:151), participatory democracy can only exist when regular people, whether young and old, are given the chance to actively and meaningfully contribute to their well-being.

2.9.5. The Act of Pressure Groups in Ward Committees

According to Rolland (2018), the introduction of new political leadership, with its changing ideas and objectives, leaves South African municipalities perpetually open to prospective regime shifts. Therefore, the administration of towns may undergo unexpected changes as a result of the changing political leadership. Ward committee members claimed in a study done at the Govan Mbeki Municipality (Secunda, Mpumalanga) that the issue with the municipality was that the ward committees were not autonomous because they relied too heavily on their ward councillor as their chairperson. They were overshadowed by the ward councillor, or when they had innovative ideas, the councillors saw them as a threat.

The councillor already knew the names of the candidates when the community held elections for members of the ward committee. Because they were only given

instructions, some ward committee members were rendered helpless by this situation (Roux, 2005:8). In addition, a 2009 study by Smith and De Visse at the Msunduzi Local Municipality in Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal, discovered that ward committees were frequently politicized in one of the following three ways: first, there is inter-party competition, in which political parties control the ward committees and the makeup of the committees is skewed towards supporters of the other party.

Additionally, there was intra-party rivalry, in which ward committees had become entangled in political party factionalism, where one faction within the ANC party exploited the ward committees to gain greater influence in politics. According to Smith and De Visse (2009), there is a term-policy competition in which the political party, as opposed to the law, defines the function of ward committees rather than their makeup. Ward committees are permitted to offer suggestions on any issue affecting their wards, according to Section 79(a) of the Local Government: Municipal Structures Act 117 of 1998. This suggests that they have a part to play and that, rather than ward councillors as people, their recommendations are focused on issues that impact the community's residents. The ward committees and the branch of political leadership occasionally have a close relationship. In some cases, the components of both structures are identical. There is another reference where the branch leadership and the ward committees are integrated to prevent the necessary aspects of antagonism between the two groups (Piper & Deacon, 2008).

2.9.6. The Participation of Communities through Protests

Service delivery demonstrations, according to Shaidi (2013:16), are collective actions taken by locals to express their resentment or grievances with the way and scope in which public services are provided to them. These demonstrations may be peaceful or violent. According to Karamoko (2011), during public mass action protests, communities frequently mention that, although poor service delivery is the main source of rage, this is made worse by government officials' lack of accountability as well as the lack of opportunities for the general public to participate in the planning processes. These make understanding the fundamental causes of service delivery protests crucial for policymakers, academics, and government practitioners.

In addition to the political process, the protests had also been about housing, access to water, electricity, and other infrastructures. Protesters had frequently lamented the

indifference of authorities and council members at the municipal level. With this claim, it is evident that politicians who ignore protestors are a problem (Twala, 2014:163). According to Allan and Heese (2011), it is often difficult to understand the causes of service delivery protests, which has led to many conjectures about their causes and whether they are actually about service delivery or not. It is understandable that the public is becoming increasingly concerned about the reasons behind the numerous protests that have taken place in South African municipalities in recent years (Allan & Heese, 2011).

Naturally, both violent and nonviolent protests about service delivery are common in South African municipalities. Therefore, protests that involve physical acts that either inflict immediate harm to people or damage physical state property might be characterized as violent (Dassah, 2012:21). According to Mathebula (2014:107), slow service delivery and community protests for basic rights protected by the Bill of Rights in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 1996 are caused by dissatisfaction with municipal performance regarding water and sanitation, electricity, housing, and other basic services.

2.10. CORRUPTION AS A CHALLENGE IN WARD COMMITTEES

According to Mbandlwa, Dorasamy, and Fagbadebo (2020:1644), the South African municipalities have received harsh criticism for their poor management, which has a negative impact on the public's access to services. Large sums of state money disappear without being traced, and public resources are used for personal gain, making fraud and corruption in local government and the public sector in general a major obstacle to good administration. Therefore, it is clear that the public sector does not have a sufficient reporting system to enable effective governance (Smit & Cronje, 2002:192).

Madumo (2012:50) asserts that corruption and maladministration exist in all the spheres of government in particular in the local sphere of government. However, this is also associated with the appointment of a senior administrative workforce, which is often influenced by political affiliation with a particular ruling party in that municipality. Munzhedzi (2016), adds that more often than not, the said corruption ensues during the process of procurement of goods and services. It is either that the prices are inflated, contracts are awarded to friends or family, tenders are not advertised, bid

committees are not properly constituted or that panel members did not declare their interest before the sitting of the adjudication committee.

Klitgaard, Maclean-Abroad and Lindsey-Parris (2000:24–29) remark that successful prevention of corruption requires public officials' discretion to be limited and clarified, monopoly power to be reduced and transparency to be increased. Even though accounting officers (Director Generals in national departments, Heads of Department in provincial administration, and Municipal Managers at the local and district municipalities) are mandated to take effective and appropriate disciplinary steps against any official in the public service institutions who contravenes or fail to comply with provisions of the financial prescripts such as the Public Finance Management Act 1 of 1999 or commit an act that undermines the financial management and internal control system of the department, there seems to be no success.

According to Managa (2012:4), protesters mainly vent their resentment and displeasure at not being included in local government decision-making. A municipality must create a culture of municipal governance that supports formal representative democracy with a system of participatory governance, according to Section 16 (1) of the Local Democracy: Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000. Municipal councils must promote local residents' participation in decisions that directly impact them. As a result of the community members being unaware of any information affecting their lives about service delivery, there will be corrupt acts committed as a result of the deliberate avoidance of this conduct.

Bekker (1996:75) adds that community participation can help turn dependents into independents, turning the poor from passive consumers of services into those services' producers, helping them both economically and socially by participating in governance. Therefore, due to individuals' lack of understanding of local and global political processes, participative democracy is a major difficulty for democratic South Africa. The service delivery marches and protests show unequivocally that South Africa's democratic system makes it difficult to practice participatory democracy, and that this makes local government less developed (Modise, 2017:2).

Butler (2004:119) writes in Piper and Deacon (2008) that when these positive and negative interpretations of ANC dominance are combined, a stark quandary is presented. Both a strong opposition and a dispersion of the liberation struggle are

unaffordable for South Africa, but neither are the effects of further ANC dominance. Yet the longer the ANC remains dominant, both electorally and in the executive, the more harm may be caused by state-party integration, patronage politics, opposition de-legitimization, and the abuse of incumbency (Mabelebele, 2006). South Africa's democracy is not robust enough to cope with fluidity and party system reconstruction because of the need to build sound, legitimate, and trusted institutions. Butler contends that in this situation, the only desirable outcome is an extended period of ANC rule, but with the danger of "a real, but unrealized" electoral defeat.

Butler (2004) notes the trend in international scholarship to emphasize the role of non-electoral mechanisms like ANC pluralism, the market, and civil society to also hold elites accountable, thereby reducing the unresponsive tendencies in a dominant party scenario. This trend is in addition to the Anglo-American emphasis on party competition. In fact, a "collaborative political order, marked by consensus and compromise within and between parties and institutions," headed by "a cohesive tripartite alliance, enjoying sustained and cooperative relations with opposition parties," may be the best scenario for the consolidation of democracy in South Africa (Butler 2004:129).

In addition to this Anglo-American emphasis on party competition, Butler (2004) points to the trend in international scholarship to emphasise the role of non-electoral mechanisms like ANC pluralism, the market, and civil society to also hold elites accountable, thus reducing the unresponsive tendencies in a dominant party scenario (Butler 2004:120). Indeed, the best scenario for the consolidation of democracy in South Africa may be a collaborative political order, marked by consensus and compromise within and between parties and institutions, led by a cohesive tripartite alliance, enjoying sustained and co-operative relations with opposition parties' (Butler 2004:129).

Ward committee politics in the Msunduzi Municipality assuming Butler is correct, what does this mean for ward committees? It suggests that, if they operate as intended, they can help build the kind of constructive, inclusive state-society relation which does nevertheless still act as a brake on local elites, and thus helps democratic consolidation. Moreover, even assuming that Butler is wrong and that what is required for democratic consolidation is a more active opposition to ANC hegemony, then ward

committees still promise something like this in asserting local community or ward interests over party agendas.

The key point is that on either reading, autonomously operating ward committees which advance community rather than party interests, thus holding local elites accountable, would be good for democracy. But do ward committees operate independently from local party branches? Do they affect the quality of local power relations in a way which reduces party competition and encourages greater elite accountability? Or are ward committees little more than an extension of the local party branch and its politics, effectively pursuing a partisan agenda in the name of the local community? The researcher is of the view that there is no independence of ward committees from their local party branches as this study has by coincidence taken place just at the start of the current ward committees and most of the subjects voiced their concern as they say most of the jobs are given to the party members within those communities.

Mdlalose (2016:45) supports this viewpoint by stating that the process for electing ward committees is comparable to that used to elect ward council members. The main issue is how ward committees are made up. The majority of elected ward committee members, if not all of them, typically have political ties to the ward's ruling party. Ward committees are frequently employed in municipalities with multiple political parties represented on the council to advance party political objectives. Concerns raised by Yunus Carrim (2001:4), a former chair of the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Local Government, point in the direction of the latter viewpoint.

2.10.1. Corrupt Practice in Local Sphere of Government

Brown and Mitchell, (2010:584) submit that political corruption is the abuse by politicians and government officials of their power for personal gain. When an appointed political office bearer performs an illegal action for personal gain, it amounts to political corruption and includes bribery, extortion, cronyism, nepotism, patronage, influence peddling, graft and embezzlement (Keightley, 2011). If this high political position's corruption is facilitated by friends who are involved in the procurement of goods and services for government departments, assisting friends with smuggling of drugs and money laundering, though it is not restricted to these activities. Furthermore, Keightley (2011) notes that sometimes it is the misuse of government power for other

purposes, such as the domination of public servants who abuse their positions to provide favours to family, friends and contacts.

2.11. EFFORTS TO COMBAT CORRUPTION

All South Africans who are serious about eliminating corruption in our country will welcome this National Anti-Corruption Strategy 2015. Corruption, wherever it occurs, represents a decline in our value system as a nation. If left unchecked, it poses a grave threat to our democratic values and our dream of being an ethical and developmental state. Corruption is committed by individuals who are driven by greed, who steal from the state, business and civil society resources that are intended to grow the economy, eliminate poverty, and ensure the achievement of development outcomes (Ramaphosa, 2021).

The Anti-Corruption Strategy Framework (2015) will serve as a joint declaration against corruption in any form and herald a resolute commitment to an ethical and accountable state, and clean governance in business and civil society sectors. It will also signal a commitment by those in positions of power to act with integrity, while inculcating a society where citizens are aware of their rights and responsibilities, respect the rule of law and are empowered to hold those in power to account according to the Anti-Corruption Strategy Framework 2015. Furthermore, this framework encapsulates nine strategic pillars, from citizen empowerment and awareness of corruption, to improving transparency and the integrity of the public procurement system as well as strengthening oversight and anti-corruption agencies and improved consequence management (Radebe, 2018).

2.11.1. Prevention and Combating Corruption Activities Act 12 of 2004

The Prevention and Combating of Corrupt Activities Act (PCCA) is one of the government initiatives to combat corruption in both the public and private sectors. This Act is known to be the primary legislation dealing with corruption. The Act was established for the rationality to provide for the strengthening of measures to prevent and combat corruption and corrupt activities, provide for investigation measures in respect of corruption and related corrupt activities, prevent people in South Africa from using corruption to influence members of the public sector of other countries, as well as place a duty on certain persons holding a position of authority to report certain corrupt transactions (Rajin, 2017). The Auditor General's 2021 report still indicates

that there are municipalities which still fail their audits stating that some of the reasons are maladministration and corrupt activities. Merten, (2018:1) supports PCCA as he submits that the local government is in a mess due to the unethical behaviour of local leadership, which focuses on political party battles and failure to hold those responsible for corruption accountable. Communities in many parts of South Africa decided to resolve public service delivery matters through public protests. Local government leadership hardly prioritises issues related to public service delivery and those who are found guilty by the law authorities are not rejected by the ruling party but redeployed to other strategic positions. Section 34 (1) of the Act states clearly that any person in a position of power who knows, or ought reasonably to have known, that another person has committed: (a) corruption or (b) the offences of theft, fraud, extortion, forgery or uttering of a forged document, involving R100 000 or more, must report such knowledge or suspicion.

2.11.2. Protected Disclosure Act 26 of 2000

The Protected Disclosure Act 26 of 2000 originates from the Bill of Rights in the Constitution, 1996 and it makes provision for procedures in terms of which employees in both the public and private sectors disclose information of unlawful and corrupt conduct by their employers or fellow employees are protected from victimization by corrupt municipal officials. The employer is obligated to provide for the protection of employees who discloses information; however, it is inadequate and difficult to use in the police service against corrupt municipal officials. This Act is hardly ever utilized to protect the whistleblowers in the police (South Africa, 2000).

This Act encourages honest employees to raise concerns and report wrongdoing within the workplace without fear of their colleagues. The fear of colleagues is often far greater than the protection that will be given to honest employees. The employees are also afraid that sometimes senior ranking officials are also involved in corruption and therefore they have hardly anyone to trust (Rajin, 2017). Even in a court of law, a copy of the docket be provided to the accused for the preparation of the trial and in this way the names of witnesses are compromised. Naidoo (2013) also agrees that whistle-blowers are unwilling and reluctant to make disclosures because of fear of victimization and harassment by their colleagues. This often happens, regardless of the promises made by employers due to recent amendments which clearly state that

confidentiality must be maintained and the identity of the person to whom disclosure is made as factors to be considered would-be whistleblowers (Rajin, 2017).

However, persistent concerns about the potentially harmful consequences of disclosing information about corruption would appear to be an influential indicator of the reporting behaviour of public servants. Public service officials are afraid to report and expose colleagues for the commission of crimes. The public service policies, regulations, and standing orders create reporting mechanisms for members who witness crime, irregular activities and corruption and who wish to remain anonymous (Rajin, 2017). The Act was enacted to ensure that protection is given to witnesses of crime and corruption by the government through the Department of Justice and Correctional Services. On the contrary, there is a lack of protection for the reporter of corrupt police officials, because corrupt officials often receive the personal information of the witness according to Rajin (2017).

2.12 LEGAL FRAMEWORK SUPPORTING COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

The legal guidelines that allow for public involvement in governmental issues are contained in the legislative framework. In this section of the study, the legal and regulatory framework for community involvement and effective government in South Africa was identified and discussed.

2.12.1. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996

As it mandates the local government institutions to involve the local communities in the policy-making process, the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 serves as the cornerstone of community involvement in local government (Govender & Reddy, 2011:61). Similarly, Maphazi (2012: 10) shared a similar vision with Govender and Reddy (2011:61) that community involvement in local governance is a requirement of the Constitution.

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, states in its preamble that the nation's society would be characterized by democratic principles, social justice and respect for human rights. It is the version of Tau (2013: 157) that the government established independent institutions primarily to enable community consultation on issues pertaining to their well-being. According to Section 152(1) (a) of the Constitution, local government must promote community involvement in local

government concerns and offer democratic and accountable governance. Since most the sources referenced in this study indicate that there is a great deal of mistrust between the government and the communities, it is still necessary and relevant to do a lot to foster community involvement in local government activities.

2.12.2. The White Paper on Local Government, 1998

The White Paper on Local Government, 1998 (WPLG) issued in 1998, is the principal regulation that aims to make local government a democratic and people-centered system. The WPLG 1998 highlights the significance of community involvement and growth in local government and calls for the establishment of a locally focused system of community engagement to address the deficiencies associated with the apartheid regime. IDP is further introduced in the WPLG, 1998. IDP involves stakeholders, individuals, and other societal sectors in development planning holistically and inclusively. IDP contributes in two ways to local government development. It promotes coordinated and sustainable development, to start. Second, it encourages participation from the general population in local development initiatives (Asha & Makalela, 2020).

A newer vision for local government emerged with the publication of the White Paper on Local Government in 1998, and its section on developmental local government advances a vision centred on working with the public on issues that affect them to meet their needs long term and improve the quality of their lives. The WPLG 1998 encourages community involvement and public participation in local government issues, serving as the Constitution. In order to better the quality of citizens' lives, it also encourages local governments to commit to collaborating with residents and community-based organisations to find long-term or sustainable solutions to meet their social, economic and material needs (Mashamaite & Hlongwane, 2015).

