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Community Participation in Water Services in the Lephalale Local Municipality in Limpopo Province, South Africa

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Abstract:

This study investigated the participation of communities in water services in Lephalale Local Municipality. It is a mixed study that adopted a purposive sample. Its sample size was 100 from a population of 125,198. To collect primary data, KII were used, while a literature review was used to collect secondary data. Data from the fieldwork and documentary analysis were contrasted to respond to the participation of community members multi-dimensionally. The study contributed to the multi-dimensional participation of citizens. Specific findings are (i) communities participated in the protection of water sources. (ii) They did not participate in the maintenance of water sources. (iii) Communities participated in the monitoring of the quality of water. (iv) Local leaders mobilised the community during the implementation of water services projects. (v) Community members did not make inputs in implementing water services projects. (vi) Training was provided for the community in water and sanitation projects. The implications of the findings of this article suggest that community participation in water services is still a problem that should be addressed. This study recommended that the functioning of Ward Committees and the Integrated Development Planning process should be strengthened to enhance participation in the Lephalale Local Municipality.

Keywords:

Water Services, Lephalale Local Municipality, Community Participation, Ladder of Participation

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Introduction

This study investigated the participation of the community of Lephalale Local Municipality of the Waterberg District Municipality at a multi-dimensional level. The Lephalale Local Municipality could not provide water to villages in the community, and this required the communities to participate in the water services. Community participation (CP) in water services should be a multi-dimensional process. Urban areas in this municipality, such as Lephalale Town and Onverwacht, have water supplied by ESKOM and EXXARO, and they use household taps and flushing toilets, while the rural villages of Marapong, Mamojela Park, and Mahlakung lack proper water services and depend on boreholes, communal tanks, community taps, and water tankering and use pit latrines. The Lephalale Local Municipality is a Water Authority but failed to provide safe water for the rural villages, despite that there is a legislative framework that requires the municipality to provide water. A lack of water continuously impacts these villages. The Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) lamented service delivery to passive citizenry instead of active citizenry (African National Congress, 1994). This suggests that the communities in the Lephalale Local Municipality should be involved in addressing their problem broadly at a multi-dimensional level. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, specifically section 152, directs local government to ensure that communities participate in the affairs that affect them.

According to Toxopeus, (2019), many communities in local government were unhappy with the quality, quantity, level of access, and lack of accountability in water services. Kruger (2019) contended that the municipality was still experiencing sewer spillages, water quality, and quantity issues. However, despite participation being a constitutional demand that communities be engaged as part of the democratic process, little has been done to fulfil the call, especially in the provision of water supplies in informal settlement communities (Ntwana & Naidoo, 2024). This is the case with the communities in the Lephalale Local Municipality, where water is provided to the urban areas at the expense of rural communities. Water has been considered a human right, and the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for 2030 have expanded to include SDG 6, which aims to "ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all" (United Nations, 2018). The participation of communities in water services in Lephalale Local Municipality became multi-dimensional to address the water problem holistically. This type of participation took the slogan "water security for all" (ANC, 1994) to its logical conclusion. Communities should no longer leave their destiny in the hands of the municipality, which has failed them despite the elaborate legal frameworks for water governance (Monyai et al., 2022). This is the municipality that, in its programme for change, dubbed a differentiated approach, Lephalale Local Municipality IDP 2021/22, committed to putting people and their concerns first (2021/22, 31). On top of this, it identified community satisfaction, regular engagement, and feedback as one of the criteria that make a good municipality. To resolve this matter, there was a need for the

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community to be at the centre of the solution of the water services, and it could no longer leave it to the municipality alone. The existing problem in the legislative frameworks for community participation is to indicate unambiguously how participation should happen. This study closed this gap by proposing the multi-dimensional levels of participation in protecting water sources, maintenance of water sources, monitoring of water quality regarding diseases, mobilisation of the community during water services projects, participating in the sponsorship of their input in implementing water projects, and training in water and sanitation.

