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Dissertation

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MASTERS OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

With the provisional title:

**Institutional Arrangement to Support the Functionality of Ward Committees in
uMhlathuze Local Municipality and eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality,
Kwa-Zulu-Natal Province**

FACULTY OF COMMERCE, ADMINISTRATION AND LAW

Candidate: Mr Leo Muntu Sibiya

Student number: 201001535

Supervisor:

Dr Lucky Asuelime

Co-Supervisor

Prof. Kedibone Phago

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Declaration

I, Leo Muntu Sibiya declare that this dissertation is hereby submitted to the University of Zululand, in the fulfilment of Masters of Public Administration degree has not previously been submitted for a degree at this Institution or any other university; this is my work ,design and in execution, and that all material contained herein has been duly acknowledged.

Sibiya M. Leo

Date

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to the legacy of my late mom **Anna-Maria Mhlongo**, who was a constant source of support and encouragement during the commencement of my academic life but she rested in the year 2012, but her implanted wisdom carried me through this far. As humans we tend to forget easily about what people did. As for me I permit the society to forget what I did but never to forget the good deeds of my mother, a street vendor. I am grateful to her for all she did.

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Abstract

The study focuses on the assessment of the institutional arrangement to support the functionality of ward committees in eThekweni metropolitan municipality and uMhlathuze local municipality. A focus on these two municipalities provides an opportunity to juxtapose the functionality of ward committee within both Metropolitan environment and poor local municipal environment. The finding of the study provides opportunity to help understand how ward committees can be made functional in different South African environment. This was done with the view to inform ward committees policy amendments which aim at improving local governance. The research methodology used for the study is qualitative approach in nature since qualitative approach researchers often rely on interpretive or critical social science, and emphasise conducting detailed examinations of cases that arise from the natural flow of life. Furthermore qualitative approach always seeks to understand peoples' insights, beliefs and attitudes - as such this study sought to understand people's insights, believes and attitude about the institutional arrangement to support the functionality of ward committees. The data instrument that was used to collect the information useful to answer the research question of the study was interviews in a form of open ended questionnaires and focus group discussions. The following are the Key findings:

The institutional arrangement to support ward committees in both the metropolitan environment and local municipal environment in municipalities that were chosen for the survey proved to be ineffective in addressing the issues arising from public participation. The study revealed that ward committees are not doing well in serving the interest of local communities but are good in serving the interest of the councillor and the council. Furthermore, this posed a negative impact on the ward committee structures. The study, therefore "calls for an institutional re-arrangement which in turn must flow from on-going dialogue, monitoring and evaluation, and learning by doing. The study revealed that this is an unfolding process, not a completed or cemented edifice and model that has been developed over the last few years should be revised as required in order to meet up with the present needs of the people" (Marais, Everatt & Dube 2007). The responsibility then reverts back to the municipality to develop intact institutional arrangements which shall address all these expectations.

List of Abbreviations

ANC	: African National Congress
MM	: Metropolitan municipality
DPLG	: Department of Provincial and Local Government
IDP	: Integrated Development Plan
LM	: Local Municipality
LGRP	: Local Government Reform Programme
MSA	: Municipal Systems Act
MSA	: Municipal Structures Act
NGO	: Non- Governmental Organisations
NPFPP	: National Policy Framework on Public Participation
RDP	: Reconstruction and Development Programme
SALGA	: South African Local Government Association
WPLG	: White Paper on Local Government
WC	: Ward Committee

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CHAPTER: 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND INTRODUCTION

Since the advent of public participation reform programmes, ward committees as structured means of participation has been a question of debate in South Africa. Therefore, in the new dispensation government, multiple “expectations have been raised regarding policy and how government should communicate with and to the community” (Houston, Humphries and Liebenberg, 2001). However, many researchers agree that public participation is crucial for the prosperity of local government development processes. Policy regulations in local government enacted provisions for the establishment of a system of participatory democracy at the local level through ward committees as an appropriate form for local citizen’s engagement (Houston, Humphries and Liebenberg, 2001).

Ward committees are portrayed in

“municipalities as community structures to play critical role in linking and informing the municipalities about the needs, aspirations, potentials and problems of the communities. They are invented to form the bridge between local municipalities and communities by facilitating proper communication. In working directly with the municipality, ward committees serve as a cord that articulates the new system of local government to the majority of the people, especially to previously disadvantaged groups. Ward committees also have important roles to play in actively taking part and determining core municipal business, such as Integrated Developmental Planning, Budgeting and the Municipal Performance Management process. However, there is a need to continuously review and identify whether the committees have the necessary capacity required of them to perform their roles as community voices or representatives. Furthermore, the ward committee structures need to be measured accordingly in terms of their effectiveness, their involvement

in local government (identifying whether they have played significant role on promoting and advancing citizen participation), and whether communities have had enough space and whether there is an established conducive environment for citizens to fully engage with the municipality in development-related processes” (Shaidi, 2007).

Ward committees are local structures that provide an important channel for citizens to have their voices heard at local level especially in a context where there are few existing alternatives for citizens to be involved in governance at local level (Shaidi, 2007).