2.12.3. The Local Government Municipal Structures Act 117 of 1998

According to the Local Government Municipal Structures Act, 1998 (Act 117 of 1998) (MSA), municipalities must create strategies to consult with and involve the community in local government matters to ensure adequate community participation (Khan et al., 2013:128). Chapter 4 of the MSA, according to Raga and Taylor (2005:141), requires municipalities to increase community participation. In addition, municipalities are required to receive reports, take into account petitions and complaints submitted by

community members, and implement notification and public comment procedures. According to Raga and Taylor (2005:141), Chapter 4 of the Local Government Municipal Structures Act, of 1998, requires the creation of ward committees through a suitable election procedure, to be independently administered by the Independent Electoral Commission. The primary goals of ward committees are to foster public participation in local government issues and to advance good government.

In accordance with sub-section (12) of the Local Government: Municipal Structures Act, 1998 (Act no. 117 of 1998), traditional leaders traditionally uphold a system of customary law in the vicinity of a municipality, and as such, they may permit community members to participate through their traditional leaders to voice their concerns in the proceedings of the council of that municipality. Traditional leaders must be allowed to attend and take part in any meetings held by municipal council before the council decides on anything that affects the sphere of traditional authority. The municipal council must give the traditional figures the authority as well as the opportunity to express their views on the matter.

2.12.4. The Local Government Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000

A municipality must set up the necessary structures, methods, and procedures to allow the local community to engage in the activities of the municipality, according to Section 17 (2) of the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, 2000 (Act 32 of 2000). What it means to have community participation in local government is spelt out in the MSA. Public engagement is covered in Chapter 4 of the MSA, and Section 16 of that chapter calls for municipalities to establish a system of participatory governance to supplement formal representative government. In this regard, municipalities are required to not only establish the necessary framework for public involvement but also to support the development of local communities' capacity for engagement in governance matters and to invest funds yearly to this end.

2.12.5. The Municipal Planning and Performance Regulations, Act 32 of 2000

The Municipal Planning and Performance Management Regulations, 2000 and the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act 2000 (Act 32 of 2000) have a lot in common. The Act mandates that municipalities include their community in the

development, implementation, and assessment of their performance management systems. The community must, in particular, be given the chance to participate in the choice of acceptable key performance indicators and performance targets. Municipalities are also required to establish a forum that will increase community involvement in the development and implementation of their integrated development plans as well as the monitoring, measurement, and evaluation of their performance concerning their key performance indicators and performance targets, as stated in Section 15 of the Municipal Planning and Performance Management Regulations, 2001.

2.12.6. The Draft National Policy Framework for Public Participation

The Draft National Policy Framework for Public Participation (2005:1) defines public participation as an open, accountable process that enables people and groups within selected communities to exchange ideas and have a role in how decisions are made. It continues by defining it as a democratic procedure that entails including people in decision-making, planning, and active engagement in the development and management of services that have an impact on their lives. The term "public involvement" refers to the process through which communities are given the chance to participate in the governance process through consultative procedures, thereby influencing governmental policy, as used in the Draft National Policy Framework for Public engagement. The more informed the community is, the simpler it is for the government to implement community-driven programs and enhance living conditions, particularly in underprivileged communities. According to this framework, the key premises behind public participation are that it is meant to advance the ideas of good governance and human rights.

A component of good governance is how municipalities report on their operations and address issues with service delivery. Municipalities must then make those services available to citizens in a transparent and intelligible manner through efficient communication channels. A human rights issue that influences how effective local government should be for the populations it serves is the provision of basic services. To ensure that these issues are addressed, it is crucial to encourage community involvement. By bridging the social gap between the general public and local

government decision-makers, the Draft National Policy Framework for Public Participation seeks to improve public participation. The Draft National Policy Framework for Public involvement is focused on ensuring that, even while structured involvement is present, it should be meaningful and objective for the benefit of the communities as a whole. This includes the ward participatory system.

Without a policy framework, society's engagement in public affairs would be all but impossible. Community involvement will inevitably be used as the primary enforcers managing the system of local government as long as suitable policies and laws are in place. The legal foundation for local government mandates that municipalities create systems for community consultation. The results of a municipal planning process directly affect the community, making the public community members relevant stakeholders who should be involved in the planning procedures.

2.13. WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

Community participation is the active involvement of people from communities preparing for, or reacting to, disasters. True participation means the involvement of the people concerned in analysis, decision-making, planning, and programme implementation, as well as in all the activities, from search and rescue to reconstruction, that people affected by disasters undertake spontaneously without the involvement of external agencies. While the opportunities for community participation may vary greatly from place to place and at different points in the disaster-management cycle, a participatory approach to disaster-related activities should be promoted to achieve sustainable development.

Health promotion Health promotion was defined in the Ottawa Charter as “the process of enabling people (WHO, 2002). Moloto, Mkhomazi and Worku (2020) posit that people in rural areas in South Africa face a myriad of challenges such as unemployment, low income and poor quality of social services, with President of South Africa Cyril Ramaphosa declaring the state of national disasters on 15 March 2020, the local government had to engage their communities on how to deal and respond to this pandemic at this point the participation of communities was very crucial for their survival especially with the coordination of their respective ward committees.

A collaborative project, according to Malaba (2016), is one where the communities are heavily involved in the decision-making process, but the government is still ultimately

responsible for the choice. Participation is seen as a means of achieving project goals, particularly reduced costs, by external groups. People from the community participate in the effort by forming groups to achieve predetermined objectives. Typically, such participation only happens after external agents have made important judgements. Communities take part in initiatives that provide material incentives by contributing resources like labour, in exchange for food, money and other tangible rewards.

Molaba, (2016) further states that the following methods could help in the participation of communities:

- **Placing:** Changes are made after asking for advice from the local communities.
- **Consultation:** The community is informed about the concerns and asked for feedback, for instance through meetings or surveys; but, it's possible that their opinions won't be taken into account in the decision-making process or that they won't even be informed of this. External actors specify the issues and the methods for acquiring data, and as a result, they manage the analysis. A decision-making share is not conceded in such a consultative approach.
- **Informing:** The community is made aware of the project, for instance by meetings or pamphlets; it may be questioned, albeit it is possible that the response won't be taken into consideration.
- **Therapy:** Community members participate by being informed of decisions made or events that have already occurred. It entails pronouncements made unilaterally by an administration or project management without taking into account the opinions of others.
- **Manipulation:** Participation is merely a presence; for instance, when members of the community serve on official boards without being elected and with no authority, or when the community is given selective information about a project in accordance with predetermined agendas.

2.14. CONCLUSION

Community participation is a corner-stone in any democratic state or country as that is the only way to safe-guard the interest of the people the government seeks to serve, as This initiative is a perfect move by any democratic government to place the participation of its people at the forefront of its programmes the goal itself is far from being archived. This chapter has reviewed some of the topics which play a role in

prompting and regulating such participation from a scholarly and legislative point of view. It has been indicated what is to be done in order for a community to effectively and positively participate in the affairs of their local government through the helping hand of their ward committees chaired by the ward councillor, with regard to this study the focus has only placed the Lepelle-Nkumpi Local Municipality at the centre stage the argumentative information outlined in this chapter has provided a discussion of the theoretical and legislative framework supporting community participation in local government.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The research methods and design that were used to carry out the study are covered in this section. The research paradigm and methodology, area of study, target population, sample procedure, sampling size, data collection techniques, data analysis, and ethical considerations were covered. The results of this study will help all wards in the Lepelle-Nkumpi Local Municipality by educating them on how to effectively consult the community on matters that impact them, which will enhance community engagement and the provision of fundamental services.

3.1. RESEARCH PARADIGM

It is the view of Vosloo (2019: 301) that a paradigm is a fundamental collection of beliefs that serve as a basis for action. It is crucial to the social sciences and is best characterized as an entire system of thought and science. According to Kamal (2019:1389), a research paradigm is made up of a researcher's perceptions, beliefs, and values on how they define the world and how they operate in it.

3.1.1. Pragmatic Research Paradigm

The pragmatic paradigm is the one that encourages a rational epistemology, a non-singular reality ontology and a mixed methods methodology as well as value-laden axiology. This means that in rational epistemology, a relationship in a research study should be decided by what the researcher sees as appropriate for that specific research study. When it comes to non-singular reality ontology, it means that there is a variety of realities and each individual has their interpretation of reality. As far as mixed methods are concerned, this is the combination of both qualitative and quantitative research methods. Value-laden axiology is a research that is beneficial to society at large. Pragmatism is a philosophical and epistemological framework for challenging and evaluating ideas and beliefs in terms of how well they function practically (Kelly & Cordeiro, 2020:3).

One reason for opting to use the pragmatic paradigm is the fact that it does not belong to any philosophical system and reality, and this indicates that the researchers have freedom of choice. Pragmatism claims that the research philosophy must be determined by the research problem (Alghamdi and Li, 2013). Pragmatists contend that the world cannot be interpreted using a single point of view but must be interpreted

using different ways as there are multiple realities. Rehman and Alharthi (2016) claim that pragmatism starts with a problem and aims to contribute to the practical solutions that can be used in the future and it is very concerned about the practical outcomes. There are other valid reasons that a researcher may opt for the pragmatic paradigm.

3.2. RESEARCH DESIGN

According to Babbie (2014:93), the research design is the whole plan of the study that addresses the "why" and "how" questions. The design of this study is a field study. According to Neuman (2011:56), a field study is a type of research design in which the researcher interacts with the respondents while directly observing them and taking notes in a natural environment to collect data. Field research was chosen for this study because it is feasible and allows the researcher to get data from the study's actual location by engaging and directly watching the participants.

3.3. RESEARCH METHOD

Burns and Grove (2013:581) are of the view that the research method is the methodology used in a study that encompasses the design, setting, sample, methodological restrictions, and methods used to gather and analyze data. Dammak (2019:02) defines research methodology as the strategy or plan of action that underpins the application and choice of particular techniques. For this study, the researcher used quantitative and qualitative research techniques using a mixed-methods approach.

3.3.1. Mixed Method Research

According to Creswell and Plano (2011:23), the mixed method is the gathering, analysis, and blending of both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study or series of studies. A mixed method approach, according to Cameron (2011:98), incorporates a qualitative and quantitative dimension but can be difficult to articulate how the two elements relate to one another. Mixed techniques are widely utilized because they help researchers grasp study problems better than either quantitative or qualitative approaches alone. Additionally, research topics that cannot be adequately addressed by a single research method are assisted by the mixed technique.

3.3.1.1. Quantitative research method

According to Bryman (2012:35), quantitative research is a method of data collecting and analysis that places a strong emphasis on quantification. Quantitative research is a type of educational research in which the researcher chooses the topic to investigate, develops targeted research questions, elicits data that can be quantified from participants, uses statistics to analyse the data, and conducts the study impartially and objectively (Edmonds & Kennedy, 2010:4). Because quantitative research methods were developed largely to give data summaries that support generalizations regarding whatever phenomenon is being studied, they were used in this study.

3.3.1.2 Qualitative research method

A qualitative method is a methodical, subjective approach used to describe actual events and conditions to illuminate their relevance (Burns & Grove, 2013: 19). On the other hand, qualitative research, as defined by Holloway and Wheeler (2010:30), is a sort of social inquiry that focuses on how individuals understand and make meaning of their experiences as well as the environment in which they live. This study focused on people's knowledge of these elements as it employed a qualitative technique to analyze people's behaviour, opinions, experiences, and feelings. Additionally, the qualitative approach was used because it places a strong emphasis on stakeholder involvement, reciprocal learning, and experience sharing.

3.4. RESEARCH AREA

A study area is a geographical area for which data is assessed in a report and/or map, according to Du Plessis & Van Niekerk (2014:12). The study was directed by the Lepelle-Nkumpi Local Municipality, one of the local municipalities in the Capricorn District Municipality in the Limpopo province. The city of Polokwane and the Capricorn district municipality are both 55 kilometers to the south of the municipality. The municipality, which has 230 400 residents and occupies 3,454.78 km², or 20.4 per cent of the district's total land area, is primarily rural. The municipality is divided into 29 wards, with Lebowakgomo, one of the Capricorn district's growth points, making up four of them (Lepelle-Nkumpi Local Municipality IDP, 2022).

3.5 STUDY POPULATION

The term "population" alludes, according to Neuman (2011: 224), to an abstract idea of a significant group of multiple examples from which a researcher chooses a sample and to which conclusions from the sample are extrapolated. The entire number of people, groups, things, or events from which a sample is drawn is referred to as the population (Gray 2009: 579). Members of civic organizations, traditional leaders, ward committee members, ward councillors, municipal officials, and community development workers make up the population of the research object. The population, according to Babbie and Mouton (2001:244), is made up of all the analytical units for which the researcher wants to make precise inferences. Four of the 29 wards in the Lepelle-Nkumpi Local Municipality, which has a population of +230 400, was included in the study (Census, 2011).

3.6. SAMPLING

According to Welman et al. (2005:23), a sample is a constrained portion of a statistical population whose characteristics are examined to learn more about the total. A sampling of populations from various sections has provided information for the study. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2009: 186), sampling is choosing units of analysis (such as individuals, groups, objects, and environments) in a way that maximizes the researcher's capacity to respond to the research questions posed in the study. Municipal authorities, community-based organizations, traditional leaders, civic organizations, community members, and ward committee members make up the sampling group for this study

3.6.1 Sampling Method

To choose the study's respondents, the researcher employed non-probability sampling and its subtypes. According to Etikan and Alkassim (2016:4), the term "non-probability sampling method" refers to a collection of sampling strategies that aid researchers in choosing units from a population they are interested in investigating. Sharma (2020:7) goes on to claim that not every item has an equal chance of getting chosen for the sample. Purposive sampling relied heavily on the researcher's assessment of which sources were most helpful in achieving the study's goals. The researcher approached those whom they believed were most likely to possess the needed knowledge and be willing to offer it (Kumar 2014:56). Purposive sampling, according to Strydom

(2011:232), is a method that is dependent on the assessment of elements that comprise the majority of traits, representative or typical qualities of the population that are relevant to the study test. The researcher intends to create a historical reality, explain a phenomenon, and produce something about which little is known, thus this sort of sampling is useful when examining the difficulties of ward committee (Kumar 2014:56).

In this study, Purposive sampling is used to allow the researcher to choose participants based on their distinctive qualities, experiences, attitudes, or perceptions. Selecting sample participants according to a purpose is another way to confirm a criterion. Purposive sampling was chosen because it connected the researcher with participants who could best shed light on how ward committees in the Lepelle-Nkumpi local municipality contribute to community engagement

3.6.2. Sample Size

According to Kumar (2014:58), sample size is a measurement of the total number of samples, measurements, or observations that were used in an experiment or survey. Therefore, the sampled size has comprised of; Municipal officials: Senior management (3), IDP staff (3) LED staff (4), community-based organisation officials (5), traditional leaders (5), and ward committee members (30), civic organisations (5), community development workers (30) and ward councillors (29). The total sample size for this study was therefore be 114, out of the whole simple size 18 were qualitative and remaining 96 quantitative sampled. The data was collected was done concurrently.

3.7. DATA COLLECTION

Data collection is the act of gathering and measuring information on pertinent variables in an organized, systematic method in order to respond to particular research questions, test hypotheses, and evaluate results (Creswell, 2017:201). Sekaran and Bougie (2016:156) define data collection as the process of compiling information from all pertinent sources in order to develop solutions to the research problem, test the hypothesis, and evaluate the findings. A questionnaire and an unstructured interview were employed by the researcher to gather data. Data has been gathered using structured questionnaires and unstructured interviews. This approach enabled the researcher to develop specific questions, derived from the problem statement, to ask the participants in this study (Kothari, 1984:8).

3.7.1. Interviews

Interviews are defined by Babbie (2007: 6) as a data-collecting interaction in which one individual which is the interviewer poses questions to another individual which in this case is the interviewee. The responses from the interviews could then be written down in a notebook and be recorded in a voice recorder. Unstructured interviews were conducted to collect information from municipal officials, civic organisations, traditional leaders and community-based organisation officials. Brynard and Hanekom (1997:30) state that open-ended questions differ from close-ended questions, as they cannot be answered with a simple yes or no, or with a specific piece of information, which allows the respondent to give the information that seems to them to be suitable.

3.7.2. Questionnaires

A questionnaire, according to Burns and Groove (2001: 43), is a list of questions that respondents must answer on a form. According to Babbie (2010:246), questionnaires are written documents with questions intended to elicit relevant data for the study. The questionnaires were used in the first phase of the study to generate data relating to the role of the ward committee in promoting community participation. Questionnaires which are structured with a 5 Likert scale in manner were used to get answers from the respondents. Questionnaires are to be given to, community members, and ward committee members. This is an organized way of getting information that was compared. The questionnaire is one tool for collecting data which makes it easier for the respondents to respond to questions without any pressure (Brynard and Hanekom 1997:31).