Methods

This is a mixed-method study that combines quantitative and qualitative research methods within a single study or across multiple related studies (McLeod, 2024). Mixed methods were adopted because quantitative methods alone is effectively limited to finding patterns and averages, thus missing the richness and depth of human experiences, emotions, and behaviours (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). To compensate for this limitation, qualitative methods, like in-depth interviews and ethnographic observation, were used to comprehend phenomena, attitudes, and social contexts (Zyoud et al., 2024). The purpose of mixed methods is to promote accuracy and completeness of the interpretations of research findings. Some researchers consider this a triangulation (McLeod, 2024). Qualitative methods provide the tools necessary to explore the nuances (e.g. characteristics and contradictions) of human behaviours (e.g. beliefs, perceptions, and actions) and interactions, capturing the complexity (breadth and depth) that these phenomena entail (Lim, 2023). The researchers used Key Informants (KII) to collect primary data from the respondents. A review of the journal articles, books, legislation, acts, and policies was done to obtain secondary data to respond to the participation levels of water services and contrast with the perceptions from the field work. Lephalale Local Municipality has a population of roughly 125,198 people. It comprises urban areas, including Lephalale Town and Onverwacht, which receive water supplied by ESKOM and use household taps and flushing toilets. The study purposively sampled 10 respondents from Lephalale Town residents and 10 from Onverwacht. From the rural villages, namely Marapong, Mamojela Park, and Mahlakung, which lack proper water services and depend on boreholes, communal tanks, community taps, and water tankering, and use pit latrines, the study purposively sampled 20, 30, and 30 respondents, respectively, to understand their level of participation in water services. This gave a sample of 100 respondents in total. A purposive sample was selected since it has some merits, such as obtaining data from the known respondents, since they have the required characteristics that the researcher looks for (Nyimbili & Nyimbili, 2022). The collected data were analysed by transcribing units, words, and sentences to convey similar meanings from respondents to obtain connections and also integrate the categories around the theme (Taherdoost,

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2021). The analysed data presented mixed perceptions on the participation of community members at the multi-dimensional levels in water services in the Lephalale Local Municipality.

Theoretical Framework Underpinning This Study

This study is underpinned by Community Participation Theory. This theory was expounded by Sherry Arnstein (1969) with eight rungs. According to the Community Participation Theory, communities should be involved in the planning and implementation of decisions that affect their lives. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996), Municipal Structures Act (1998), and the Reconstruction and Development Programme (1994) are some of the policy frameworks that require the participation of communities. The realisation of the Community Participation Theory. Sherry Arnstein's Ladder of Participation is shown below as Figure 1.