Since 2001, ward committees in South Africa “have emerged as a key institutional mechanism intended to contribute towards bringing about people-centred, participatory and democratic local governance” (Smith, 2008). “The rationale for ward committees is to supplement the role of elected councillors by creating a bridge between communities and the political and administrative structures of municipalities” (Mafunisa, 2003). However, in recent years, there has been a rise of enormous complaints, from various group of the public, in a variety of context and settings, arguing that most ward committees in the South Africa are not functioning as intended in terms of enhancing the environment of participatory governance. In view of the literature synthesised by the researcher, it was discovered that confrontations and protest over service delivery has been viewed as exacerbated by poorly functioning of ward committees and as a recurring decimal in local governments since the post-apartheid era of the South African’s political history. This has dire socio-economic consequences for development of local government in the country. Thus this study raises issues concerns and therefore seeks to assess, what are the institutional arrangement gaps in relation to the functionality of ward committees? Specifically, the study assesses the structural gaps that limit ward committee engagement in local governance, the ward committee rules of engagement in the election process. In the process of understanding the institutional arrangement the study seeks to assess whether it contributes of the efficacy of ward committees.

1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

In South Africa, Wards were first adopted in the Cape of Good Hope, when the burgers

insisted for a greater share in the government of the Colony. As the committee of the high court was established in the Cape of Good Hope in 1786, this indicated progressive strides towards creating concrete grounds towards full establishment of wards, The committee of the high court was then handed the municipal and policing functions in 1793 (Craythorne, 1997: 126). At that time there were only 23 wards in the Cape .Therefore the initial idea for the purpose of assisting these structures in governance was to be provided with two ward master.

“Their functions were to firstly keep a register of the persons in their wards, and secondly to report on particular municipal or criminal matters to the committee of the high court. Thus, later it became evident that the role of the ward master evolved into a particular relation, where contact between the people and the municipal commissioners was promoted (Craythorne, 1997: 127).

Therefore, the new system of ward committees established by the government of the former president Thabo Mbeki in 2001 is a derivative “from the above historical background, it is therefore clear that Ward Committees are regarded as the mechanisms through which public participation in local government is realised. Ward Committees should serve the purpose of representation, i.e. promoting local participatory democracy” (Craythorne, 1997: 127). Ordinarily, ward committees are initiated to provide a vital link between the communities and the local government council. They are there serving as a helping hands support towards the elected councillors in return the councillor should represent the voice of a specific community in a geographical setting in a municipal council in accordance with chapter 4 of the Municipal Structures Act, 1998.

Table 1. The establishment of Ward Committees according to provinces

Province	Population	Number of metropolitan municipalities	Number of local municipalities	Number of wards	Number of Established Ward Committees
Eastern Cape	6 527 747	1	38	636	636
Free State	2 773 059	-	20	300	300

Gauteng	10 451 713	3	8	423	423
Kwazulu-Natal	10 259 230	1	50	771	771
Limpopo	5 238 286	-	25	513	513
Mpumalanga	3 643 435	-	18	365	365
Northern Cape	1 058 060	-	27	174	174
North West	3 271 948	-	21	365	365
Western Cape	5 278 585	1	24	348	248
Total	48 502 063	6	231	3 895	3 790

Adapted from CoGTA (2009: 14)

Table 1. is the establishment of Ward Committees according to province. In the cause of advancing participatory democracy South Africa has demarcated 3895 wards within 283 municipalities which are separated into the following categories:

Six metropolitan municipalities, namely: Johannesburg, Cape Town, Ethekewini, Ekurhuleni, Tshwane and Nelson Mandela Bay, 231 Local municipalities and 47 District municipalities. The demarcated 3895 wards are indicated in above as Table 1. The wards in the table refereed as table 1.1 have established Ward Committees in pursuit of a participatory democracy envisaged in the (CoGTA, 2009: 13) document. Despite the paradoxes

“associated with the local government system in South Africa, it is important to highlight the ratio of the number of municipalities in relation to the population within each specific province. This is necessary of explain the paramount importance of participatory democracy, as detailed in the table. Local government plays an important role in a beaurocratic system in the sense that it implements policies and to ensure effective and accountable service delivery in a relatively smaller jurisdiction. It is through this approach that wards are established. Ward Committees are area-based committees, whose boundaries coincide with the jurisdiction of the ward (White Paper on Local Government, 1998: 64). Through public participation, which should be initiated by the local municipality, via the Ward Committee, the local municipality should be in a better position to deliver the required

goods and services, as expected by the municipal community. This will assist municipalities in identifying the goods and services required by municipal communities. As such, the need for the formulation of an integrated development plan arises, so as to effectively develop a mechanism to identify community needs and priorities, and design administrative and managerial practices to fill these needs” (Craythorne, 1997: 127)

in decision making process. It is vital in this background to provide a clear picture as to where these ward committees originated from. The reason for this is to make things simple when making an exegesis the controversies and the breakthroughs of ward committees since their advent. Therefore, issues bedevilling ward committees are discussed below.