3.8. DATA ANALYSIS

Creswell (2017:201) defines data collection as the process of obtaining and evaluating information on variables of interest in an established systematic manner to address stated research questions, test hypotheses, and evaluate results. According to Leedy & Ormrod (2010: 135), the ability to interpret and analyze what they observe is what makes qualitative researchers forceful. The most recent version of International Business Machines: Statistical Product and Service Solution (IBM: SPSS Version 27) was used to analyze the quantitative data acquired using a questionnaire in this study. To evaluate the qualitative information obtained through interviews, thematic analysis

was used. A narrative format was used to present qualitative data in accordance with Creswell's (2005:334) recommended procedures. The following steps are described:

- **Step 1: Planning to record data**

Before gathering data, the researcher should make plans for a better-organized data recording process.

- **Step 2: Gathering Data and Initial Analysis**

In qualitative research, data analysis calls for a two-pronged strategy. The first one entails data analysis at the research location while data is being gathered. The second one includes conducting data analysis off-site.

- **Step 3: Organizing and Managing Data**

The researcher must now organize the data into file folders, index cards, or computer files, which is the first stage of analysis.

- **Step 4: Reading and drafting notes**

The researcher immerses themselves in the specifics after organizing the data to attempt and obtain a sense of the interview as a whole before breaking it down into components.

- **Step 5: Creating categories, themes, and patterns**

This step entails identifying patterns in the study's environment or participants. The researcher looks for categories that exhibit internal convergence and exterior divergence as they emerge.

- **Step 6: Coding the Data**

By carefully and thoroughly noting passages in the data, the researcher must apply a coding strategy to those groups and topics. Codes might be written as numerals, coloured dots, or abbreviations of essential words. The researcher has the option.

- **Step 7: Testing Emergent Understanding**

The researcher starts by assessing the likelihood of his or her understanding and investigates them using the data.

- **Step 8: Investigating Other Possible Reasons**

In this step, the researcher should critically challenge any patterns that seem obvious as they are being revealed in the data. The researcher should look into other hypotheses to explain the data and their connections.

3.9. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethics refers to the branch of knowledge that deals with moral principles. According to (Gebler 2010:1), ethics is the area of philosophy that deals with moral principles that apply to how people behave, particularly with regard to whether a particular action is right or wrong and whether its purposes and motivations are good or bad. Ethics, according to Walliman (2006: 206), are the guidelines for behaviour in research that are intended to cause no harm and provide potential beliefs. Research ethics are the set of ethics that govern how scientific and other research is performed at research institutions such as universities, and how it is disseminated. Research ethics promote the aims of research, such as expanding knowledge and they support the values required for collaborative work, such as mutual respect and fairness. When conducting this research, the following was taken into consideration such as permission, informed consent, presenting results fairly and anonymity.

3.9.1. Permission to conduct the study

The permission letter to conduct a study in the municipality and tribal councils was provided by the University of Venda. The researcher has given the Lepelle-Nkumpi Local Municipality a letter from the University of Venda to ask permission to conduct the study. The Lepelle-Nkumpi Local Municipality and tribal council provided the researcher with a letter granting the researcher permission to carry out the study. The researcher has included the authorization letter from the municipality and tribal council to perform the study as an annexure.

3.9.2. Informed Consent

According to Flick (2014:96), informed consent is the free decision to take part in the study. Research participants have the right to informed consent, which gives them the information they need to make an informed decision. They also have the right to withdraw from the study at any time if they so choose. According to Bless, Hagson-smith, and Kagee (2006:143), the researcher needs time to communicate the study's objectives to participants. The value and goals of the study were outlined in a cover

letter that was given along with the request for responders. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2009:195), it is a prerequisite of the research's code of ethics that participants assent voluntarily and without being exposed to any physical or psychological pressure.

3.9.3. Confidentiality

Confidentiality is the handling of information that a person has disclosed in a relationship of trust with the expectation that it was not disclosed to others without consent in ways that are inconsistent with the understanding of the original disclosure, according to Amdur and Bankert (2010:278). In the report or presentation, the researcher has refrained from attributing compliments to specific participants to identify them. This must be done both directly (if specific compliments are linked to a name or a specific role) and indirectly (by referencing a group of characteristics that may identify an individual or a small group).

3.9.4. Anonymity

Data collected from respondents who are entirely unknown to anyone connected with the survey are considered anonymous (Flick, 2014:76). The researcher has taken steps to ensure that research participants' names are kept totally private and unknown to anybody other than the researcher. The study's participants were told by the researcher that no one else would know their names in the study, so they must not be afraid to give accurate information.

3.9.5. Voluntary Participation

Voluntary participation, in Hart's definition (2013:187), is the exercise of a research subject's free will in selecting whether or not to participate in a research activity. The researcher has informed participants that their participation is entirely voluntary and that they are free to withdraw their consent at any time.

3.9.6. No Harm to Participants

No-Harm is the rule that researchers may not put participants in circumstances where they would be in danger of damage as a result of their involvement (Bankert, 2010:312). The researcher made sure that participants were not put in a position where their participation put them at risk of injury.

According to the principle of "no harm," researchers are not allowed to place participants in situations where their participation puts them at risk of harm (Bankert, 2010:312). The researcher took care to avoid placing participants in situations where their participation put them at risk of harm.

3.9.7. Deception of Information

Deception, according to Bless et al. (2006:144), occurs when the researcher conceals details about the study's genuine purpose from the participants to keep them from changing their natural behaviour. For this study, such an act was not committed because everyone taking part was made aware of the information and how it will be used both during and after the research study is finished.

3.10. CONCLUSION

This chapter described the research design and the sub-divisions namely, descriptive research design and contextual research design. The chapter also presented the research methodologies wherein the researcher selected the mixed collecting and analysing data. This researcher also provided the reasons for mixed methods of collecting and analysing. This chapter also provides the study area which was based on Lepelle-Nkumpi local municipality. Population of the study were traditional leaders, community based organisation, members of the community, ward committees and municipality. This chapter provided the sampling of targeted members who participated in this study. The researcher selected non-probability sampling method and purposive sampling method. The researcher also provides the reason for using these sampling methods, the sampling size of this study was also provided in this chapter.

This chapter further describes the data collection in which the researcher selected both questionnaires and interview questions, the chapter also discusses data analysis which consists of statistical analysis and thematic analysis. Ethical considerations which included permission to conduct the study, informed consent, voluntary participation, confidentiality, anonymity and no harm to participants, were also provided in this chapter.

CHAPTER 4: DATA PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Information about the research methodology utilized to conduct the research investigation was provided in the previous chapter. The research paradigm, research design, research methodology, study area, study population, sampling and sampling method, data collection tools, data analysis, and ethical considerations were all discussed in the previous chapter. The information gathered through surveys and interviews is presented, explained, and examined in this chapter. The information gathered is concentrated on how the Lepelle-Nkumpi Local Municipality's Ward Committee contributes to community engagement. The researcher combined qualitative and quantitative approaches for data collection. With an explanation of the questionnaire replies, the responses of the respondents are visually displayed in tabular form, charts and graphs, and narrative form with an analysis of the outcomes of the interview questions.

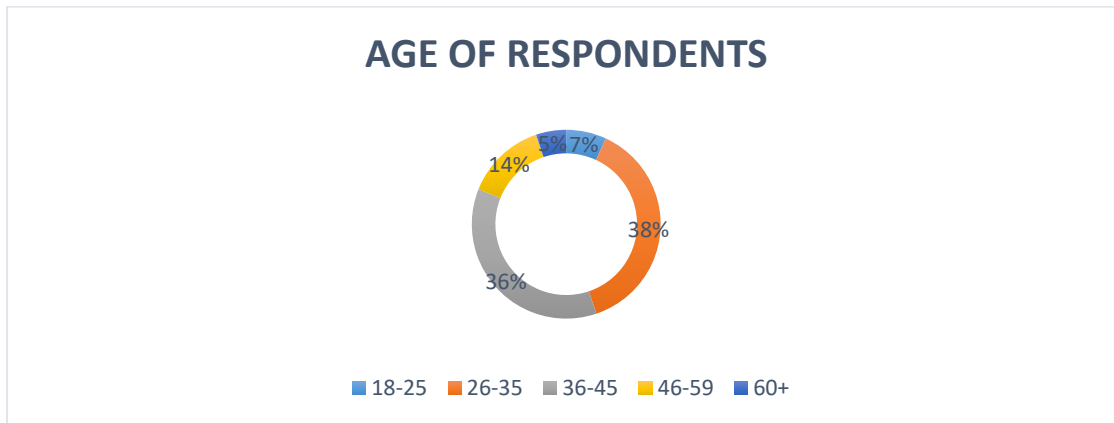
4.2. DATA ANALYSIS BASED ON QUESTIONNAIRE DATA

This section's goal was to present data gathered from questionnaires given to the Municipal senior Management, IDP officials, LED officials, Community-Based Organization (CBO) officials, Ward Committee members, and Traditional Leaders. The data collected via questionnaires were displayed by the researcher in graphical tabular format, frequencies, and percentages. Each graph, chart, and table is followed by a brief description of the findings

4.2.1 Section A: Respondents' Biographical Information

The respondents' biographies are provided in this section. This section's data is displayed graphically with tables, graphs, and charts, and the findings are briefly explained.

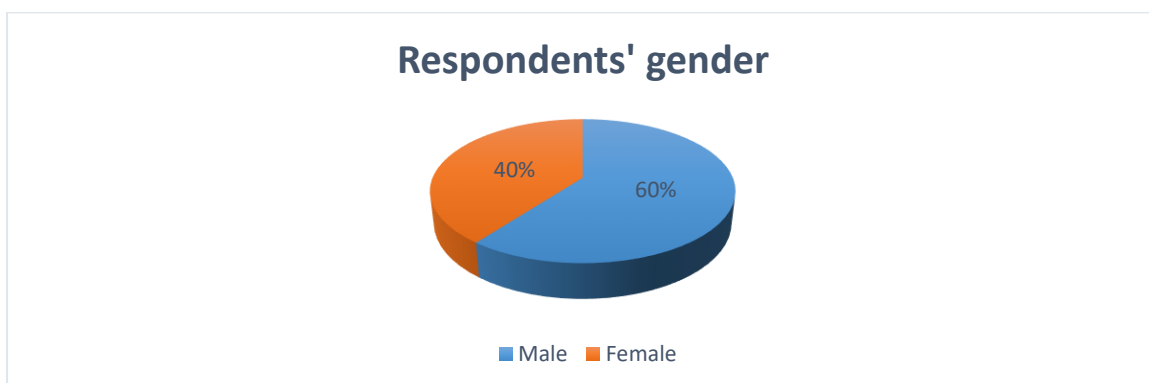
Figure 4.1. The age of respondents (source:author 2023)



Source: Author

For this study, the researcher specifically targeted respondents above the age of 18. Additionally, the researcher did not limit participants in this study to those who were 60 years old or older. Figure 4.1. demonstrates that 4 (7%) of the respondents were between the ages of 18 and 25, 22 (38%) were between the ages of 26 and 35, 21 (36%) were between the ages of 36 and 45, 8 (14%) were between the ages of 46 and 59, and 3 (5%) were between the ages of 60 and above. According to the aforementioned data, respondents between the ages of 26 and 35 made up the majority of survey participants. The fact that younger people are actively participating in municipal programs and maintaining good community participation practices makes a strong case for community involvement in Lepelle-Nkumpi Local Municipality over the long term.

Figure 4.2. Respondents' gender



Source: Author

According to data acquired from Figure 4.2 there were 23 (40%) female respondents and 35 (60%) male respondents that participated in this study. There was a discrepancy in the proportion of male and female participants, with more men taking part than women. This demonstrates how historically underprivileged females are still excluded from the mainstream economy, including research.

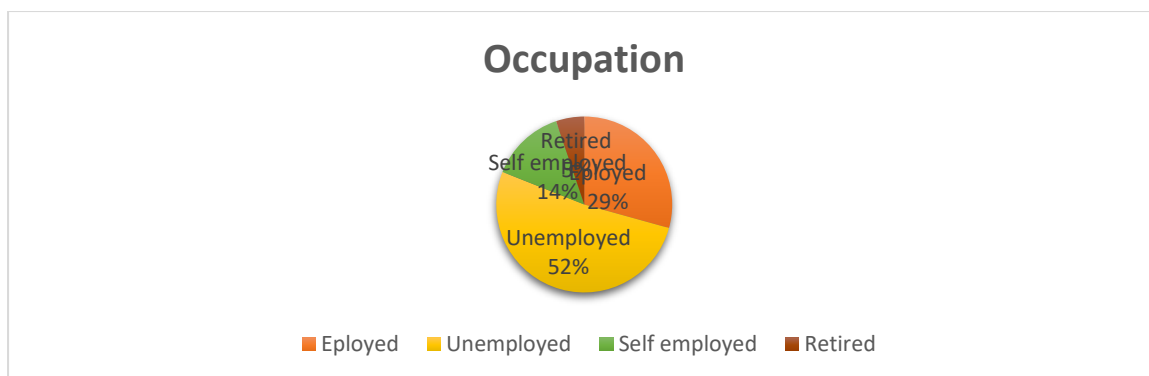
Table 4.1. The educational level of respondents

Educational level	Frequency	Percentage
Grade 1-7	0	0%
Grade 8-12	26	45%
Diploma/ Degree	25	43%
Postgraduate qualification	4	7%
No formal education	3	5%
Total	58	100%

Source: Author

A study of respondents' educational backgrounds is given in Table 4.1. Grades 1-7, Grades 8-12, Diploma/Degree, Postgraduate Qualification, and No Formal Education are the different categories for educational attainment. According to the analysis, 25 (43%) of the respondents who took part in the survey have a diploma or degree; 4 (7%) of them have a postgraduate degree; 26 (45%) of them have finished grades eight through twelve; and 3 (5%) of them have no formal education. Finally, none of the participants in this survey indicated that they had not finished Grades 1 through 7. According to Table 4.1, respondents with a Grade 8-12 outnumbered respondents with diplomas or degrees and postgraduate degrees in the survey. The respondents' educational background significantly affects how opinions and subject-matter knowledge are assessed.

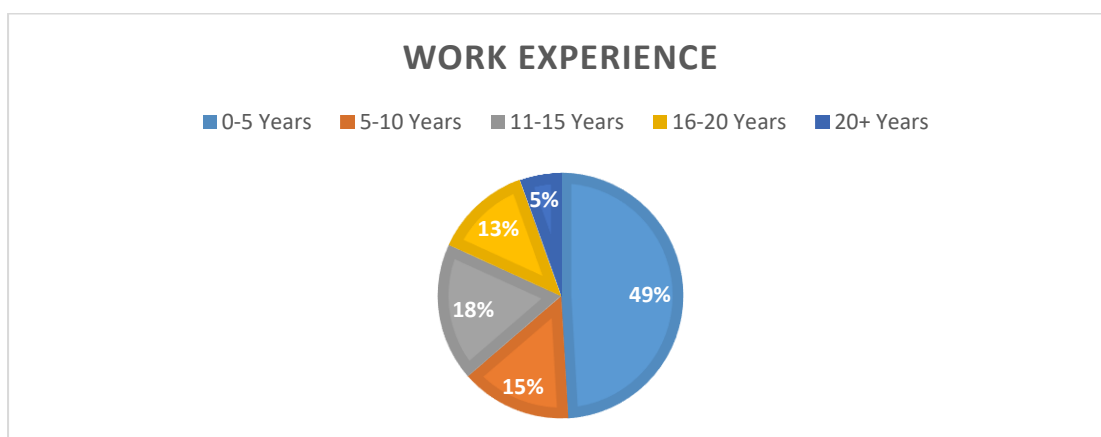
Figure 4.3. Occupational status of respondents



Source: Author

Figure 4.3. shows that 27 (52%) respondents who participated in this study were employed; 20 (29%) of the respondents were self-employed; 8 (14%) of the respondents were self-employed and 3 (5%) of the respondents were retired. This figure indicates that there is a high unemployment among the respondents who had participated in this study.