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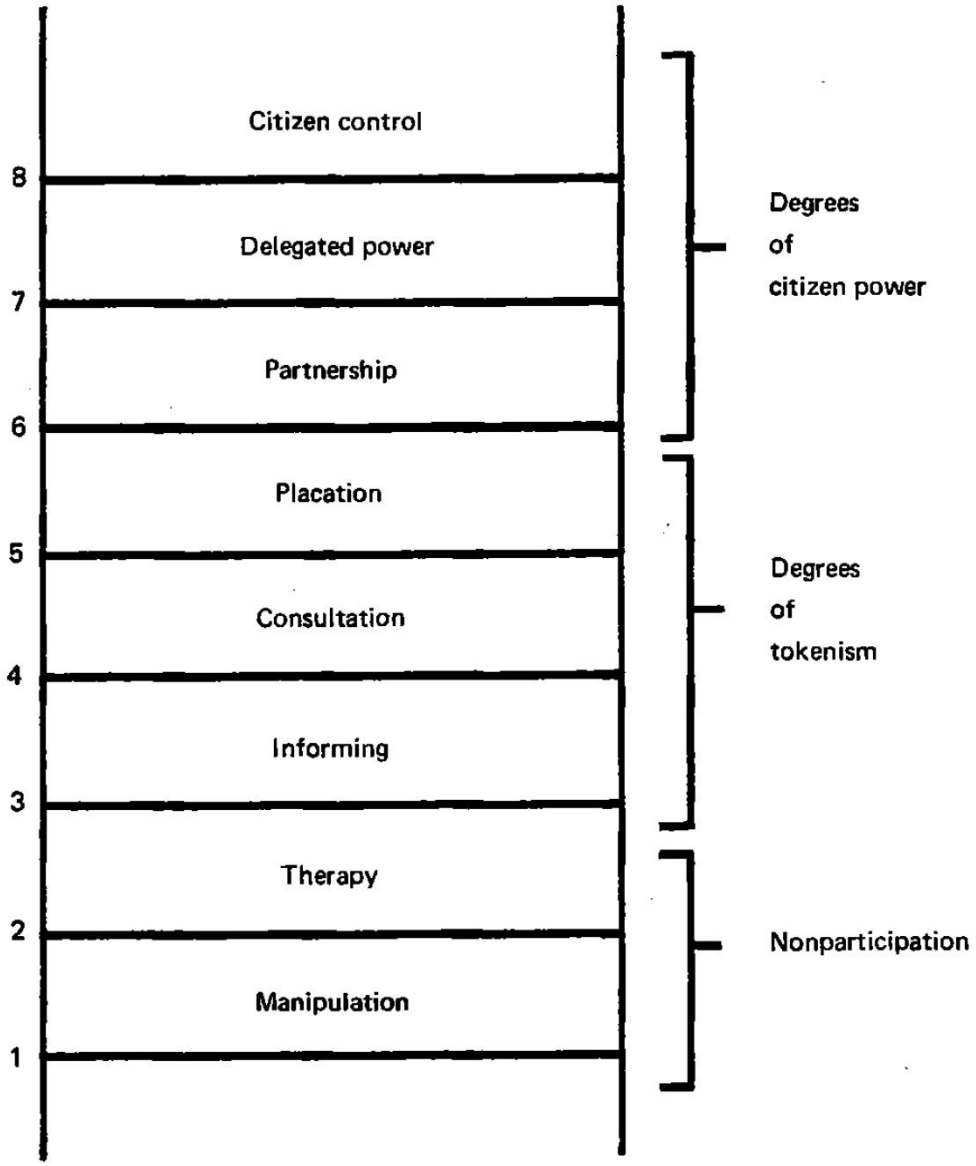


Figure 1: Sherry Arnstein's ladder of participation (Source: Sherry Arnstein, 1969)

Community Participation in Water Services at Multi-Dimensional Levels

Participation of communities in water services is multi-dimensional instead of being considered a one-sided one. Below, this study presented the six dimensions in which they participate.

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The Participation of Communities in the Protection of Water Sources

According to the Reconstruction and Development, 1994, and the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa,1996, communities are expected to participate in the affairs that affect them. Their participation should not be limited to water services and sanitation but should be elevated to a level of protection of water sources. Water resources require protection from any possible harm to safeguard water from harmful factors and also to sustain them. According to Ananga et al., (2021), the participation of communities is crucial for managing water in resource-scarce regions. Communities have played an important role in the protection of water resources, and the findings of the study by Ananga et al., (2021) concluded that communities have managed to maintain watersheds and other environmental preservation activities. Further, community participation supports the promotion and protection of the hygiene quality of potable water to sustain water supply systems (Ananga et al., 2021). Water contamination is a critical issue affecting rural South Africa, where many communities rely on untreated surface water sources (Odiyo et al., 2020). It was found that the use of unprotected water sources, such as rivers, streams, and wells, and poor sanitation practices (mainly bush toilets) were prevalent among residents (Asoba et al., 2020). The study, therefore, concludes that the extent of adoption of water and sanitation in the Bongo District is relatively great, and communities were involved to some extent to engender the sustainability of the facilities (Atengdem et al., 2024). For communities to be able to play this role of the protection of water sources, there should be a partnership that is established and forums to engage them regularly (Mititelu, 2019). This study also concludes that the integration of the protection of watershed areas in the government's planning processes is a successful indicator of the community's participation (Mandugay et al., 2022). The watershed management council's initiatives to inform the public or community on how they can participate in the protection of protected areas are through the installation of signages and delineation of the critical watershed areas with consultations on its legal basis, like the Davao City watershed code (Mandugay et al., 2022).