In the study conducted by (Hicks, 2006), on ward committees, the author contends “often when committees are in place, their status is ill-defined and they operate in clumsy and unpredictable manner or they appear to be paralysed by in-fighting or stand-offs with councillors” (Hemson, 2007). It is stated that: “some are accused of serving as extensions of local councils, rather than as independent community structures” (Hicks, 2006; Everatt and Gwagwa, 2005). In Hicks’s contention (2006:2), there is tension between ward committee and ward councillors resulting from the absence of “clarity on the roles of ward councillors as opposed to proportional representation councillors and limited resources available to enable ward committees to function. The available data on studies conducted on ward committees suggest that familiarity with ward committees seems to correlate with a slight decline in trust in local government” (Hicks 2006), leading Hemson (2007:12) to state that “the ward committee system is not strengthening confidence in local government since these are not working as well as they should”. At the ward committees level the study conducted by (Piper and Deacon, 2009), cited (Ndlela, 2006) indicates numerous issues concerning ward committees operations, amongst other things ward committee establishment was an issue.

Despite impressive strides in the formulation and implementation of Local Government Reforms Programs (LGRP) that South Africa has attained since its implementation in 1998, in terms of accelerating the delivery of public services to the local populace,

increasing the level of local community participation in Municipal decision making process, as well as establishing local structures such as ward committee for enhancing accountability of municipalities to serve local populace. It is on this premise that the study sought to assess the structural gaps that limit ward committee engagement in local governance and the ward committee rules of engagement in the election process. Because the issue of ward committee is a function of local government, this study considered eThekweni Metropolitan municipality and uMhlathuze local municipality. This is necessary because a focus on the two municipalities provides an opportunity to juxtapose the functionality of ward committee within both Metropolitan environment and poor local municipal environment. The study in this is able to enlighten the reader to understand how ward committees can be made functional in different South African environment. This is with the view to inform ward committees policy amendments thereby improving local governance.

1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The ward committees play very important role in the governance for instance, to ensure that local councils are adhering to the principles of good governance, and thus enhancing better delivery of social services in the local settings has been recognised in South Africa. Since 2001 “ward committees in South Africa have emerged as a key institutional mechanism intended to contribute towards bringing about people-centred, participatory and democratic local governance” (Smith, 2008). Both uMhlathuze local municipality and eThekweni metropolitan municipality have established ward committees in terms of (sections 72–78 of Local Government: Municipal Structures Act, 2000). These ward committees were expected to increase the participation of local residents in municipal decision-making, influence policy making process at the ward and municipal level, to be the “representative of the local ward, and not politically aligned, to be involved in matters such as the Integrated Development Projects (IDP) process, municipal performance management, preparing the annual budget, council projects and other key activities” and programs (Delener, Fuxman, Lu and Rodrigues, 2012).

Despite the existence of framework for functionalities of ward committees in these municipalities of KwaZulu-Natal province, general observation show that the “rationale

for ward committees to supplement the role of elected councillors by creating a bridge between communities and the political and administrative structures of municipalities” (Mafunisa, 2003) does not function as intended in terms of enhancing the environment of participatory governance. Because of those setbacks, communities in those municipalities lack interest in civic matters; do not fully participate in the IDP processes; and end up raising protests against service delivery (Interview with IDP project coordinator, 2013). This raises issues for assessment. What is the institutional arrangement set up in relation to the functionality of ward committees. This study intends to assess the structural gaps that limit the ward committees in playing their role as a link in decision making process of the municipality and also describing the rules of engagement in the election process of ward committees. Because the issue of ward committee is to ensure proper function of local the government, this study considered eThekweni Metropolitan municipality and uMhlathuze local municipality. This is necessary because a focus on the two municipalities provide an opportunity to juxtapose the functionality of ward committee within both Metropolitan environment and poor local municipal environment.

1.4. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The aim of the study is to assess the institutional arrangement efficacy of ward committees.

1.5. SPECIFIC RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- * To describe the limitations of ward committee engagement in local governance
- * To assess the rules of engagement in the election process of ward committees in eThekweni Metropolitan municipality and uMhlathuze local municipality.

1.6. SPECIFIC RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- * What are the limitations of ward committee engagement in local governance?
- * What are the rules of engagement in the election of ward committees in the municipalities of eThekweni and uMhlathuze?

1.7. INTENDED CONTRIBUTION TO THE BODY OF KNOWLEDGE

The significance of a study entails the importance of the research with respect to its purpose and objectives (Muya, 2014). In another words, it asks what new knowledge or

developments are the research question of this study going to generate (Muya, *ibid.*). First, what new knowledge the study will create? Prosperous societies are innovative societies, and innovation begins with basic research. Assessing the structural gaps that limit the ward committees in local governance and also describing the rules of engagement in the election process of ward committees will produce new body of knowledge in local governance. Because the issue of ward committee is a function of local government, this study considered eThekweni Metropolitan and uMhlatuze local municipality. Therefore, the study intend to generate knowledge whether the institutional arrangement for the functionality of ward committee is improving or failing to improve the present muddy state of ward committees. This will not only change situation, from that which is considered problematic to one that is desired, but also add values to the body of knowledge of the ward committees engagement in local governance, thereby contributing to prosperous developmental society. Second, in assessing the structural gaps that limits the ward committees to play their role as a link in decision making process of the municipality and also describing the rules of engagement in the election process of ward committees, the study will produce results that will inform ward committee's policy amendments thereby improving local governance. Third, the findings of the study will provide insightful knowledge to the ward committees and local government, to policy makers, researchers and training institutions to articulate and implement approaches or model to curb the challenges brought by poor performance of ward committees in local settings.