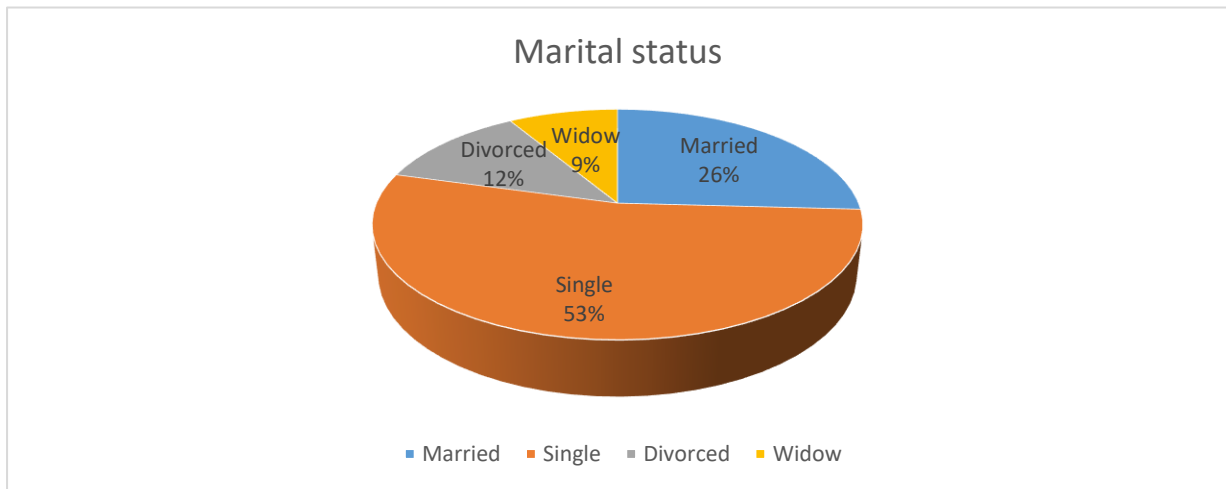
Figure 4.4. Working experiences



Source: Author

Figure 4.4. displays the data on the respondents' professional work experiences. 30 (49%) of the respondents have 0-5 years of work experience, followed by 10 (18%) of the respondents with 7-15 years, 8 (15%) with 5-10 years, 7 (13%) with 16-20 years, and only 3 (5%) with 20 years or more. This figure shows a serious concern as most percentage was of the respondents who had 0-5 years of working experience which this data some hoe supports figure 4.3. in terms of unemployment with the Lepelle-Nkumpi Local Municipality.

Figure 4.5. Marital Status



Source: Author

Figure 4.5, above shows that the majority of the respondents (53%) were single, 15 (26%) of the respondents were married, 7 (12%) of the respondents were divorced and 5 (9%) of the respondents were widows.

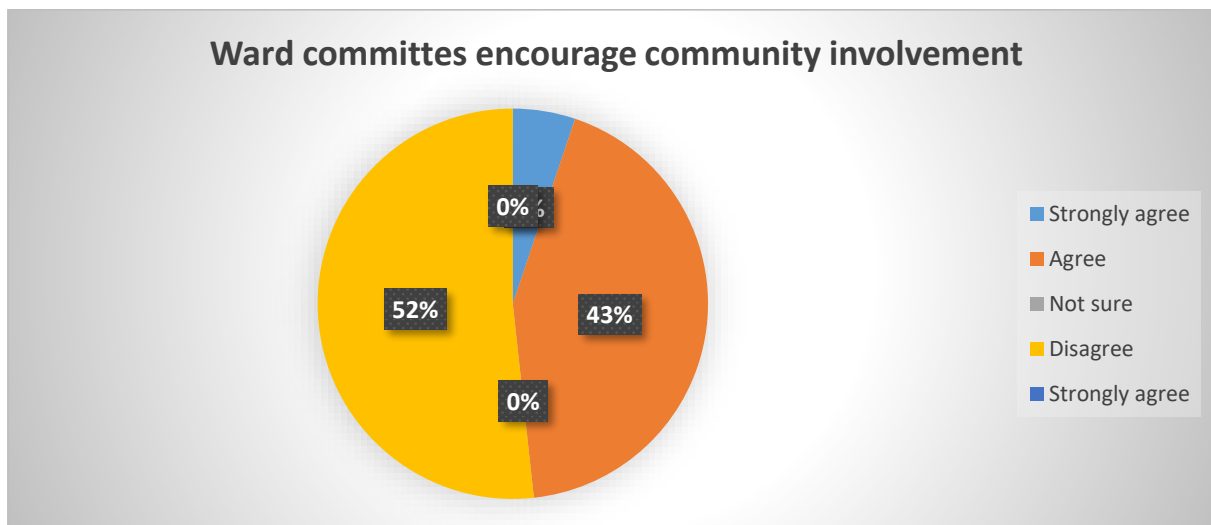
4.3. SECTION B: THE ROLE OF WARD COMMITTEES IN COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

The data in this section is presented in a graphical chart form which was compiled from the questionnaire items. This section is categorized into four, sub-section namely: the ward committees are fulfilling their power and functions within local government, the state of community participation in Lepelle-Nkumpi Local Municipality, the hindrances to the community in the activities of ward committees and recommendations for aiding community participation through ward committees.

4.3.1. The Ward Committees Are Fulfilling Their Power and Functions Within Local Government

The flowing illustrations contain a representation that is collected in addressing a research question that seeks to investigate whether the ward committees are fulfilling their power and functions within local government which includes analysis and interpretations.

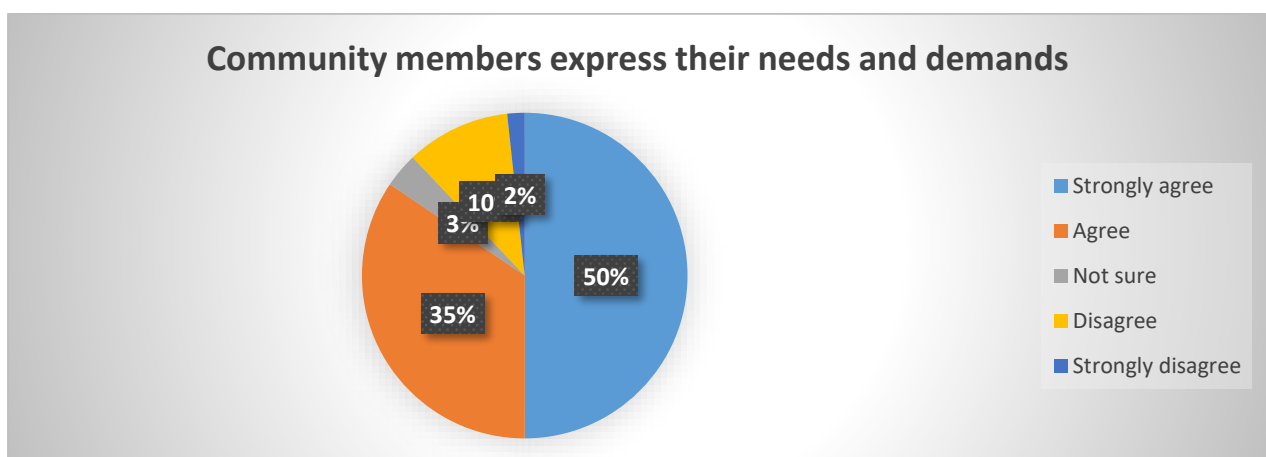
Figure 4.6. Ward committees promote community involvement



Source: Author

Figure 4.6. gives evidence to support the claim that ward committees enhance community involvement in municipal matters. The data shows that the majority of the respondents agree that the ward committees do encourage participation in the municipal affairs when taking in to account the 25 (43%) agreeing and 3 (5%) strongly agreeing. It should also be noted that there is a worrying number of respondents 30 (52%) disagreeing with the notion that the ward committees do encourage the community to participate. The percentage representation is slightly balanced with about 2 percent favouring those who disagree with the question. Looking at the data above and the follow-up interviews, it can be concluded with respect to the interviews that ward committees don't encourage community members to participate.

Figure 4.7. Community members express their needs and demands

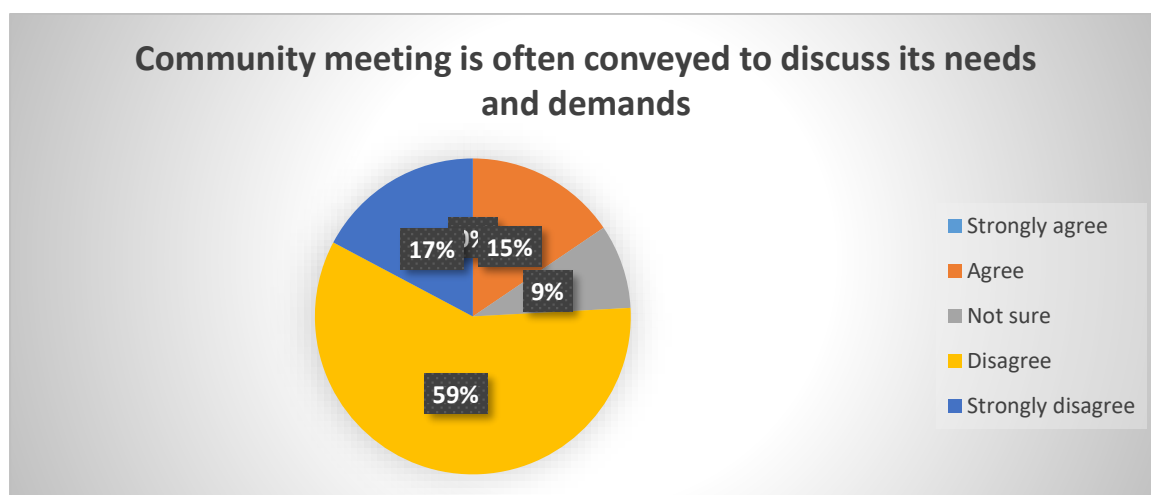


Source: Author

Figure 4.7. Present data on the statement: community members express their needs and demands; the data shows that when the opportunity is given the majority of respondents 29 (50%) strongly agreed and 20 (35%) agreed that they do express their needs and demands to the Lepelle-Nkumpi local municipality. While the data does also indicate that 6 (10%) of the respondents disagree, 2 (3%) of respondents are not sure and 1 (2%) of the respondents strongly disagree.

The percentage representation shows that the majority of participants agree that community members do express their needs and wants see Managa (2012) in chapter 2.

Figure 4.8. Community members are often conveyed to discuss its needs and demands



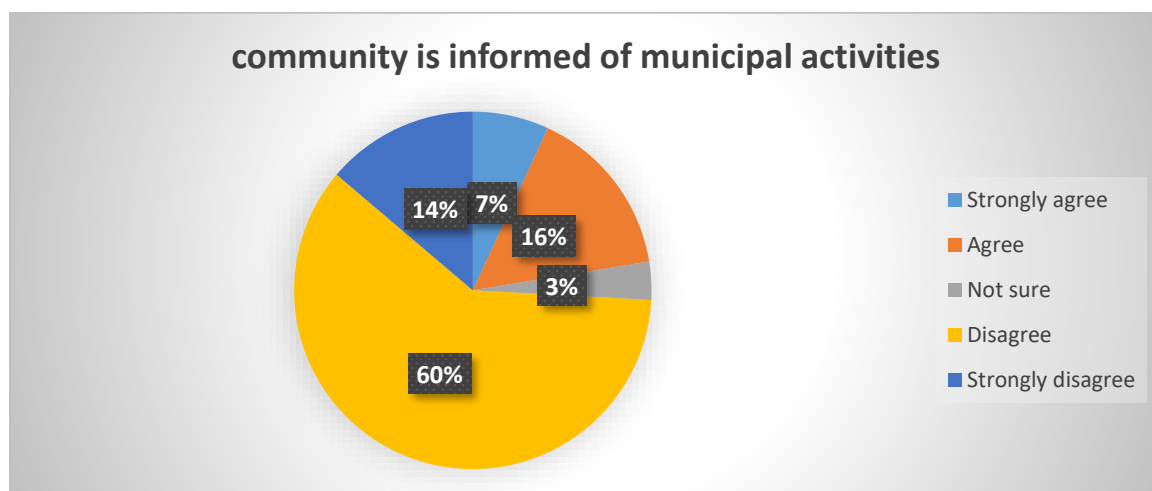
Source: Author

According to Figure 4.8 of data collected on the claim that community meetings are frequently held to discuss needs and demands, 34 respondents (59%) disagreed with the claim, and 10 respondents (17%) strongly disagreed. Therefore, it can be deduced that they are not enough meetings needed to discuss affairs affecting their respective communities. There is a positive incline with 9 (15%) of the respondents agreeing that such meetings do occur while 5 (9%) of the respondents were not sure. 9 per cent of the respondents were not sure when responding to the question that indicates there

is a problem in the way the communities are fed information about meetings called for them to participate.

59 percent of the participants disagreed showing that the meetings which are needed for community engagement are not held as this number has a good representative margin to can allow a conclusion that meetings which are crucial for addressing the needs of the community. To validate the findings above Karamoko (2011), stated that during public mass action protests, communities frequently mention that, although poor service delivery is the main source of rage, this is made worse by government officials' lack of accountability as well as the lack of opportunities for the general public to participate in the planning processes.

Figure 4.9. The community is informed of the municipality's activities.



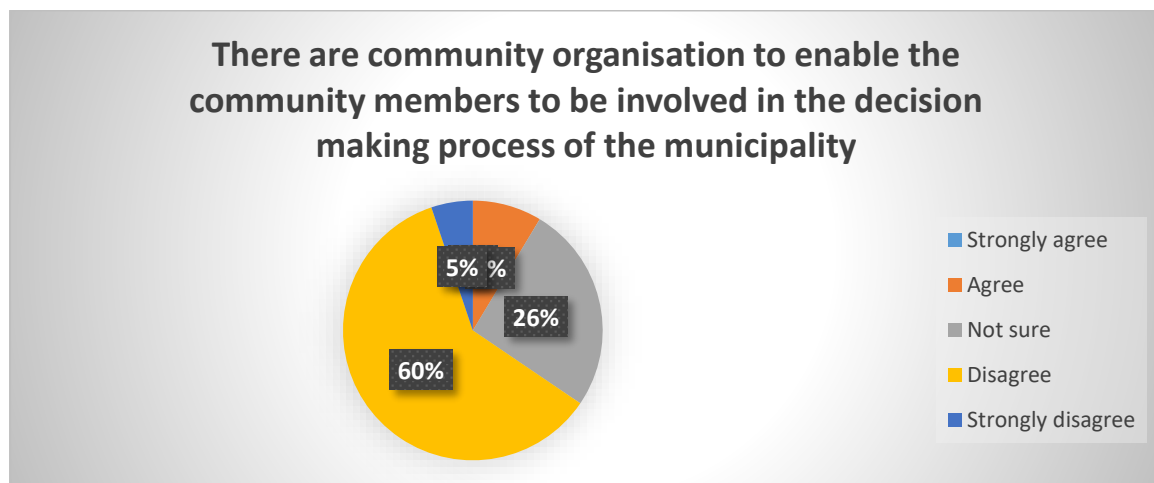
Source: Author

According to Figure 4.9 data gathered from respondents on the question of whether or not communities are informed about the activities of the municipality, most respondents 35 (60%) disagreed with the statement, with 8 (14%) of them strongly disagreeing. 9 (16%) of the respondents agreed with the statement, 4 (3%) of the respondents strongly agreed, and 2 (3%) of the respondents were not sure. The data indicates that there is a serious miscommunication of information from the municipality to the community. In McKenzie and Mostafa (2017:5), they clearly indicates that individuals should be involved in a project from the beginning to the finish. It would eliminate a lot of problems where communities are only solicited for their comments

on project proposals that have already been produced or their contributions only during the project/programme implementation. The absence of that input causes high percentage of participant disagreeing.

With 60 per cent of participants disagreeing, it brings a just conclusion that the municipality does not bring communities into confidence by sharing with them information through relevant methods and structures in a way that the people are made aware of what is happening in their local municipality. 16 percent of respondents show that there is an available method in which communication occurs, yet most of the population does not have access to but just a minority of people do.

Figure 4.10. There are community organisations to enable the community members to be involved in the decision-making process of the municipality



Source: Author

Figure 4.10. Presents data from respondents who had participated in this study on the statement that there is a community organisation to enable the community members to be involved in the decision-making process of the municipality. 35 (60%) of the respondents disagreed that they are a community organisation that enable community members to be part in the decision-making process of the municipality. 3 (5%) of the respondents strongly disagreed, while 15 (26%) of the respondents were not sure of the organisations stated in the statement and 5 (9%) of the respondents are aware of such organisations in their communities.