The Participation of Communities in Maintaining Water Sources

Communities are consumers of water and should ensure that the water is safe for consumption. They should be involved in the maintenance and sustainability of water sources. These sources in the Lephalale Local Municipality villages are boreholes, communal tanks, and communal taps. Ananga, et al., (2021) in their study revealed that communities were viewed as a viable model for managing water in areas where there is a scarcity of water. A related study by Asoba et al., (2020) in the Eastern Cape of South Africa found that the use of unprotected water sources (rivers, streams, and wells) and poor sanitation practices (mainly bush toilets) was common in the communities.

Community participation is therefore crucial in maintaining water sources, particularly when infrastructure is old, as in South Africa, which is a water-scarce country, to prevent loss of water

(Toxopeus, 2019). Corroborating this, Rofi & Saragih (2019) revealed that the community participating in the micro-watershed had fenced to protect the springs from encroachment by wild and farm animals. However, in some informal settlements and their leadership structures are continuously excluded and overlooked in decisions and plans around water supply (Ntwana & Naidoo, 2024). Further, designated communities are excluded from public participation platforms such as ward committees and ward councillors (Ntwana & Naidoo, 2024).

Community Participation in the Assessment of the Status of Water Quality

The quality of water impacts the health of the consumers, particularly in the villages such as Lephalale Local Municipality, where they depend on boreholes, communal tanks, and taps. The consumers must monitor eater quality from time to time. The source of concern for communities is generally the quality of water delivered as a result of years of usage of infrastructure that is not maintained (Baazanah & Litabe, 2023). Old infrastructure causes danger to the health of people as rust forms in the water. The study by Asoba et al., (2020) found that the use of unprotected water sources (rivers, streams, and wells) and poor sanitation practices (mainly bush toilets) was prevalent among residents. Community Participation (CP) is considered a viable model for managing water in resource-scarce regions (Ananga et al., 2021). Water contamination is another critical issue affecting rural South Africa, where many communities rely on untreated surface water sources (Odiyo et al., 2020). The lack of access to safe water and sanitation facilities in villages highlights the urgent need for improved water quality, sanitation infrastructure, and community education on safe water practices and waste management (Matimolane et al., 2024). Daluwatte et al., (2020) found that to ensure safe water for the residents, communities were involved in rural water supply projects.

The Role of Community Leaders in the Mobilisation of the Community During Water Services Projects

Communities require leaders who lead them in attending to issues that affect them. They even go to an extent of taking them to the street to protest the lack of service delivery. The local leaders provide leadership, and based on Arnstein's (1969), they could be at the level of stage 7 of delegated power and stage 8 of citizen control, which are the highest two stages in which community leaders who act on behalf of the followers have decision-making powers regarding water supply projects. These water supply projects are those that are implemented in their communities. According to Purba & Wahyu (2022), successful community participation is the role of informal leaders who play a role in motivating the community to participate. However, their role is hampered by their continuous exclusion from decision-making and plans that relate to water supply for their communities in ward committee structures (Ntwana & Naidoo, 2024). Local leaders embody six traits of leadership, such as strategising, convening,

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knowledge building, capacity building, partnering, and policy engagement (Wu, 2021). Community leaders should continuously raise awareness for capacity building to equip them to participate in the planning process and implementation phases of Integrated Development Planning (Mamokhere & Meyer, 2022). Capacity building is a prerequisite for participation in water service project implementation. Yang et al., (2023) in their study revealed that community mobilisation through face-to-face guidance, multi-sector monitoring engagement, information dissemination, and the involvement of social activists enhanced participation effectiveness among citizens.