1.8 MOTIVATION OF THE STUDY

The Study has drawn motivation from the fact that the researcher developed interest in matters relating to local government particularly public participation because of the position he held from 2008 -2012 as a Chairperson of ILembe Provincial Contractors Forum. The researcher noticed from most meetings- He has attended that the concerns of ward committees were always side lined, words like “noted or motion is moved were used often but in true sense the issues of which ward committees were raising were not considered important by the council members. Yet, ward committees are said to be community representatives, a question of whether are they fulfilling their role of

representing local communities in decision making process of the council raises issues of investigations.

1.9 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

According to Leedy and Ormrod (1990:121), “research methodology is an operational framework, within which the facts are placed so that their meaning may be seen more clearly. A structured research process can only be done by means of a systematic plan of action”. Furthermore, Babbie and Mouton, (2001: 103) state that “a research methodology deals with whom or what will be studied to collect information; identify the subjects and how information will be obtained. In other words this process encompasses how the researcher will collect, analyse and interpret data so as to achieve the aims of the study”. Therefore this section is explaining all the steps of the methodology.

1.9.1 Research philosophy

The study intended to describe the rules of engagement in the election process of ward committees and to assess limitations of ward committee engagement in decision making process of the municipalities. As such, this study is embedded in *an interpretive or social constructivist philosophy* which views reality as a construct created by the mutual inter-relationships between individuals and the environment.

1.9.2 Research Design

According to Mouton and Marais, (1988:32) “a research design is an arrangement of conditions for collecting and analysing data in a manner that aims to combine relevance to the research purpose with economy in procedure”. Therefore, in this study, the nature of the problem under study necessitated the application of *descriptive research design*. The main purpose of using descriptive research designs builds on portraying peoples’ insights, socially constructed beliefs, norms and perceptions, with regard to gaps that is arising from the rules of engagement in the election process of ward committees and the limitations of ward committees engagement in decision making process of the municipality.

1.9.3 Research Approach

According to Neuman (2006:151), there are two approaches to research, namely the qualitative and quantitative data collection methods. Although each approach has its own methodology which stem from different philosophical assumptions that shape the ways researchers approach problems, collect and analyse data. Qualitative researchers often rely on interpretive or critical social science, and emphasise conducting detailed examinations of cases that arise from the natural flow of life. In keeping with the rule of alignment of the study, qualitative approach was viewed as being a twin with descriptive research since it seeks to understand peoples' insights, believes and attitudes. Therefore, the study employed qualitative approach to research as it was suitable. The purpose of utilising qualitative approach in this study was intended to provide an in-depth description of gaps arising from the rules of engagement in the election process of ward committees furthermore to obtain rich information on the limitations of ward committee's engagement in decision making process.

1.9.4 Study areas

1.9.4.1 uMhlathuze local municipality

“The City of uMhlathuze (KZ 282) is situated on the north-east coast of the province of KwaZulu-Natal, some 180kms north-east of Durban. The city borders a coastline that spans approximately 45 kilometers in length of which nearly 80% of it is in its natural state. The N2 highway traverses uMhlathuze Municipality in a north-east direction towards the Swaziland border and south-west towards Durban” (uMhlathuze Municipality 2012).

The uMhlathuze Local Municipality was established after to Local Government Elections and being empowered by the provisions of section 12(1) of the Local Government Municipal Structures Act 1998 (Act 117 of 1998). uMhlathuze Local Municipality consists of 30 wards and is identified as a Category B municipality. Since there are 30 wards, this suggests that there are also 30 ward committees serving the communities in this area. However, the study was interested only in ward 6 for the

purpose of this study, because this ward was found to be a semi-rural area and it fitted well with the obligations of the study.

1.9.4.2 eThekwini Metropolitan municipality

“eThekwini metropolitan Municipality is located on the east coast of South Africa in the Province of KwaZulu-Natal (KZN).The Municipality spans an area of approximately 2297km² and is home to some 3 442 361 million people. It consists of a diverse (cosmopolitan) society which faces various social, economic, environmental and governance challenges” (ethekwini Municipality 2013).

It has 103 established wards and 103 ward committee, however the study was interested only in ward 51 because of its known dynamics and that ward 51 was found to be urban municipality in nature.