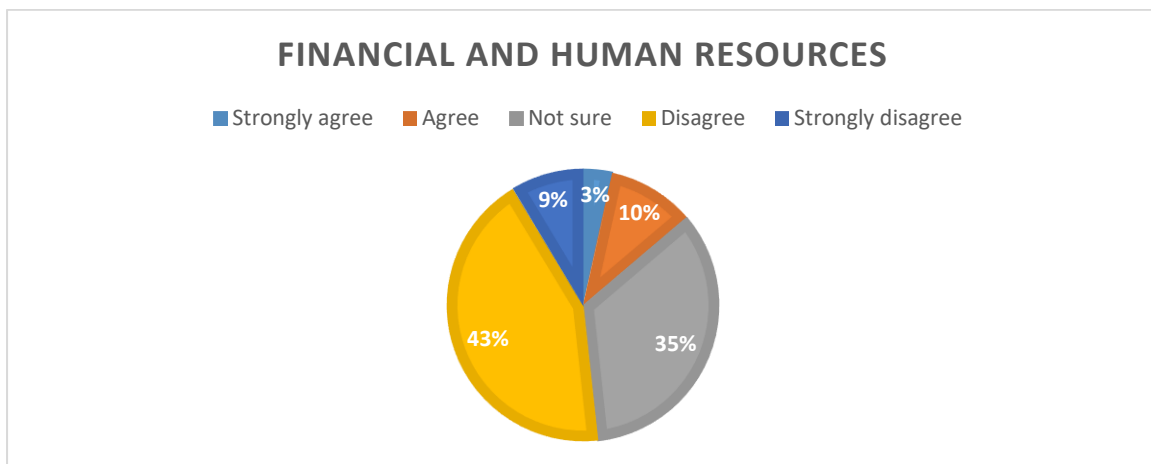
Mamokhere (2006) affirms the input that 60 per cent is a large number to accept when putting in mind the importance of community-based organisations as a stakeholder in

ensuring profitable participation as that will affect the interest of specific groups which seek to put forward the needs of those whom they advocate for, put the rest of the representative percentage into perspective the data shows the is a very serious need for community-based organisations.

4.2.2. The State of Community Participation in Lepelle-Nkumpi Local Municipality

The following illustration contains data representation that are collected in addressing a research question that seeks to investigate the state of community participation in local government which includes analysis and interpretations of such information.

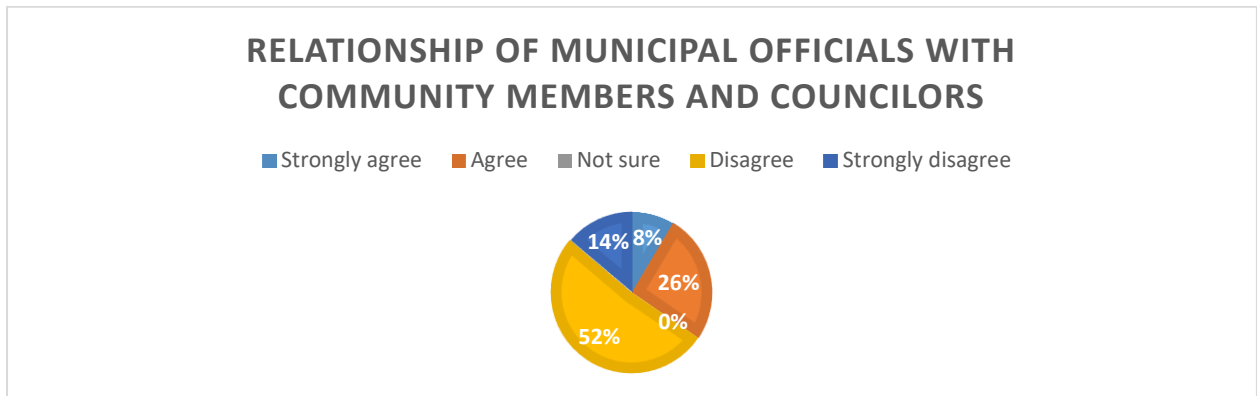
Figure 4.11. Municipality’s financial and human resources for community participation



Source: Author

Figure 4.11. Presents information on the statement municipality has financial and human resources to facilitate community engagement. 25 (43%) of the respondents disagreed with the statement asked of them, 20 (35%) of the respondents were not sure, 5 (9%) of the respondents strongly disagreed, 6 (10%) of the respondents agreed and 2 (3%) of the respondents strongly agreed with the stated assertion. The data indicates that the majority of respondents who participated in this study have no faith that the municipality has both financial and human resources to enable community participation.

Figure 4.12. Municipal officials have good relationships with community members and councillors

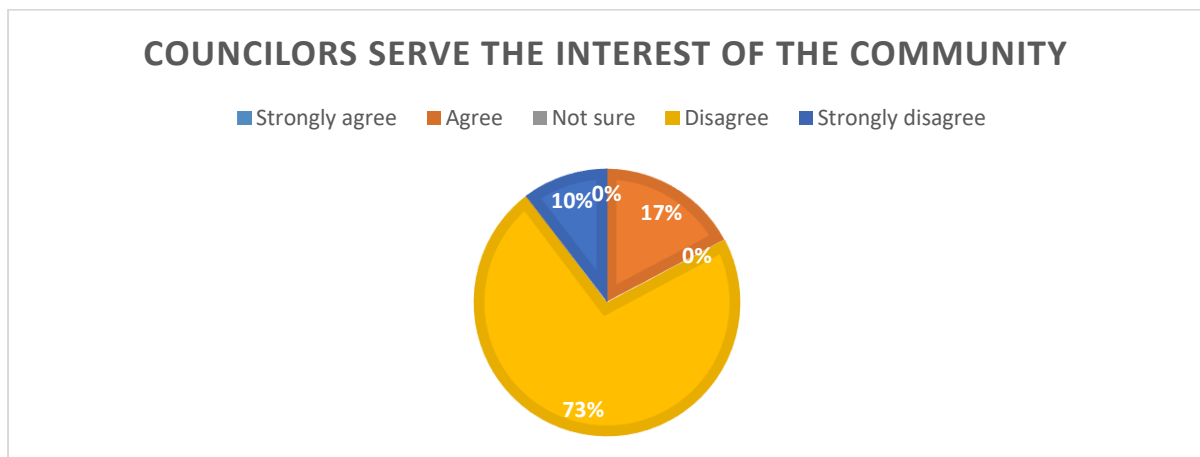


Source: Author

Figure 4.12. Presents data captured through the respondents who participated in this study on the statement municipal officials have a good relationship with community members and councillors. 30 (52%) of the respondents disagree that there is a good relationship between community members and councillors with 8 (14%) of the respondents strongly disagreed. The chart does show that 15 (26%) of the respondents agree with the statement with 5 (8%) of the respondents strongly agreeing. In the follow-up interviews, Respondent I supported the outrages number of participants who disagreed with the posed question by submitting that there is no absolute proper consultation of the traditional leader by their local government officials and ward councillors before any development is done in our area.

Meetings are crucial for a good relationship between the community members and the local municipality. The remaining percentage which represents those who agreed to the statement is validated by Respondent F when saying that community participation is below satisfactory. This is so because members of the community do not always come out in numbers when the municipality invites them to community meetings.

Figure 4.13. Councillors serve the interest of the community

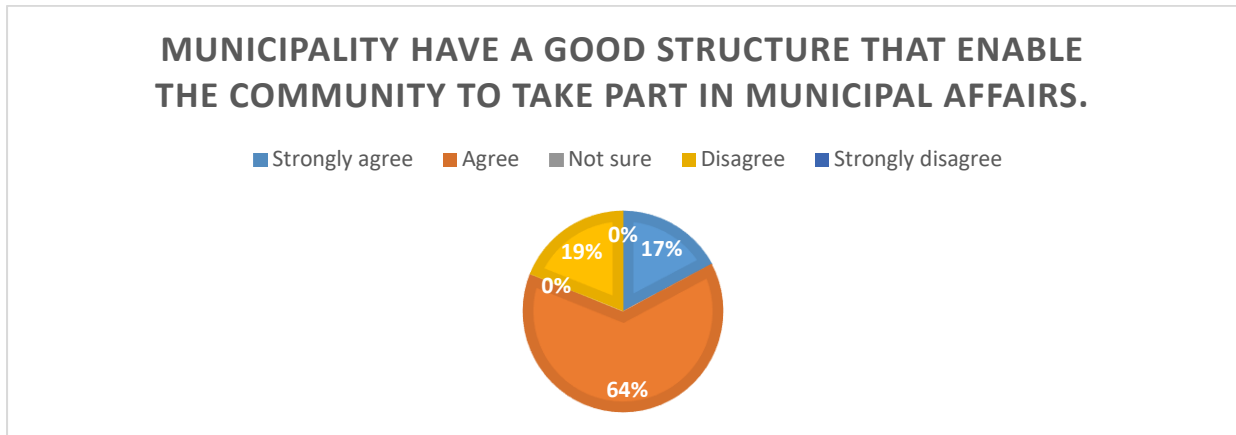


Source: Author

Figure 4.13. Indicates data collected from the respondents who participated in this study on the statement councillors serve the interest of the community. There is undoubtedly a high number of respondents 42 (73%) who disagree that councillors serve the interest of the community, adding to that with 6 (10%) strongly disagreeing. 10 (17%) of the respondents did agree that councillors serve the interest of the community. The percentage distribution in this figure shows a serious concern with the conduct of the councillors under the Lepelle-Nkumpi Local Municipality. Marks and Erwin (2016) clarify figure 4.13. by submitting that senior party politicians in local government are almost always elected by party list rather than by the ward, which means that the key political players, particularly those who sit on the municipal executive, do not have ward committees. Ward committees, in effect, are a participation mandate imposed on disempowered politicians.

It is very worrying to see such a large representation of participants who disagree with the posed statement when the sole purpose of a councillor is to serve the interest of the community to the best of their ability. Respondent D shares that it is difficult to get hold of officials to get help from them.

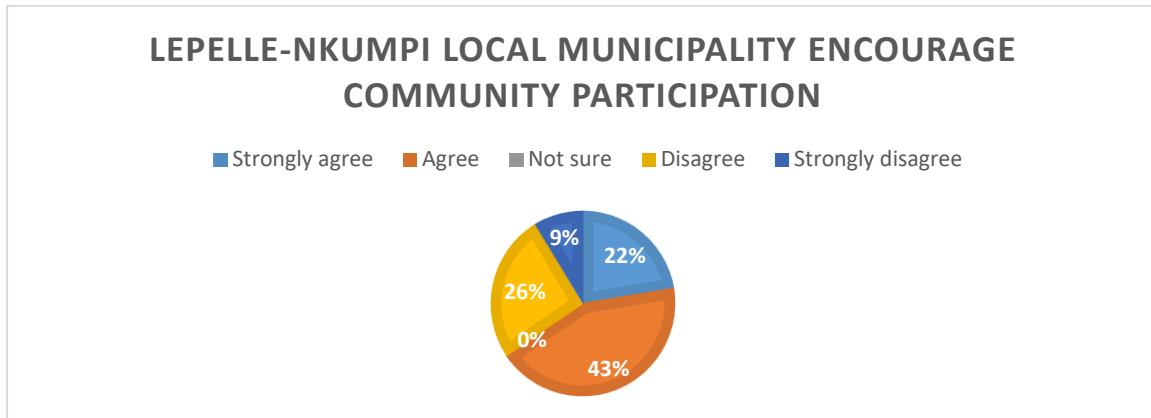
Figure 4.14. Municipality have a good structure that enables the community to take part in municipal affairs.



Source: Author

Figure 4.14. Presents data collected from respondents who took part in this study on the statement Municipality have a good structure that enables the community to take part in municipal affairs. 37 (64%) of the respondents agreed that the municipality does have a good structure to enable the community to take part in municipal affairs, with 10 (17%) of the respondents strongly agreeing to the questionnaire posed to them while there is 11 (19%) of the respondents disagreeing. The data shows that there is a majority of respondents who indicate that the municipality does have a good structure to enable the community to partake in the affairs of the municipality. 64 percent can be validated by the availability of schools within the communities that can hold community engagements therefore the argument of a need for community hall collapses.

Figure 4.15. The Lepelle-Nkumpi Local Municipality encourages community participation



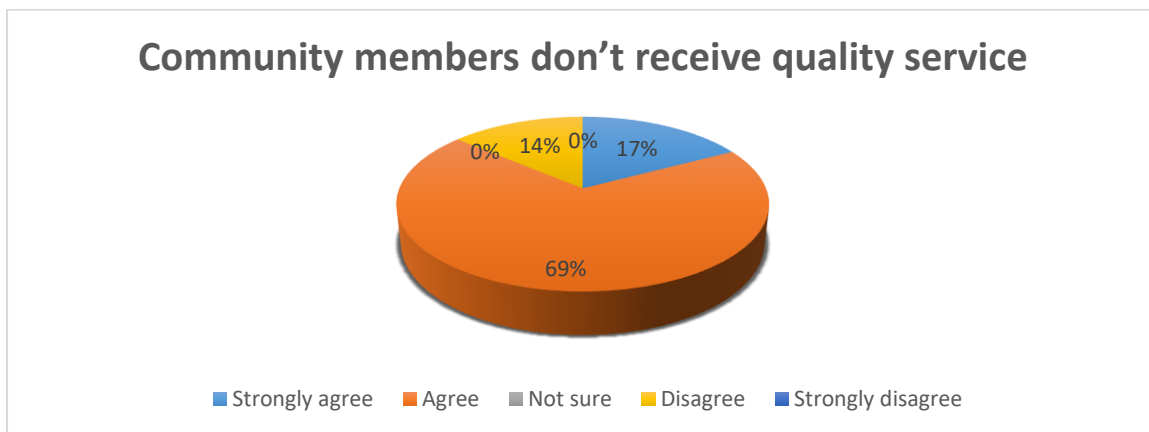
Source: Author

Figure 4.15. Presents data from respondents in this study of who 25 (43%) of them agreeing that the Lepelle-Nkumpi Local Municipality does encourage community participation with an additional 13 (22%) strongly agreeing to the statement. The data also indicate that 15 (26%) of respondents disagreeing with the statement with 5 (9%) strongly disagreeing. It can be concluded from the data provided in this figure that the municipality does encourage community participation. The proportion of the percentage that represents those who disagree through the comment of Respondent F in raising a concern that political interests cause hindrances because when ward committee members differ politically, they are unable to perform their duties. This will limit the movement of crucial information between the community and the municipality. The majority of the participants agree with the statement meaning that the the Lepelle-Nkumpi Local Municipality does ensure that people are encouraged to participate.

4.2.3. The Hindrances to Community in The Activities of Ward Committees

The flowing illustrations contain a representation that is collected in addressing a research question that seeks to investigate the hindrances to community in activities which includes analysis and interpretations.

Figure 4.16. Community members don't receive quality service



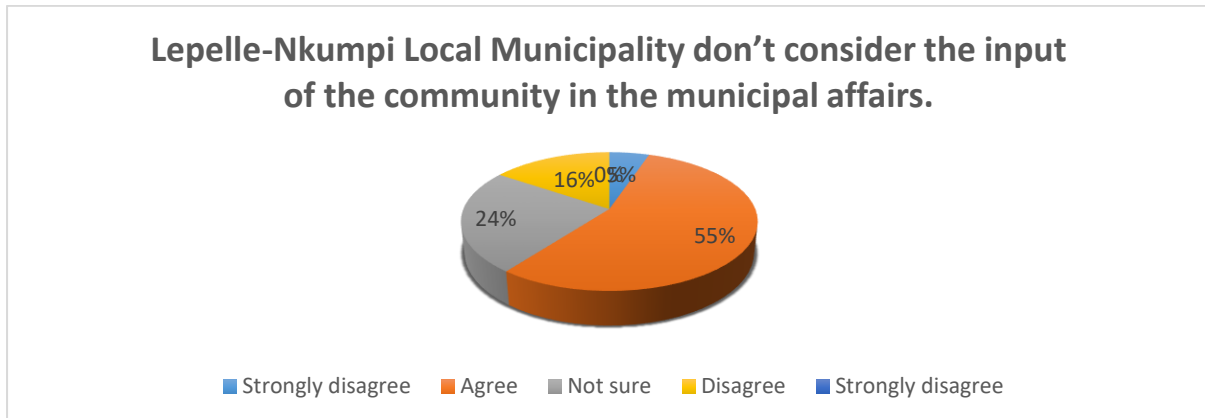
Source: Author

Figure 4.16. Presents data on the statement given to respondents who took part in this study, 40 (69%) of those respondents agreed that community members don't receive quality service, with 10 (17%) of the respondents strongly agreeing and merely 8 (14%) of respondents disagreed. The data shows that there is a highly alarming issue when it comes to the services rendered to the community.