Consideration of Community Inputs in the Implementation of the Projects

The participation of citizens in the life of municipalities to mitigate passive citizenry, as ANC (1994) directed, should be overarching. It must be multi-dimensional, and in the main, their voice should be heard to improve their life. The study findings by Antwi et al., (2025) have shown that public participation in decision-making and implementation processes is important in water governance and management. Services are rendered to communities that take responsibility for their delivery. Municipalities are compelled by legislation to create Ward Committees and an Integrated Development Planning process to enable them to participate and articulate solutions to their problems. Since service delivery is anchored on the principles of democracy, communities should participate in shaping the municipal character of service delivery. As the ANC (1994) directs that service delivery should not be delivered to passive citizenry, citizens should actively articulate their needs and also propose solutions to their problems. IDP and budget should be informed by inputs from Ward Committees and IDP planning processes. According to Ananga et al., (2021), managers of community water supply schemes, together with their development partners, should support CP as the most viable policy for improving water service delivery in this era of climate change and rapid urbanisation. The findings by Di Vaio et al., (2021) concluded that collaboration, coordination, and stakeholder engagement were the crucial elements that water governance models include to address the global sustainability challenge. Local government is a sphere that is closest to the citizens and should find it easy to solicit their input for inclusion in the overall service delivery plan, as the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, Sec 152 requires. Lephalale Local Municipality IDP (2021) had shown that the community inputs were sourced through councillors, and at times, they were done during IDP road shows. However, there could be barriers to sourcing inputs from the communities, such as limited funding, public awareness and education, socio-cultural, political, and economic constraints, which discouraged participation (Bazaand & Litabe, 2023).

Training Is Provided in Water and Sanitation Projects

As the ANC (1994) noted, service delivery should be provided to active citizenry and not passive ones. To enhance their participation, they should be trained to equip them with knowledge, skills, and awareness. Section 152 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 requires the

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participation of communities in the affairs that affect them. However, low levels of education hinder the effectiveness of ward committees, as does a lack of support from the municipality and a lack of understanding of their roles and responsibilities (Local Government Bulletin 2021). Bakari & Mbunda (2022) in their study concluded that the majority of the community members who participated in water supply projects did so because awareness was a significant factor. Corroborating this finding was Ryklief & Tengeh (2022), who found that training in service delivery awareness positively improved and motivated participants' performance to remain relevant to the needs of citizens. However, financial resources were a significant barrier for the community to participate in the water development projects (Bakari & Mbunda, 2022; Huang et al., 2022). Mamokhere & Meyer (2022) in their study found that participation of citizens and employees took place through constant education and motivating role players to participate in the planning process and implementation phases of Integrated Development Planning. The study by Purba & Wahyu (2022) found that meaningful participation would happen when there is sufficient capacity and knowledge of the community involved in local government.

Discussion of Results

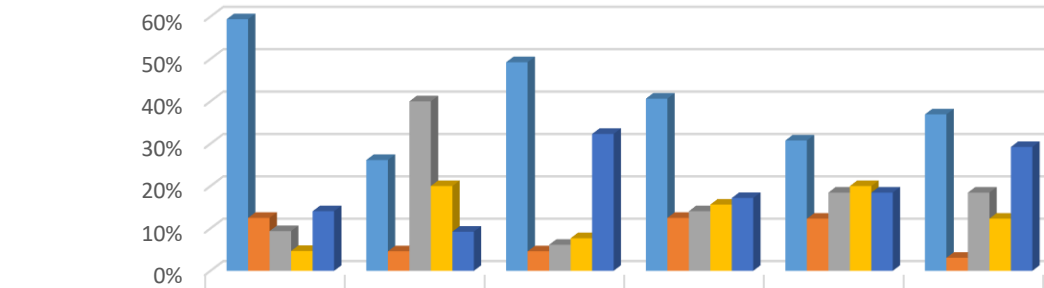
Participation of the community in water services is presented in multi-dimensional areas, as indicated below in Figure 2.