1.9.5 Study Sample

Cooper and Schindler (2006:72) defines sample as “a part of the target population, carefully selected to represent that population”. In line with the above definition of target population, (Babbie, 2005: 104) adds on to say a sample is what or who is being studied . The study sample in this case is the communities of the two municipalities under study, ward committee, councillors, members and municipal officials. The table below indicate sample according to categories and sample size

Table 4: Selection of a Study Sample for the Study

No	Name of the Municipality	Target Population of the respective ward	Sample Size
1	uMhlathuze local	394	40
2	eThekwini Metropolitan	506	50
	Ward Committee Members		20
	Key Informants		10
	Total	1140	120

Source: Research Data, 2014

1.9.6 Sample Size

The sample size for this study was 120 respondents. Stratified sampling as one of the probability sampling technique was used to generate a sample of 90 community members from the surveyed wards and 20 ward members in both municipalities who had been affected by the problem at hand. In addition, the study interviewed 10 key informants in order to supplement data for this study. Table 4: demonstrates the sampling process of each selected municipalities as per the last census.

1.9.7 Sampling Techniques

Both probability and non- probability techniques was used for this study. Whereby combination of urban and semi-rural systems was brought into play when selecting wards for the study, thus ensuring that the research project is not skewed to one group sector whilst being biased towards other sectors of society.

1.9.8 Sampling method

1.9.8.1. Purposive Sampling

The study employed purposive sampling since it is one of the non-probability sampling methods, in choosing the research participants who were targeted for in-depth interviews i.e. municipal officials, ward councillors, Ward Committee members within eThekweni metropolitan municipality (ward 51) and (ward 6) of uMhlathuze local municipality.

1.9.8.2. Convenient Sampling

In convenience sampling, “subjects happen to be in the right place at the right time. A convenience sample is the use of readily accessible persons in a study. Any person who happens to cross the researcher’s path, and meets the inclusive criteria set for the study, gets included in a convenience sample” (De Vos 1998:199; LoBiondo-Wood & Haber, 1998: 253). In the case of this study community members were readily available as a sample.

“Probability sampling is characterised by an equal chance of inclusion of each element in the sample and however in the case of non-probability

sampling, this is not the case. In the present study, aspects of probability sampling are reflected by the way in which community members were selected” (De Vos 1998:199; LoBiondo-Wood & Haber, 1998: 253).

A list of 90 community members who were beneficiaries of the Ward Committee system was chosen in the study through the use of lottery methods.

Breakdown of study participants

✓ Key informants:

10 municipal officials separated into two municipalities under study namely: eThekweni Metropolitan municipality and uMhlathuze local municipality.

✓ eThekweni metropolitan municipality and uMhlathuze local ward committee members:

20 ward committee members meaning its 10 members per municipality.

✓ Community members of the two municipalities under study:

90 divided into two =45 each municipality.

The total sample size is then **120**

1.9.9 Data Collection Tools

1.9.9.1 Documentary Review/Analysis

This technique of conducting research and of data retrieval encompasses collating of documentary evidences relating to the topic being studied to deepen the analysis. Official documents like the IDP documents, ward committee handbook, municipal reports were critically reviewed. Information obtained is reviewed summarized.

1.9.9.2 Observation

The observation method of collecting data is utilised. The purpose for using this method is based on the notion that via the attendance of Ward Committee meetings, interaction among Ward Committee members (eThekweni Metropolitan and uMhlathuze Local Municipality) was closely observed. The process assisted in ensuring that the proceedings of meetings, that is, the

“way in which Ward Committee members conduct themselves during meetings, were carefully studied. Observation could be done either through the researcher taking part in the affairs of the study group, or the researcher being a passive observer” (Kumar, 2005: 120).

Non-participant observation was applied throughout the empirical research field work, where the researcher only attended the ward committee meetings to take note of meeting procedures and subsequently interview the members. As a method of data collection, interviewing processes involved an interaction between two or more individuals for a specific purpose. Therefore, the types of interviews can be identified as structured and unstructured interviews. Self-reporting, which entails personal and group face-to-face interviewing was also applied. In achieving its objectives, the research was conducted through interviews as this was of paramount importance because of its qualitative nature. The nature of the research project allows for face-to-face interaction between the informants (municipal officials’ i.e. Community Participation Manager, IDP Manager, Cooperate Governance Manager, Speaker of the Council etc.) therefore the researcher, attempted to comprehend the views and perspectives of the informants, in particular those who have a direct relationship with the programme of Ward Committees.

1.9.9.3 Questionnaires

The choice of a method of collecting data depends on the practical applicability of the research. Utilising the primary sources, data was collected through interviews, which assisted the researcher in acquiring data from members of council, Ward Committees, ward councillors, and members of the community. The process of interviewing as a method of data collection was based on interview schedules to collect data from the participants. A simple, random selection of participants was conducted on the focus group, in order to ensure that women and youths participated in the research project as the election process of ward committees requires gender, age representatively. The study administered semi structured questionnaires containing both close and open ended questions to avoid bias results. While open ended questions invites free responses from respondents, closed ended questions only allows respondents to choose from alternative responses provided. Questionnaires were distributed to different groups of community.

The questions were short to the point, yet with flow that the respondents could use to provide quick and accurate information. Questionnaires were used because of its ability for collecting a lot of information within a relatively short time (Leedy and Ormrod, 1990: 192).