Respondent H states that ward committees are not trained to deal with community participation, the also not enough resources available for ward committees to perform their duties. Which in turn suffocates the quality of service delivery received by the communities. Respondent C highlights the issue of not having a skilled facilitator, this can have an impact on the service delivered as it might not suit the needs of that community. 14 per cent of the participants disagreed stating that community members don't view quality service delivery in the same manner.

Respondent E supports this finding by stating that *"they don't normally deliver what they promised the community"*. This statement may show that the quality of a service is determined by the levels at which it addresses the needs of an affected community and its members.

Figure 4.17. Lepelle-Nkumpi Local Municipality doesn't consider the input of the community in municipal affairs.

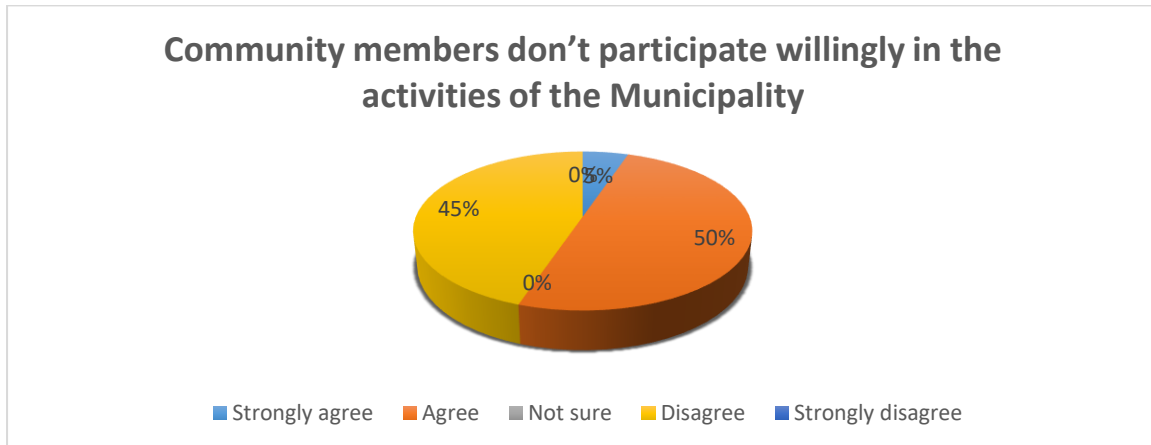


Source: Author

Figure 4.17. presents data taken from respondents who took part in this study on the statement that the Lepelle-Nkumpi Local Municipality doesn't consider the input of the community in the municipal affairs, out of all the respondents who took part 9 (16%) of respondents disagreed, 14 (24%) of respondents were not sure, 32 (55%) of respondents agreed to the statement while 3 (5%) strongly agreeing. The majority of participants agreed but this shows a worrying concern as there is an indication that ward committees do not relay information to communities. All ward committees currently do is amplify the voice of ward councillors at monthly council meetings, confirming that communities believe municipal decisions do not adequately respond to the needs and values of the communities, particularly the poor and disadvantaged sectors; to the extent that planning, including budgets and IDPs, are not reflective of community needs (Madzivhandila and Maloka, 2014).

In a follow-up interview, Respondent G said that when there are infightings between the ward councillors and the ward committee when the councillor doesn't share information. By that submission, it can be argued that this will have a direct negative impact on the input made by community members to the municipality.

Figure 4.18. Community members don't participate willingly in the activities of the Municipality

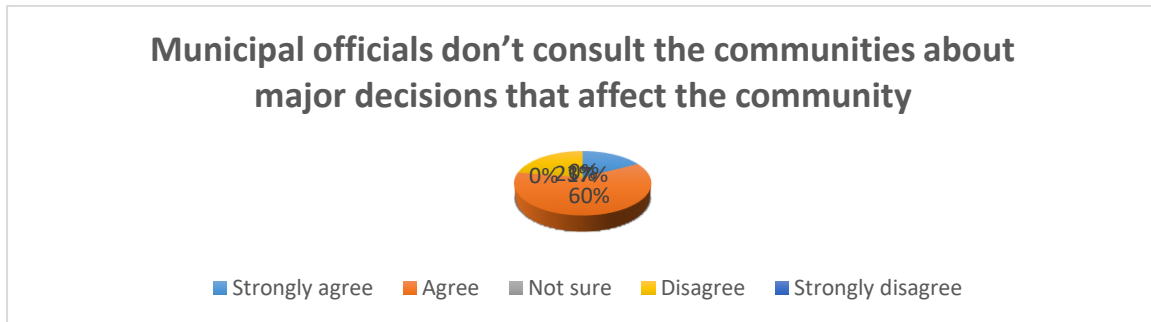


Source: Author

Figure 4.18. Presents data on a statement given to respondents who took part in this study, 29 (50%) of the respondents agreed that community members don't participate willingly in the activity of the municipality, and 3 (5%) of those respondents strongly agreed. There is a significant 26 (45%) of respondents who disagreed with the statement. The data shows that the community needs to be persuaded to participate in activities occurring in their municipality. See (Mashamaite and Hlongwane, 2015).

It is problematic that for the people to participate in their affairs some are forced to do so by someone or a party because that has a bad view and impact negatively harshly on overall on the development and service delivery of communities within Lepelle-Nkumpi Local municipality. 45 per cent of participants disagreeing is a large number to ignore as it could highlight conflicts ranging from politics to maladministration which will have to affect the community participation. One of the respondents in the interviews conducted in this study said that the ward committees are more politically influenced and that affects the needs of the communities.

Figure 4.19. Municipal officials don't consult the communities about major decisions that affect them

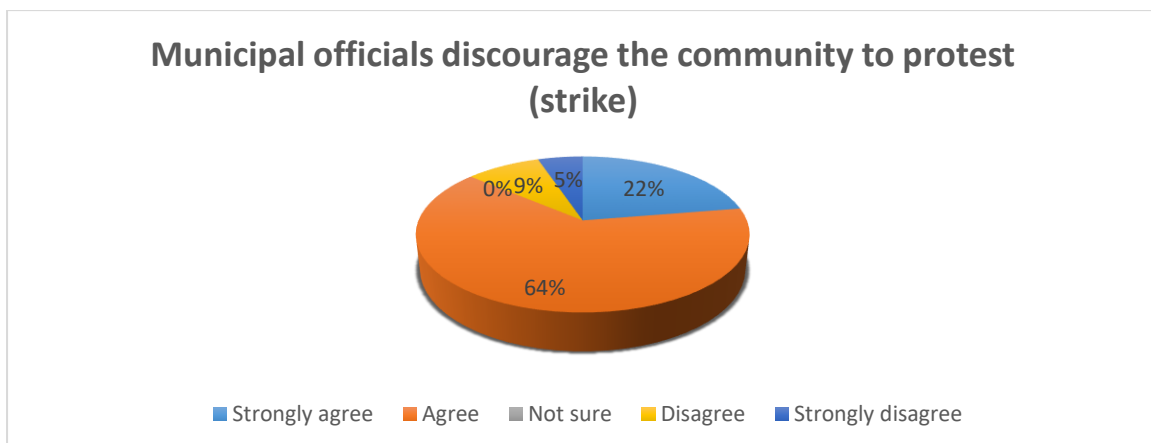


Source: Author

Figure 4.19. Presents data on the statement municipal officials don't consult the communities about major decisions that affairs from the respondents who took part in this study. 35 (60%) of the respondents agreed to the statement with 10 (17%) of the respondents strongly agreeing while only 11 (23%) of the respondents disagreed with the statement. The data shows that there is a serious concern when it comes to the communication between the communities and the municipal officials.

There is a serious need for the municipality to rearrange how it interacts with communities. This says a lot about the need for training concerning communities for municipal officials. 77 per cent of participants agreeing to the posed question clearly shows that the communication processes have totally broken down which doesn't assist municipal communities, especially concerning relaying their concerns to the municipality.

Figure 4.20. Municipal officials discourage the community to protest (strike)



Source: Author

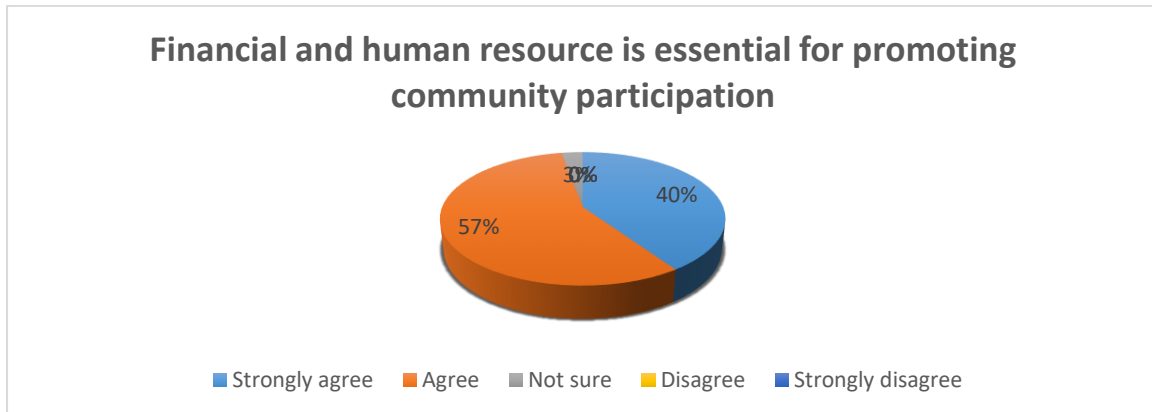
Figure 4.20. Presents data on a statement municipal official discourage the community from protesting (strike), 37 (64%) of the respondents agreed that the municipal officials do discourage protest, with 13 (22%) of the respondents strongly agreeing and only 5 (9%) of the respondents disagreeing while 3 (5%) of the respondents strongly disagreeing. It can be stated that from the data taken from this figure municipal officials do try their best to discourage communities to not engaging in strike protests. Karamoko (2011), points that the protests are self inflicted by submitting that during public mass action protests, communities frequently mention that, although poor service delivery is the main source of rage, this is made worse by government officials' lack of accountability as well as the lack of opportunities for the general public to participate in the planning processes.

Taking into account data collected in Figure 4.19, it would justify why 90 per cent of the respondents agreeing that the municipality discouraging protests. It is very important to note that section 17 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 protects the rights to freedom of assembly and protest therefore such should not be done in a manner that infringes the rights of the community members. However, strikes are mostly accompanied by violence accompanied by the destruction of public property and a setback in-service delivery.

4.2.4. Recommendations For Aiding Community Participation Through Ward Committees

The following illustrations contain a representation that are collected in addressing a research question that seeks to investigate whether the ward committees are fulfilling their power and functions within local government which includes analysis and interpretations.

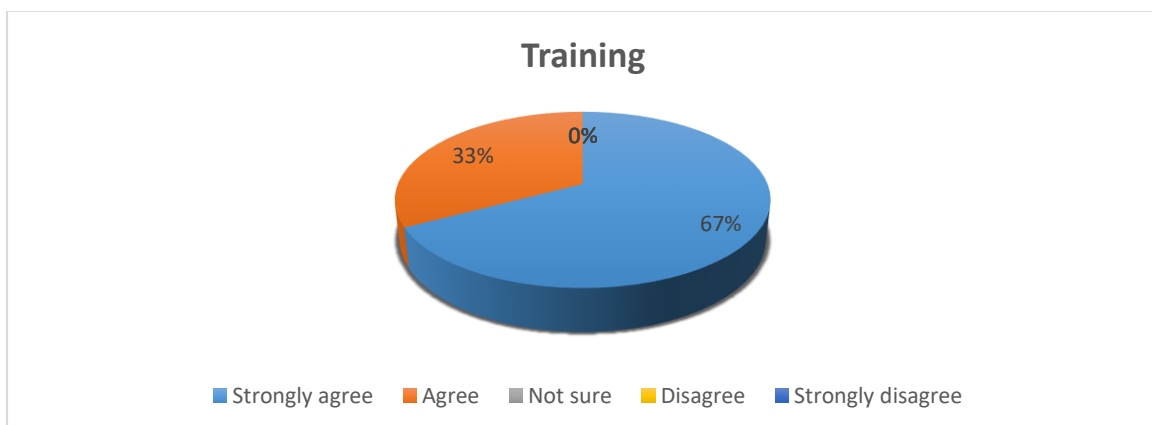
Figure 4.21. Financial and human resource is essential for promoting community participation



Source: Author

Figure 4.21. Presents data findings on the statement of financial and human resources that are essential for promoting community participation. 20 (40%) of the respondents strongly agreed, 28 (57%) of the respondents agreeing and only 10 (3) were not sure. There is a need when looking at the data that financial and human capabilities are very important in advancing community participation in the municipality. There must be an initiative from the municipality to train its workforce to be competent including those who seek to volunteer for service rendering by doing so it will increase the capacity and capabilities of municipal human resource.

Figure 4.22. Training of councillors and municipal officials



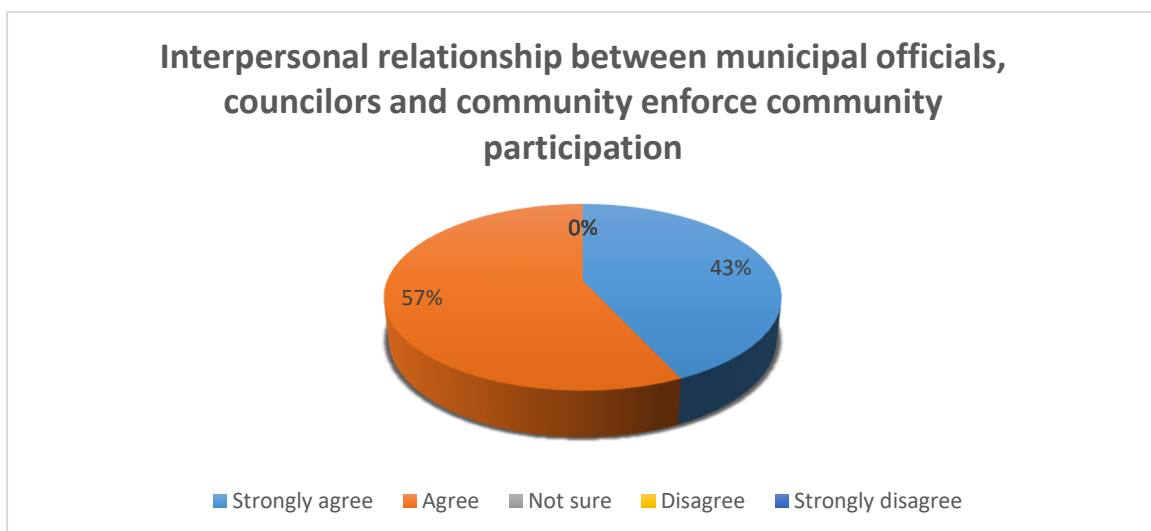
Source: Author

Figure 4.22. Presents data collected from the statement of the training of councillors and municipal officials before performing their tasks is essential, 39 (67%) of the

respondents strongly agreed with the statement with 19 (33%) agreeing. The data does indicate a united front around the posed statements as all the respondents acknowledge the need for trained individuals in service of the community be councilors or municipal officials, this is supported by Mbandlwa (2021) in stating that most ward councillor candidates that are contesting the local government elections in elections in South Africa do not have developmental ideas. Those who are nominated and contesting the elections do not have a track record of developing their communities, but they are nominated based on their popularity.

Figure 4.19. and 4.20. Supports the data represented in this figure as communication and financial resources would play a part in what the participants are showing through this collected data.