Q3: 1	Participation in water source protection
Q3: 2	Community participation in water source maintenance
Q3:3	Community participation in the monitoring of water-related diseases
Q3:4	Local leaders are playing a big role in mobilising the community during water services projects
Q3: 5	Community inputs are used to implement the water projects
Q3:6	Training of the community in water and sanitation projects

Figure 2: Participation of the community in water services

Figure 3 below shows the participation in the questions listed above.

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	Q3.1	Q3.2	Q3.3	Q3.4	Q3.5	Q3.6
Agree	59%	26%	49%	41%	31%	37%
Strongly agree	13%	5%	5%	13%	12%	3%
Disagree	9%	40%	6%	14%	18%	18%
Strongly disagree	5%	20%	8%	16%	20%	12%
I do not know	14%	9%	32%	17%	18%	29%

Figure 3: Participation in the questions

Figure 3 provides the results of multi-dimensional community participation in water service for the residents of Lephalale Local Municipality. The findings were derived from the data collected through a questionnaire, observation, and document analysis to address the objectives of the study. The qualitative interview perceptions were contrasted with those from the empirical findings to deduce the results. The quantitative survey percentages were added together in terms of their categories and also contrasted with the empirical findings to deduce the results for reporting, as shown in Figure 3 above. The findings for each objective of the study are outlined thematically below.

Findings

Q3: 1 Community participation in the protection of water sources

The study sought to understand the participation of communities in the protection of water sources, such as boreholes, communal tanks, and communal taps in the Lephalale Local Municipality, since they are vulnerable to vandalism. In Figure 3 above, the majority of respondents, 72%, had indicated that they participated in the protection of water sources. *One of the respondents indicated that "we get invited to meetings by the council and advised to protect our water sources, hence we participate in the protection of water sources from being vandalised".* These findings were supported by Ananga, et al., (2021), whose study found that communities played an important role in the protection of water resources and managed to maintain watersheds and other environmental preservation activities. However, there were 14% dissension voices of those who did not agree. To this, one of the respondents said that *"we do not participate because we are not paid for what we do by this municipality, even when they know there is a high employment rate".* This is in contrast with the findings of the study by Ntwana & Naidoo (2024),

who found that communities were continuously excluded from decisions and plans for water supply in their Ward Committees. On the other hand, 14% did not know. From the data analysis, it can be concluded that communities participated in the protection of the water sources.

Q3: 2 Community participation in the maintenance of water sources

This study sought to determine the participation of communities in the maintenance of the water sources, namely boreholes, communal tankers, and communal taps in the Lephalale Local Municipality villages. The data from the perceptions of respondents showed overwhelmingly (60%) that there was no participation of the communities in the maintenance of water sources. To this question, one of the respondents explained that *"we do not participate because the meetings we get invited to are just for compliance since our views are not considered at all.* This is contrary to the Lephalale IDP 2021/22, which showed that the communities were participating. There was a minority (31%) of those who agreed that they participated, which is consistent with the Lephalale IDP 2021/22, which indicated that communities were participating. Consistent with this, Ananga et al., (2021), found that managers of community water supply schemes, together with their development partners, supported CP as the most viable policy for improving water service delivery in this era of climate change and rapid urbanisation. On the other hand, 9% of respondents did not know. The study concluded that the communities of Lephalale Local Municipality did not participate in the maintenance of water sources.

Q3: 3 Communities' participation in the monitoring of water sources for water-related diseases.