1.9.9.4. Focus Group Discussion Guide

The purpose of using the FGDs' guide was to obtain an in depth information from ward committees on the problems they experienced in line with the rules of engagement in elections and the limitations of ward committee in local governance. A set of open-ended questions in English served as a guide for the FGDs to probe for clarification. A total of five FGDs were conducted.

1.9.9.5 Interview Guide or Schedule for Key Informants

Neuman (2000) argues “that face to face interviews have the highest response rates. Interviewers can also observe the surroundings and can use non- verbal communication and visual aids”. The purpose of using the interview schedule was to enable the researcher to get more information directly and clarify some questions and arguments regarding gaps arising from the limitations of ward committees in local governance and the rules of engagement of ward committees in the election process. The instrument was useful and appropriate for collecting information from the two municipal officials, ward councillors, Ward Committee members and the community within eThekweni Metropolitan municipality (ward 51) and (ward 6) of uMhlathuze local municipality who have experience with the problems. The use of an interview guide aimed at supplementing data gathered from questionnaires, documentary review and Focus Group discussion guides. Oral consent was sought from the respondents before the interviews were conducted.

1.9.10. Data analysis

“Data analysis is the process of moving from raw data to evidence-based interpretations that are the foundation for published reports in qualitative studies, the goal of data analysis is to find themes that explain the study (Cresswell, 1998: 201)”.

De Vos (2002: 340) “describes data analysis as a process of bringing order, structure and meaning to the mass of collected data”. Therefore, this study adopted content analysis as it sought to use themes as sequence of analysis. This method of analysis is best explained as follows: “Content analysis is a technique of gathering and analysing the content of text, where content refers to the words, meanings, pictures, symbols, ideas, themes or any message that can be communicated” (Neuman, 2000:292).

1.9.11 Validity

Multiple data collection techniques were employed to ensure reliability and validity of the study, since there is no single data collection technique that is sufficient in collecting valid and reliable data. According to Golafshani (2003) and Miller (1991) “instrument validity and reliability lie at the heart of competent and effective study”. Reliability and validity are important criteria to research in any paradigm because the “results of a study can be reproduced under a similar methodology, then the research instrument is considered to be reliable and validity” (Miller 1991). Validity refers to the degree to which the instruments used actually test or measure what it purports to measure (Punch, 2004). The researcher designed study instruments that aimed to answer the research question as per study objectives. The results of the finding in this research showed that they are reliable as the instrument applied measured what were expected to measured.

1.9.12 Reliability

This may refer to the consistency and dependability of the results. Reliability denotes

“that the numerical results produced as a result of data collection procedure do not vary because of the characteristics of the measurement process or measurement instrument itself. Therefore, under the same conditions when observations can be repeated, data collected should produce identical numerical results. Although absolute reliability of data is difficult to be realized, simply conceptualising constructs, use of a precise level of measurement, use of multiple indicators and use of pilot tests can improve the reliability of research instruments” (Neuman and Robson, 2009).

This research ensured reliability by facilitating proper training of researchers, formulating precise level of measurement such as questionnaires and interview guides which are explicit, unambiguous and less complicated. The questionnaires and interview guides in this study was structured in a way that was plainly directive in order to keep up with time for answering.

1.10 LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The researcher had to ensure that a time schedule was compiled, to address the challenges of limited time available to conduct the study. The study was limited to the two selected wards because of their nature as related to the study. In addition, the researcher had to motivate respondents to feel at liberty to provide information to the study, by adhering to research ethics pointed out in the research methodology in (Chapter 5), and administer questionnaires on the spot, to ensure that no delays were encountered in the return of questionnaires.

1.11 CHAPTER LAYOUT

Chapter 1: Introduction - This chapter presents a background details for the study and it is segmented in the following manner from the background to the study, the problem statement, objectives of the study, research questions, contribution of the study, and motivation of the study, chapter layout and the conclusion. This chapter is also devoted to the methodological approach this research employed. It outlined the procedural steps the researcher took to investigate the identified problem in this research.

Chapter 2: A Review of the Literature - This chapter focuses on synthesis and scholarly literature review that finds bearing to the current study. The chapter reviews works base on public participation, ward committees election process, Role of ward committees in the decision making process of the municipality. The chapter details what has been said by whom and the context and approaches adopted. It also details what previous author's fails to say which then provides the validation and gap in knowledge for this study.

Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework - This chapter discusses in detail the theory informing the study and further provides a link to related theory that helps the reader understand the phenomenon under study more clearly. It further discusses the following concepts: The benefits of public participation ward committees enhancing accountability, responsiveness, accountability and responsibility. This chapter also discusses the place of legislative framework and the public participation in the governance of the wards committees in the local government. The essence is to see the interdependency and interrelationship between the ward committees and the local government.

Chapter 4: Analysis and report of the Study - This chapter provides reports on the findings and analysis of the study.

Chapter 5: Conclusion and Recommendation - Chapter seven provides the summary, conclusion and recommendations for the study.