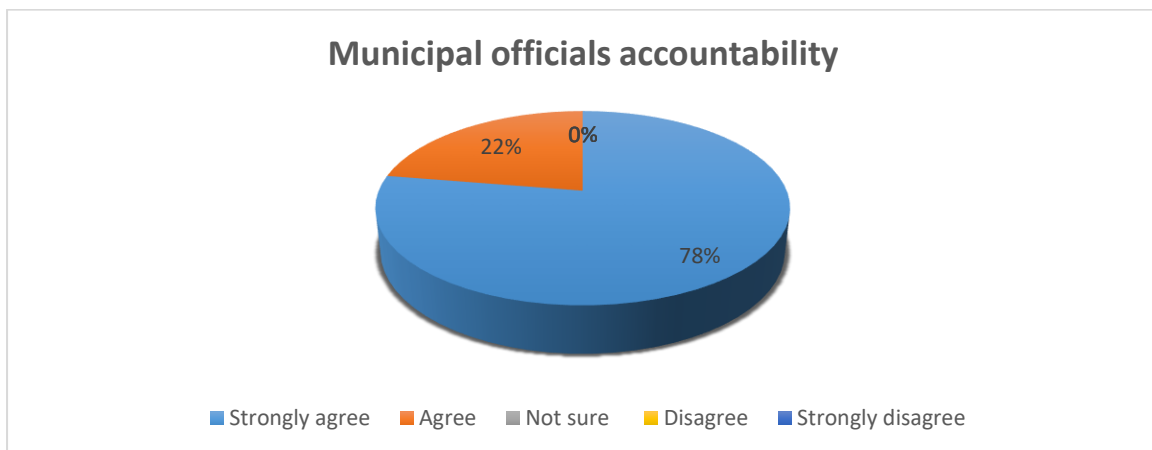
Figure 4.23. Interpersonal relationship between municipal officials, councillors and the community enforces community participation



Source: Author

Figure 4.23. Presents data gathered on the statement interpersonal relationships between municipal officials, councillors and community enforces community participation. 25 (43%) of the respondents strongly agreed while 33 (57%) agreed to the statement. Taking from the presented data if communication becomes at the centre, there will be a productive effort to ensure community participation.

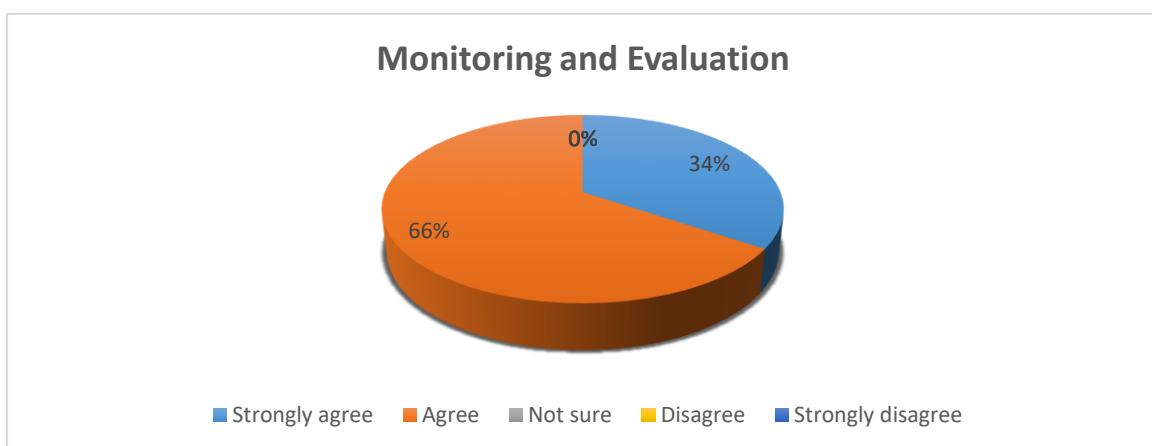
Figure 4.24. Holding municipal officials accountable



Source: Author

Figure 4.24. presents information on the assertion that it is crucial to hold municipal authorities accountable to the local community, which was put to the study's respondents. 13 (22%) of the respondents agreed to the statement, while 45 (78%) of the respondents strongly agreed. The data shows that municipal residents are interested in having individuals who will have transparency and accountability when the community need answers on the affairs of the municipality. In essence, any democratic society seeks to hold those it has entrusted with resources to account for what they do.

Figure 4.25. Mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation assist the municipality in achieving its goals and plans



Source: Author

Figure. 4.25. shows the respondents who took part in this study were asked about the assertion that monitoring and evaluation systems help the municipality achieve its goals and plans. 38 (66%) of the respondents agreed with the statement, with 20 (34%) of the respondents strongly agreed. The data provides a view that for a better realization of the set objectives of the municipality, the respondents have a unified stand that there must be ways that ensure that the decisions taken are fully implemented.

4.3 ANALYSIS OF DATA COLLECTED THROUGH INTERVIEWS

This section contains data obtained through interviews with Traditional Leaders, Community-Based Organisations, Municipal Managers, and LED and IDP staff. The interview was structured in the following way, section F: Community Based Organisation, section G: Municipal Managers, section H: LED staff, section I: was IDP staff and lastly section J: Traditional Leadership which all consisted of four questions each. To ensure anonymity the respondents who took part in this section will be referred to in alphabetical order e.g. Respondent A.

Section F: Community-Based Organisations

1. Do ward committees fulfil their powers and functions within local government?

Respondent A

Not all of them.

Respondent B

Yes, they conduct household visits monthly to consolidate community needs and submit them for discussion by ward councillors.

Respondent C

Disagrees saying that from their experience, the ward committee is mandated by ward councillors who are mandated by the municipal mayor, which causes too much political influence on a structure that needed to be more apolitical in approach to fairly address the grievances of the community.

Respondent D

No, they don't. It is even difficult to get hold of and get help from them and subsequently get the municipal's attention.

Respondent E

No. Municipal officials are not fulfilling their powers and functions because they normally don't deliver as promised. Furthermore, the community is of the view that the municipal is less focused on principal services such as housing, roads, water, health services etc.

2. What is the state of community participation in the Lepelle-Nkumpi Local Municipality?

Respondent A

Frequently, community members hold meetings to discuss and voice their needs and how such needs must be addressed. The Lepelle-Nkumpi Local Municipality allows community members to come and voice their concerns concerning the lack of service delivery so that in turn they can be communicated to the councillor on their behalf and see how the matters can be resolved without any altercations and violence.

Respondent B

IDP *imbizo* – We provide inputs during the *imbizos* as the ward committee submits reports to the Municipality quarterly.

Respondent C

The community does not believe they are respected or heard by the ward committees that they had elected to represent them. As Lepelle-Nkumpi Local Municipality, we had tasked ourselves to try and advocate the concerns of the community to the elected representatives as best we could.

Respondent D

Our municipality plays no role in our organisation. We have absolutely no support from them in terms of providing us with the services that we request. They never even host youth events none whatsoever. When it comes to municipalities supporting our events, that is also a challenge.

Respondent E

The is no participation of any kind unless you would refer to political rallies for upcoming elections. It is only then that you will notice the effective energy of ward committees.

3. What are the hindrances faced by the organisations in promoting community participation in the activities of ward committees?

Respondent A

The main challenge and concern for the municipality is that the people who complain about the lack of service delivery do not attend meetings. They don't even bother doing follow-ups, the meetings are only attended by senior citizens who don't even understand half of the crises we face on a daily basis.

Respondent C

Members of a community come from different nationalities of cultures, and members who do not understand the language which is communicated, often choose to exclude themselves from community meetings. Lack of skilled facilitators, administrators who organise community engagement activities may not have or have less experience in community participation. Skilled administrators can maintain a good relationship with community members which in turn results in an excellent participation outcome.

4. What are the organizational recommendations for aiding community participation through ward committees?

Respondent A

We recommend that councillors introduce mandatory meetings after every three months so that every portfolio head can report back to the community and the community members can raise their issues and add suggestions where possible.

Respondent B

One major recommendation is that the municipality must formulate a strategic plan and annual reporting, and attend plenary meetings for the health programs, and housing for orphans' vulnerable children as recommended by social workers.

Participate in dialogues on health talks and awareness campaigns recommended during stakeholders' meetings.

Respondent C

As an organisation, we believe that the ward committees must ensure that community members feel heard and respected and create a safe environment where community members can feel free to share their opinions throughout the whole process. Sessions like brainstorming sessions where everyone can share their ideas and creative skills are needed.

Respondent D

The ward committees must participate in our work, our events and campaigns, help us with resources from their office and municipal youth desk's office too. Help us in mobilizing our events be part of our organisation in every way possible.

Respondent E

The municipality must be given enough training to ward committees and they must understand that they are elected to serve the community not the other way around, ensure that there is a frequent engagement with established community-based organisations that will help in understanding the status core.

Section G: Senior management

1. What are structures in place within the municipality designed to assist ward committees to fulfil their powers and functions within local government?

Respondent F

The ward committees are led by ward councilors to ensure that there is a proper ward committee's management. The municipality also has a ward committee policy that regulates and gives clear roles of the ward committees, the ward committees are also given monthly stipend to assist them.

2. Challenges faced by ward committees in Lepelle-Nkumpi Local Municipality

Respondent F

Community participation is below satisfactory because members of the community do not always come out in numbers when the municipality invite them for community meetings.

3. The hindrances affecting activities performed by ward committees

Respondent F

Political interests cause hindrances because when ward committee members differ politically, they become unable to perform their duties. Due to high unemployment, some of the members join the ward committee for income purposes and they do not perform duties well.

4. Community participation is a key fundamental principle in democratic society

Respondent F

The council has adopted a schedule of community meetings. Ward committee members do their door-to-door visits to ensure community participation, there are also frequent council *imbizos* where communities are invited.

Section H: Senior management

1. Improving the economic status of communities is an important function of LED

Respondent G

Dissemination of information and data collection

2. The manner in which the ward committees are structured how is that affecting the state local economic development in Lepelle-Nkumpi local municipality?

It is positively affecting the municipality, as they are working closely with community members daily. They are aware/ know all the challenges on the ground and all planned programs from the municipality to improve the economic growth are shared with them to be implemented in the communities.

3. What are the hindrances faced in local economic development when ward committees carry out their duties in involving communities in the economic activities of their local government?

Respondent G

When there is infighting between the ward councillors and the ward committee. When the councillor doesn't share information.

4. What are recommendations for aiding community participation to improve local economic development through ward committees?

Respondent G

Working with municipal public participation officer. Make awareness campaign.

Section I: Senior management

1. The integrated development plan is without a doubt an important element in ensuring that the municipal council is aware of what the needs and wants of the communities are, making community participation in that process a vital key, do ward committees's composition allow them to fulfil their powers and functions in IDP process within Lepelle-Nkumpi local government?

Respondent H

Yes, they do.

2. Are ward committees effective and efficient in promoting community participation in IDP processes in Lepelle-Nkumpi local municipality?

Respondent H

No. Ward committees are not trained to deal with community participation, they also not enough resources available for ward committees to perform their duties.

3. What are the hindrances faced in the IDP process through community participation in the activities of ward committees?

Respondent H

Local conflicts, intraparty conflicts and levels (alarming) of poverty, unemployment and service delivery deprivations.

4. What can be recommended for aiding community participation in the IDP process through ward committees to fulfil the needs and wants of the communities in Lepelle-Nkumpi local municipality?

Respondent H

Compilation of ward projects which are funded, adherence to the schedule of ward community feedback meetings. Timeous implementation of approved IDP/budget projects and programmes.

Section J: Traditional Leadership

1. Does the traditional leadership believe that ward committees fulfil their powers and function effectively within local government?

Respondent I

No, when there is development projects employment opportunity is not given to the local communities of that area. We as traditional leaders are not consulted in advance before the project starts, we just hear from the communities that there is a project in the area.

2. What role is being played by traditional leadership in improving the state of community participation in Lepelle-Nkumpi local municipality?

Respondent I

Traditional leaders together with the ward committee always encourages the community to attend or participate in all development meetings with the ward. Traditional councils held several meetings with the communities to discuss the services delivery within their areas.

Respondent J

We pass information to our community if there are matters that need their attention and delivery to the ward councillor about complaints of the community.

Respondent K

We encourage our community to attend the meetings being called by those politicians, so they can hear what they have to say.

3. What are the hindrances noted by traditional leadership which affect community participation in the activities of ward committees?

Respondent I

There is no absolute proper consultation of the traditional leader by their local government official, municipalities and ward councillors before any development is done in our area and poor recognition of traditional leaders by politicians. There are allegations by the community members that the councillor prefers service delivery be given to the group that belongs to their party interest.

Respondent J

Lack of services from the municipality such as housing, water and others causes the community to loss trust and want nothing to do with the municipality.

Respondent K

We have very slow service deliveries such that the things the people request in the meetings are promised but they never get them.

4. What can be recommended for aiding community participation through ward committees?

Respondent I

The law needs to be changed so that ward committees reflect a variety of civil society interests such as business youth taxis, ratepayers, sports and cultural organizations, rather than political party activists. Representatives of traditional leaders ought to serve on ward committees where appropriate so that they can urge the local population to get involved in service delivery.

Respondent J

The must be proper communication between these ward committees and traditional houses, this municipal leader must learn to come to the communities and hold meaningful sessions, so people can have confidence in them and stop calling us when they want our votes or signatures.

Respondent K

A change in the service delivery might give hope to the community members and encourage them to attend community meetings called by the ward committees or the municipality. Traditional leaders must be respected and taken as equal, important stakeholders when it comes to the affairs of the community by the local government as we are not their kids to be played with, they must understand that we have traditions and those should not be undermined under any circumstances.

4.4. CONCLUSION

This chapter examined and interpreted the role of ward committees in community participation with an emphasis on the Lepelle-Nkumpi Local Municipality. The researcher collected data from respondents via questionnaires and interviews, which were then analysed. The information gathered via questionnaires was presented, analysed and interpreted in chart and tabular formats. In contrast, information gathered through interviews was presented in narrative form. The following chapter has presented the study's findings, conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. INTRODUCTION

The presentation, interpretation and analysis of the data collected through the use of questionnaires and interviews were dealt with in the previous chapter. The data collected focuses on the role of ward committees in the promotion of community participation in the Lepelle-Nkumpi Local Municipality. This chapter summarized the study, as well as the findings, conclusions and recommendations generated from the questionnaire and interview data. Each of the research questions posed in the first chapter is addressed in the discussion. The researcher intended to explore the role of ward committees in community participation in the local municipality of Lepelle-Nkumpi. The study has to justified the following research objectives:

- To investigate whether ward committees are fulfilling their powers and functions within local government.
- To investigate the state of community participation in Lepelle-Nkumpi Local Municipality.
- To investigate hindrances to community participation in the activities of ward committees.
- To propose recommendations for aiding community participation through ward committees.

The research questions of the study are as follows:

- What are the powers and functions of ward committees within local government?
- What is the state of community participation in Lepelle-Nkumpi Local Municipality?
- What are the hindrances to community participation in the activities of ward committees?
- What are the recommendations for aiding community participation through ward committees?

The study has discovered or unearthed the status of community participation in the Lepelle-Nkumpi Local Municipality through the ward committees. The study contains

recommendations and strategies that can be used to advance community participation in the Lepelle-Nkumpi Local Municipality through its ward committees.

5.2 MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The major findings came from the specific objectives of the study which were: to investigate whether ward committees are fulfilling their powers and functions within local government; to investigate the state of community participation in the Lepelle-Nkumpi Municipality; to investigate hindrances to community participation in the activities of ward committees and to propose recommendations for aiding community participation through ward committees. The following is a summary of major research findings:

The first objective of the study was to investigate whether ward committees are fulfilling their powers and functions. The study revealed that the majority of the respondents agree that the ward committees do encourage participation in municipal affairs when taking in to account the 25 (43%) agreeing and 3 (5%) strongly agreeing. It should also be noted that there is a worrying number of respondents 30 (52%) disagreeing with the notion that the ward committees do encourage the community to participate.

The study showed that when the opportunity was given the majority of respondents 29 (50%) strongly agreed and 20 (35%) agreed that they do express their needs and demands to the Lepelle-Nkumpi local municipality, While the study does also indicate that 6 (10%) of the respondents disagree, 2 (3%) of respondents are not sure and 1 (2%) of the respondents strongly disagreed. The study found that 34 (59%) of the respondents disagreed with the stated statement, adding 10 (17%) of the respondents strongly disagreed therefore it can be deduced that there are not enough meetings needed to discuss affairs affecting their respective communities. The study also showed that there is a positive incline with 9 (15%) of the respondents agreeing that such meetings do occur while 5 (9%) of the respondents were not sure. The study further found that of all the respondents 35 (60%) of the respondents disagreed that they are being informed about the activities of the municipality with 8 (14%) of the respondents strongly disagreeing. 4 (3%) of the respondents strongly agreed, 9 (16%) of the respondents agreed with the statement 2 (3%) of the respondents were not sure.

The study indicated that there is a serious miscommunication of information from the municipality to the community. The study found that 35 (60%) of the respondents disagreed that they are community organisations that enable community members to be involved in the decision-making process of the municipality. 3 (5%) of the respondents strongly disagreed, while 15 (26%) of the respondents were not sure of the organisations stated in the statement and 5 (9%) of the respondents are aware of such organisations in their communities. This indicates that ward committees have a greater influence in the local affairs of the community.