In this study, researchers sought to understand the participation of communities in the monitoring of the water sources for their quality, i.e, their being free from water-related diseases. Boreholes, communal tanks, and communal taps are normally vulnerable to waterborne diseases. In assessing the participation of communities in the monitoring of the safety of water in the Lephalale Local Municipality, (54%) of respondents agreed that they participated and that the water was safe from water-related diseases. One respondent had this to say, *"in the past, water was not safe, but these days we monitor it on our own, and we use stuff to clean weakly*. Another one added that, *"We also have municipal officers who also test our water* (this was assumed to be communal tankers and taps). From the responses of the respondents, communities were involved in water services (Daluwatte et al., 2020). However, there is a significant perception (14%) of those who did not agree. One respondent indicated that, *"we buy water from the town because we are not sure about the quality of the water from our sources such as boreholes, communal taps, and communal tanks"*. Lastly, there is a massive percentage of 32% of those who did not know.

Q3: 4 Participation of Local leaders in the mobilising of the community during water service projects.

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The mobilisation of community citizens through face-to-face guidance, multi-sector monitoring engagement, information dissemination, and the involvement of social activists is considered a mechanism to significantly enhance recycling participation effectiveness among citizens (Yang et al., 2023). The purpose of this question was to assess the participation of local leaders in mobilising community members in the implementation of water service projects. Figure 3 above, a percentage of (54.0%), respondents agreed that local leaders mobilised the community during the implementation of the water services project. One respondent said that *"this is not done all the time, sometimes we just see projects being implemented without our knowledge".* From these perceptions, it could be concluded that the citizens of Lephalale Local Municipality were treated for a degree of tokenism where placation, consultation, and informing have just enjoyed an increased degree of participation and not that of empowering the citizens (Arnstein, 1969). This is contrary to Wu (2021), who found that leaders embodied leadership traits of generally motivating, building capacity, and providing leadership. However, (30%) disagreed that local leaders played a role in mobilising communities, while a minority (17%) did not know. The findings of this study showed that the local leaders played a role in the mobilisation of the community during the implementation of water services projects, though with a small percentage.

Q3: 5 Participation of communities in the sponsoring of inputs in the implementation of water projects.

This study sought to find out if community inputs were used to implement water projects in the Lephalale Local Municipality. In response to this question, this study found that (43%) of respondents agreed that community inputs were used to implement water projects. One respondent explained that *"even though our councilor takes our proposal to the municipality, not all of our proposals are considered since they always tell us that they do not have sufficient budget*". The study showed that (38.0%) of respondents disagreed that the inputs of the communities were used in the implementation of the projects. A respondent lamented that, *"we do not know where to take the inputs to, since our Ward Committee and Cllr are not effective, they just look at the big salaries they get"*. In contrast, from these responses, it does not appear strongly that communities were deliberately excluded from participating in the Ward Committee meetings (Ntwana & Naidoo, 2024). This could suggest that there is no awareness or roadshows by the municipality to give information to communities. The percentage of 18.0% of respondents showed that they did not know. This response is different from the above in the sense that here, they just do not want to be committed to the study.

Q3: 6 Training was provided in water and sanitation projects.

The analysis of data from Figure 3 above sought to establish the training provided for communities to participate in water and sanitation projects. Local Government Bulletin (2021) contends that to build the capacity of communities, there must be training for water and sanitation projects. Further, low levels of

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training negatively impact the effectiveness of ward committees. From this data analysis, (40%) of the respondents agreed that there was training provided for water and sanitation. One of the respondents indicated that, *"the problem is that we do not see anyone using the skills acquired for a permanent job".* Corroborating this, another one said, "we were only trained to use VIP toilets constructed in our area". From the perceptions above, the training that was provided was disempowering the citizens instead of empowering them. Consistently, Ryklief & Tengeh (2022) in their study found that training should improve and motivate public officials' performance to remain relevant to the needs of citizens. Yet, (30%) of respondents flatly disagreed that there was training provided. This perception is supported by Bakari & Mbunda (2022), who found that community awareness was a significant factor that negatively influenced people`s participation, and financial resources are a significant barrier for the community to participate in the water development project. In addition, there were 29%) who expressed that they did not know. Though the percentages are low, it is indicative that community members were trained in water and sanitation projects.