1.12. CONCLUSION

The purpose of this chapter was to outline the problem furthermore and bring about an understanding of the origination of the idea of public participation in the perspective of ward committees within the South African local government environment. This chapter has further drawn a picture on ward committees controversies and a reason why this study was necessary to be conducted. Lastly but not list this chapter enlightens the reader on how the study aimed to contribute in the body of knowledge on local governance. This chapter also provides details on how the study was carried out in terms of research methodology that was used to gather the information that assisted in answering the research question. The case studies, focus group discussion and open ended questionnaires that were used for this study provided rich information that was useful in answering the research objectives.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Reliable information on the existing gaps attributed to the functionality of ward committee's in local governance is in short supply. As the purpose of literature review in research is to describe accumulated knowledge about a specific problem, issue or debate under and to ascertain strengths and weaknesses of the literature, identifying the existing gaps as well as noting unbiased and valid studies of the relevant published work (Muya, 2014). This section reviews scholarly works already written that finds bearing to the current study. The chapter reviews works base on public participation, ward committees election process, Role of ward committees in the decision making process of the municipality. The chapter details with what has been said by whom and the context and approaches adopted. It also details what previous author's fails to say which then provides the validation and gap in knowledge for this study.

2.2 LIMITATIONS OF WARD COMMITTEE ENGAGEMENT IN LOCAL GOVERNANCE

2.2.1 Conflict of interest between Ward Councillor and Ward Committee

According to, (Putu ,2006: 30), "there is conflicting interests between the councillors and ward committees, the author notes that in most cases because ward committees are chaired by ward councillors conflict erupted due to the fact that the ward councillors wish to satisfy their political mandate rather than improving the lives of citizens. This led to the control of ward committees and the participation process where the agenda for meetings is often politically influenced in the hands of politicians who came to signify barriers for effective involvement of ordinary citizens". Whilst the above literature review drive the nail home, this study argues that the presence of a councillor in the structure of ward committee as a chairperson forfeits the purpose of ward committee as a voice of the people.

2.2.2 Communication

Chapter 4 of both the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000 and Local Government: Municipal Structures Act 117 of 1998 includes ward committees as a structure that can provide a way for communities to be heard at local level in a structured and institutionalised way. The Department of Provincial and Local Government: (Ward Committee Resource Book, 2005: 37) stipulates that the ward committee should, in a broad sense, be a communication channel for the entire community residing in the respective ward. However, these policies are very explicit and concise this study argues that the role of ward committees as communication channel for the communities to be heard remains questionable. Most municipal councils provide administrative support to facilitate regular interaction between the ward committee, the ward councillor and the council, while ward committees on the other hand lack capacity to communicate regularly with their communities (IDASA & Afesis-Corplan, 2005)

2.2.3 Dissemination of information to the community Language bearer

The Local Government: Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000 requires municipalities to utilise communication resources such as local newspaper and radio stations, an official website of the municipality including the public library to give information about the affairs of the municipality to the community. Therefore, the community through ward committee representative structures must ensure that the information relevant to community as prescribed by the legislation is published. However, this study contends that ward committees are failing to contest for appropriate language to be used as medium of communication in information dissemination as this is required where the population is dominated by one language.

2.2.4 Lack of Consultation in the IDP process

The Urban Sector Network (USN) reports “a case study of the integrated development planning processes of the eThekweni Metropolitan in which they highlight some key strengths and challenges regarding public participation in IDP. The report starts by noting that IDP participation structures in the metro were not developed through an initial process involving existing structures and new role-players” (USN, 2001: 26). This

resulted in a situation where processes were pre-designed and taken to communities for acceptance”, (USN, 2001: 26). Therefore, the study concurs with the above findings and further argues that ward committees became like lambs ready to die without questioning why they are killed this means ward committees just endorse decisions already taken by the council without questioning them. Therefore- this study puts into question their contribution as the voice of the people in the decision making process.

2.2.5 Lack of Resource

Piper and Chanza (2006) conducted research on the “operation of ward committees in the Msunduzi municipality, lack of resources was identified as having a significant influence in the under-participation and under-representation of young people on ward committees”. The study concurs with above findings, However, the research further contends that the young people are seen as a threat towards the councillor and the council, since they demand to be paid, the stipend which is stated in the legislations governing ward committees whilst also demanding all the support they should be provided with by the municipality as asserted in the legislations. On the other hand, the unlearned adults do not demand these things therefore in most elections the youth is sidelined but adults are represented.

2.2.6 Insufficient Training for Ward Committees

Another issue that emerged repeatedly in the study conducted by piper and Chanza was the issue of training for ward committee members (Mohamed ,2006: 40). He argues “that it is extremely difficult for member of a ward committee in an impoverished setting without any logistical means to be effective in engaging their communities”. Tshishonga (2007) on the other hand contend that “the challenges facing ward committees in local participatory governance in the eThekweni metropolitan Municipality... that capacity building and training remain one of challenges facing ward committee members in performing their duties effectively”. These include but not limited to “Insufficient skills in organising and running community based meetings; Lack of information regarding municipal policies and protocol; Inadequate support in the form of office facilities and equipment” (Tshishonga 2007).