From the interviews which were carried out to determine whether ward committees fulfil their powers and functions within local government, the study found that the ward committees tend to distance themselves from the community, the promises that the community get are never archived at all. There is a strong political influence in the ward committees such that it disturbs with daily functions of the ward committee resulting in some of the set projects to be interrupted.

The study's second objective was to investigate the state of community involvement in the Lepelle-Nkumpi local municipality. The study revealed that 25 (43%) of the respondents disagreed with the statement that was made to them, 20 (35%) of the respondents were unsure, 5 (9%) of the respondents strongly disagreed, while 6 (10%) of the respondents agreed and 2 (3%) of the respondents strongly agreed with the stated statement. The study also revealed that the majority of the respondents have no faith that the municipality has the resources, both financial and human, to enable community participation. The study showed that 30 (52%) of the respondents disagreed that there is a good relationship between community members and councillors with 8 (14%) of the respondents strongly disagreed. The study does show that 15 (26%) of the respondents agree with the statement with 5 (8%) of the respondents strongly disagreeing. There is undoubtedly a high number of respondents 42 (73%) who disagree that councillors serve the interest of the community, adding to that with 6 (10%) strongly disagreeing. 10 (17%) of the respondents did agree that councillors serve the interest of the community. The percentage distribution in this study shows a serious concern with the conduct of the councillors under the Lepelle-Nkumpi local municipality. The study further showed that 37 (64%) of the respondents agreed that the municipality does have a good structure to enable the community to take part in municipal affairs, with 10 (17%) of the respondents strongly agreeing to

the questionnaire posed to them while there is 11 (19%) of the respondents disagreeing.

The study showed that there most respondents indicated that the municipality does have a good structure to enable the community to partake in the affairs of the municipality. The study also showed that 25 (43%) of the respondents agreed that Lepelle-Nkumpi Local Municipality does encourage community participation with an addition of 13 (22%) strongly agreeing to the statement. The study also indicated that 15 (26%) of respondents disagreed with the statement with 5 (9%) strongly disagreeing. It can be concluded from the information provided in this study that there is a serious problem when it comes to community participation in Lepelle-Nkumpi Local Municipality.

From the interview schedule which was to investigate the state of community participation in Lepelle-Nkumpi Local Municipality. The study showed that community participation is a key factor in advocating the needs and wants of the communities under Lepelle-Nkumpi Local Municipality. Ward committees must and should always work hand in hand with various stakeholders within the community as those are the once which represent the different diversity of people within the municipality. The programmes of the community-based organisations should be adopted by the ward committees. this CBO tend to hold their functions frequently and their functions are more on the ground with their interest groups which they seek to represent.

The third objective of the study was to investigate the hindrances to community participation in the activities of ward committees. The study found that 40 (69%) of those respondents agreed that community members don't receive quality service, with 10 (17%) of the respondents strongly agreeing and merely 8 (14%) of respondents in disagreeing there is a highly alarming issue when it comes to the services rendered to the community. The study also showed that Lepelle-Nkumpi Local Municipality doesn't consider the input of the community in municipal affairs, out of all the respondents who took part 9 (16%) of respondents disagreed, 14 (24%) of respondents were not sure, 32 (55%) of respondents agreed to the statement while 3 (5%) strongly agreeing.

The study showed that 29 (50%) of the respondents agreed that community members don't participate willingly in the activity of the municipality, 3 (5%) of those respondents strongly agreed, there is a significance 26 (45%) of respondents disagreed to that

statement. The study further showed that the community needs to be persuaded into participation in activities occurring in their municipality, Municipal officials don't consult the communities about major decisions that affairs from the respondents who took part in this study 35 (60%) of the respondents agreed to the statement with 10 (17%) of the respondents strongly have agreed while only 11 (23%) of the respondents disagreed to the statement. The study showed that there is a serious concern when it comes to the communication between the communities and the municipal officials. The study also showed that 37 (64%) of the respondents agreed that the municipal officials do discourage protest, with 13 (22%) of the respondents strongly agreed and only 5 (9%) of them respondents disagreed while 3 (5%) of the respondents strongly disagreed.

Interviews were conducted to investigate the hindrances to community participation in the activities of ward committees. The study found that lack of service delivery is a common problem among the respondents, there is a close bond built by the municipality to encourage community participation through service delivery as the respondents indicated that they see no need to participate in the municipality affairs as the services they entitled to them never receive them. The study found that the lack of training of ward committees and municipal officials in carrying out their daily activities. This is considering that within the municipality, there are different ethnicity, and such should be taken into consideration as they represent the diversity of the Lepelle-Nkumpi local municipality.

The fourth and final objective of the study was to investigate recommendations for aid in community participation through ward committees. The study found financial and human resource is essential for promoting community participation 20 (40%) of the respondents strongly agreed, 28 (57%) of the respondents agreed and only 10 (3) were not sure. training of councillors and municipal officials before performing their tasks is essential, 39 (67%) of the respondents strongly agreed to the statement with 19 (33%) agreeing. The study does indicate a united front around the posed statements as all the respondents acknowledge the need for trained individuals in service of the community be councilors or municipal officials.

The study further showed that 45 (78%) of the respondents strongly agreed with 13 (22%) of the respondents agreeing on holding municipal officials to account. The study

showed that there is an interest in having individuals who will have transparency and accountability when the community need answers on the affairs of the municipality. The study also found that mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation assist the municipality in achieving its goal and plans which was asked to the respondents who took part in this study, 20 (34%) of the respondents strongly agreed, with 38 (66%) of the respondents agreeing to the statement. The data provides a view that for a better realization of the set objectives of the municipality, the respondents have a unified stand that there must be ways that ensure that the decisions taken are fully implemented.

The study further found out that some of the aid collected from the respondents must introduce mandatory meetings every three months between the community members and the ward committee, Also the consultation with the traditional leaders must be improved as this is a very important stakeholder in encouraging community participation. Elected individuals must understand the need and importance of serving communities, The ward committee is a vehicle that can best serve as a communicating tool between the community and the Lepelle-Nkumpi local municipality, such will eliminate the misinformation which results in the wrong or non-service delivery.

5.3. SUMMARISED RESEARCH FINDINGS

Following is a summary of the main findings from the research questionnaire in this study:

- The majority of respondents concur that the ward committee does promote community involvement.
- The majority of residents do communicate their requests and requirements to the municipality.
- The majority of respondents disapproved of the notion that community meetings are frequently held to address its needs and expectations.
- The majority of respondents disputed that they were informed of the municipality's actions.
- The majority of respondents disagreed that there are community-based organizations that allow residents to participate in municipal decision-making.
- The majority of respondents disagreed that the municipality has the resources, both financial and human, to encourage community involvement.

- The majority of respondents dissented from the statement that ties between residents and council members are good.
- The majority of those surveyed disagreed that councilors represent the community's interests.
- The majority of respondents concur that municipalities do have structures to allow the public to participate in municipal issues.
- Most survey participants concur that the Lepelle-Nkumpi Local Municipality does promote community involvement.
- Majority of the respondents agreed that community members don't receive quality service.
- The majority of respondents agreed that the Lepelle-Nkumpi Local Municipality does not take the community's input into account when making decisions about local matters.
- The majority of respondents concurred that residents do not voluntarily take part in municipal activities.
- The majority of respondents believed that municipalities do not consult locals before making significant decisions that have an impact on the community.
- The majority of respondents concurred that adequate financial and human resources are necessary to encourage community involvement.
- The majority of respondents felt that councillors and municipal officials must be trained before executing their duties.
- The majority of respondents concurred that interactions between local government representatives, council members, and the community encourage community involvement.
- The majority of respondents believed that it's critical to hold municipal leaders accountable to the local communities

Following is a summary of the major findings from the research interview:

- There is a communication breakdown between traditional leadership and ward committees.
- The compilation of ward projects which are funded.

- There are local conflicts, intraparty conflicts and alarming levels of poverty, unemployment and service delivery deprivation.
- Ward committees are not trained to deal with community participation.
- Development projects employment opportunity is not given to the local communities.
- Traditional leaders are not consulted in advance before the projects start.
- The traditional leaders pass down information to the community members when there are matters that concern the community.
- Traditional leaders must be respected and be taken as an equal, important stakeholder when it comes to the affairs of the community.
- Legislation needs to be amended to ensure that ward committees don't comprise political party activities but represent a range of civil society interests.
- There must be dissemination of information and data collection.
- When the municipality works closely with ward committees it has a better understanding of the people's economic needs as the ward committee is always on the ground.
- There must be a close relationship between the ward committee and the municipal public participation officer.
- Community participation is below satisfactory.
- Political interest causes hindrances.
- Individuals join the ward committee for income purposes.
- There is a lack of resources, and this causes a rise in inequality and unsustainable growth in our community.
- Ward committees must be involved in the events of CBOs.

5.4. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study's suggestions are presented in this section. They were based on the study's key findings on the objectives set out for the role of the ward committee in community participation in the Lepelle-Nkumpi Local Municipality.

The study recommends that there be training for ward committees as that will advance their skills when conducting their duties, Having concluded that community

participation is a cornerstone when it comes to advocating the needs and wants of the community, it is recommended that all methods of communication be deployed so that the information can be able to get the community members including using all languages not only Sepedi as it's the dominating language within the municipality but the use of multi-languages as this makes those marginalized groups to be included in the process of the municipality.

From the findings most respondents were of the view that ward committee don't fulfil their powers and functions with the local government, The study recommends that the municipality as a collective should take initiatives in helping the ward committees where they need help also its very important to make awareness with the communities to make them better understand the functions and powers of the ward committee within local government.

The recommendation from this study after finding out that the state of community participation in Lepelle-Nkumpi Local Municipality is below satisfactory levels, the municipality must as soon as possible engage the consent stakeholders together with ward committees of various communities within the local municipality to can come up with interventions strategies that better works for the interest of those communities. The municipality must take into account that the majority of its residents are young people who use technology in the form of social media and other forms of communication platforms to communicate with others therefore this study recommends that the municipality must invest in communication technology in order to stay in touch with its people, better serving the needs of the people accurately.

Community-based organisations are very key stakeholders in the community as they are created for a specific group of people or a targeted task, therefore, they contain an insight knowledge which could benefit the municipality and better get a grip on the developmental and economic needs of those groups of persons advocated for by community-based organisations. Most of the communities found with the Lepelle-Nkumpi Local Municipality are traditional in nature such that they are still under the leadership of traditional leadership "*Magoshi*" who play a vital role in how the community interact with outsiders therefore it is recommended that the municipality builds a better relationship between traditional authorities in order to improve the standard community participation is at now.

The major concern on the hindrances to community participation runs between poor service delivery and political interference, the municipality must improve its services to its residents as this study has been found to be a direct link to the manner in which the community members choose to either participate in the affairs of the municipality it being through ward committee or other forms of participations channels. Giving services is not just that but delivering the right service to the communities in need is very important as that would show that the municipality does listen and take into consideration the inputs of community members.

Political interference in ward committees is a serious problem as it affects negatively on the duties of the ward committees. This study recommends that the municipality holds workshops with ward committees in order to help them to have an apolitical approach, communities consist of different needs and those should not be neglected due to political affiliation or opinion. The economic development must be of a high priority as it has been indicted that some of the individuals join the ward committee for income purposes due to the high unemployment rate.

The lack of resources is a key factor to most of the respondents when they gave their answers to various questions, evident that the municipality does not have the financial capacity to can smoothly run its affairs. This study makes a recommendation that the municipality look at the possibility of public-private partnership as in a way to increase the level of resources needed. It is also recommended that forming a relationship with NGOs that seeks to eliminate poverty and unemployment will better serve the interest of the municipality and therefore improve resources to deliver services to the community members.

Through the ward committee this study recommends that the municipality initiate projects that are youth self-driven, those projects can be run on point with traditional leaders as the legal custodians of the land, thus making it easy when working towards improving the unemployment rate that is busy ravaging the youth with the Lepelle-Nkumpi Local Municipality. Projects that are led through ward committees seeking to develop the residents are important as they will help the people to better understand the need to meet the municipality halfway in terms of service delivery as the community members are skilled to be able to work for themselves.

Dundas (1996:168) highlights that the freedom of citizens to choose their elected representatives is a critical feature of democratic governance. During an election citizens need to be informed of their rights and the voting process, Dundas (1996) argues that political consciousness and informed choices are key factors in an electoral democracy' For voters to participate effectively in the electoral process, they need to be familiar with the requirements of registration and voting and balloting procedures as well as aspects such as party choice and preference. The Lepelle-Nkumpi Local Municipality must create projects which will deal with educating members of the communities about the need to vote as a form of democratic participation.

Opinion polls conducted, and research undertaken before elections indicated that several factors influenced voter participation, including voter literacy, fear of intimidation and political violence, ignorance of the electoral process, and scepticism about the secrecy of the vote. A nationwide survey conducted by the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) revealed that the two major obstacles confronting black voters were low levels of voter literacy and violence and intimidation (De Kock and Ehlers, 1994:71).

5.5. RECOMMENDATION FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The goal of this study was to investigate the role of ward committees in community participation, with a specific focus on the Lepelle-Nkumpi Local Municipality to uncover the state of community participation and recommend stakeholders who should be involved in the community participation. Specifically, the research was carried out to make recommendations. The study was carried out at the Municipality of Lepelle-Nkumpi. According to the study's findings, more research should be conducted in South African local municipalities that are predominantly rural to identify the issues that inadequate service provision by municipalities could affect community participation as this study has found a direct link between those two. The goal of future research should be to increase the degree of community participation practice; hence attention must be paid to stakeholders who play a vital role in community participation and service delivery.

5.6. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The researcher encountered problems during data collection as it was proving to be difficult to find the relevant municipal officials, as some would be out of office during load shedding hours as the municipal offices don't have electric power backup. The research instruments got lost between the registry officer and the courier officer. Political figure "A" instructed the researcher to stop distributing the research instruments as he did not have the approval of Political figure "B" and would get back to the researcher after having communicated with political figure "A". The researcher tried countless times to get hold of the political figure "A" but with no luck that resulting with ward committees from the north region of the municipality not participating in the study.. Two traditional houses took the research instruments but never answered them, other potential respondents pulled out of the study as they thought they would be paid and when that was clarified they were no longer interested.

5.7. SUMMARY

The study was about the role of the ward committee in community participation in the Lepelle-Nkumpi Local Municipality. This chapter was all about the findings, recommendations, and conclusion. The findings and recommendations were made on the role of ward committee in community participation in the Lepelle-Nkumpi Local Municipality, investigated challenges experienced by the Municipality in fostering community participation, implications such in the provision of municipal services at the Municipality and mechanisms to enhance community participation in the provision of municipal services at the Lepelle-Nkumpi Local Municipality.

The first chapter of the study included the problem statement, the study's aims, objectives, and essential research questions, as well as its importance and delimitations. The objectives of the study were: to investigate whether ward committees are fulfilling their powers and functions within local government, to investigate the state of community participation in the Lepelle-Nkumpi Local Municipality, to investigate hindrances to community participation in the activities of ward committees, to propose recommendations for aiding community participation through ward committees

Chapter two discussed the following areas of focus: the Public Choice Theory, contextualization of community, tools in fostering community participation, corruption as a challenge in ward committees and legislative framework supporting community participation.

The research methodology used to conduct the research investigation was covered in Chapter 3. The chapter also covered the research paradigm, research design, research approach, study area, study population, sample and sampling procedures, data collection techniques, data analysis, and ethical issues. In this study, both quantitative and qualitative research approaches (mixed methods) were applied.

Chapter 4 discussed data presentation, interpretation and analysis of information that was collected using questionnaires and interviews. The questionnaires were distributed to ward committees while interviews were given to IDP officials, LED officials, senior Managers, "Traditional Leaders and Community-Based Organisations within the Lepelle-Nkumpi Local Municipality.

As far as data analysis is concerned, the study employed statistical and thematic analysis. Data acquired through the use of questionnaires was analysed using SPSS's latest version and data acquired using interviews was analysed by thematic analysis. Ethical considerations including permission to conduct the study, informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity, no harm to respondents and voluntary participation were all followed in this study.

5.8. CONCLUSION

Chapter 5 which is the final chapter of this study presented the findings, recommendations and conclusion. The major findings of the study derived from the objectives of research which are: to investigate whether ward committees are fulfilling their powers and functions within local government, to investigate the state of community participation in the Lepelle-Nkumpi Local Municipality, to investigate hindrances to community participation in the activities of ward committees, to propose recommendations for aiding community participation through ward committees. This study was able to give recommendations on those objectives, future studies that could be conducted in line with this research topic will draw conclusion from this study. The researcher is convinced that the study has achieved its objectives.

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