Conclusion

The study investigated the community participation in water services at a multi-dimensional level in the Lephalale Local Municipality of the Waterberg Municipality. While Lephalale Local Municipality is a water authority, it failed to provide water services to the villages, while water was supplied to the urban areas. The solution was for the community to be involved as directed by the legislative framework, such as the RDP (1994) and the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996. This study adopted a mixed method, comprising qualitative and quantitative designs. For data collection, an interview was used, and a schedule of the interview was used with prepared questions and a literature review that reviewed articles, research methodology books, and other material to address the community participation in a multi-dimensional process in water services. Purposive sampling was adopted for this study with a sample size of 100 respondents to mitigate the risk of bias in the findings. This study contributed to the participation of communities in water services at a multi-dimensional level.

The analysis of data shows that communities participated in one or a few multi-dimensional levels, but not necessarily in all six dimensions. In particular, participated in the protection of the sources of water, monitoring of the quality of water for the reduction of water-related diseases, mobilisation of the community during the implementation of water services projects, training for water and sanitation projects and not in maintenance of water sources, and sponsoring of the inputs for the implementation of water services projects.

Based on the findings, the data analysis does not point to the participation of communities in the maintenance of water sources, something which is of great importance if the health of the citizens is to be safeguarded against any possible harm. However, 60% of the participants indicated that they did not

participate. Participants feel their views are taken for granted, as one of them said, “We do not participate because the meetings we get invited to are just for compliance”. The Lephalale Local Municipality should strengthen its participatory forums, such as Ward Committees and IDP, to give citizens a degree of power to articulate how their water sources should be maintained.

The other finding shows that they were not making inputs on the implementation of water services projects. Making inputs is one of the indicators that the citizens are alive to their problems and suggesting solutions. If their inputs are not solicited and used to formulate service delivery instruments, it is a problem. The worst was when one of the respondents said, “We do not know where to take the inputs to, since our Ward Committee and Cllr are not effective, they just look at the big salary”. Lastly, while training is key to creating knowledge, skills, and general capacity for active participation in service delivery to be in sync with the call of the RDP, the training was merely a malicious compliance, as one of the respondents indicated in the interview. Therefore, the training was in sync with Arnstein’s three rungs of non-participation, characterised by informing, therapy, and manipulation.

Practical Implication

Lephalale Local Municipality should develop mechanisms through the office of the speaker to monitor the participatory mechanisms in the community. The Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs should also monitor the effectiveness of the participatory mechanisms of its municipalities. Lephalale Local Municipality should conduct road shows, regular reporting meetings, and ensuring that ward committees and IDPs are working to promote community participation. All fora for promoting participation should be conducted through the local languages to ensure that nobody is left behind.

Theoretical Implication

Community participation is a multi-dimensional approach. Many studies have discussed community participation in a general sense instead of specific and practical sense. Further, they also viewed participation in a single dimensional approach. This study has gone further to situate their participation in a practical manner. The results of this study have shown that while many studies have shown that participation was a single dimension, in reality participation of communities in water services is multi-dimensional. By offering a multi-dimensional approach, this study has contributed to empirical research on community participation in water services beyond the scope of the study.

Further Research

This study was limited to a single local municipality of Lephalale in the Waterberg District Municipality of the Limpopo Province in South Africa. The results are therefore limited to this study area. Since water

services has become a national issue, a provincial study is needed to resolve water challenges through community participation. A broader participation in water services by communities might offer a better understanding of the planning by state as chapter two of the Constitution requires as part of the Bill of Rights. A quantitative study is recommended since this will be informed by a larger sample than qualitative one.

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Ethical Approvals

The University of South Africa's Ethics Committee has approved and issued an ethical certificate for the dissertation degree. The respondents also completed the informed consent form to avail their participation in the study.

Data Availability

Data is available on request.

Disclaimer

This article is based on Sellina Mugagudi Makgatho's Master's Dissertation with UNISA, supervised by Mavhungu Elias Musitha. The degree has since been conferred.

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