This study argues that the incapacity of ward committees contribute to the demotivation felt by many ward committee members.

2.2.7 Limited power of Ward Councillor

Tshishongas' (2007) studies on participatory democracy in the Johannesburg city council, in which was noted that Benit-Gbaffoue (2006: 7), suggests that “one of the key limitations to the participatory process is the limited powers and lack of accountability of ward councillors . The limited power of councillors within the municipal council is attributed to a strong centralisation of decision-making and policy orientation, which also leaves room for one party domination to prevail” (Benit-Gbaffoue 2006;7). Councillors are also said to show limited accountability to their constituencies, due both to the municipal structure itself.

2.2.8 Community Capacity challenges

There was an argument

“that the IDP processes are still far from achieving full community involvement in policy-making as stipulated in the legislation – they remain very much top –down , and communities are said to be merely allowed to comment on proposals developed by city officials rather than being invited to contribute to the content before its drafting . Instead, the meetings are dominated by questions about the promises that are not realised and perhaps making a list of demands for the city” (Mohamed, 2006.42).

Meanwhile, “the IDP proposals which are presented to communities for consultation are complex and contain technical parts that are beyond the ability of the community members to grasp” (Mohamed, 2006.42). Therefore the study question the role of local government with regards to community capacitation? .It should be remembered that public participation means nothing if the community lack understanding as to what is their contribution in decision making process. Ward committees as well can do nothing in the absence of the community, hence -they carry their mandate. According to (Putu, 2006:28), “public participation through the ward committees in the Rustenburg Local Municipality, the author further argues that there was no proper introduction of

democracy at the grassroots level and people simply do not know how to constructively engaged with local government”.

2.2.9 Ward Committee Power Fiasco over Boundary

Putu (2006: 30) in his study of participation of ward committees conducted in the Rustenburg Local Municipality “highlights the conflict that rose between traditional leadership and the municipality as another challenge to the participatory process... and that control by the municipality over the decisions about the nature of the structure of the participatory channels restricted and undermined the influence of the traditional authorities” (Putu. 2006: 30). In line with the above reviewed literature this study concurs with Putu’s findings however, suggest that, it seems as if certain powers of traditional structures are said to have been taken away and granted to the ward councillor and ward committees without notification and agreement with the traditional leaders structures.

2.2.10 Lack of relevant information sharing and resources

“Lack of communication or poor communication between the municipality and the ward committees is detrimental to any meaningful participation in municipal processes. The ability of ward committees to function effectively is constrained by poor municipal communication strategies and a lack of accessible information and resources at ward level. This is particularly true in relation to municipal planning processes such as the IDP and the municipal budget. If targets and indicators for development and budgeted allocations were not made known and were not properly explained ward committees could hardly make any input or be held accountable” (Silima 2013).

2.2.11 Limitation of power

The limitation of power is legislatively imposed on ward committees by means of *the Local Government: Municipal Structures Act of 1998*. This “act confines the powers of ward committees to that of communication and mobilisation, providing advice and acting

as a support system to ward councillors. Although the Act makes provision for municipalities to delegate certain powers and duties to ward committees” (Silima 2013). According to Smith (2008:14), “only a few municipalities have done this in any meaningful way”. The study concurs with the above findings and further argues that participation without power to participate leaves ward committees voiceless in decision making process. In actual fact, ward committees are not to be spectators but should form part of decision making panel however this avenue seem not to be exhausted.

2.2.12 Representation of ward committees

“An important objective for democratic governance is to ensure that the representation on ward committees is derived from an inclusive nomination and election process. Ward committee members should strive at all times to represent the community they serve. From the literature review it is first clear that the main focus of both the ward committee members and the public officials should be on partnership building and more specifically of a participative democracy” (Silima 2013).

As (Hilhorst and Guijt 2006: 15) state: “Smooth partnerships are essential for efficiency, to avoid duplication and prevent gaps. However, this is easier said than done. In a multi-stakeholder setting, being clear on responsibilities and quality standards, sharing information, undertaking joint analysis, and honouring agreements is often a challenge”. The study concurs with the above findings however it further argues that the above mentioned challenge is perceived in the election process of ward committees where sectoral representation of ward committees is questionable.

2.2.13 Political will

“The barrier to strengthening participation involves the absence of a strong and determined central authority in providing and enforcing opportunities for participation at the local level, as well as the lack of political will by local government officers in enforcing the legislation that has been created for this purpose” (Velasquez, 1991; Herzer et al., 1991; Rosemberg; 1994; Bohme,

1997)”.

According to Mukandala (1998), Makumbe, (1998) and Ddungu (1998), “This is more notorious in the case studies of countries with one-party democracies or weak opposition parties”. Therefore, ward committees are seen as not effective because officials of local government who supposed to assist them in realising their goal are not willing to assist.

2.2.14 Ward Committee members educational levels

“A skills audit of 373 ward committee members in the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality carried out by the Project for Conflict Resolution and Development in 2008 found that only 34 of the members (9%) had any post-matric training or qualification and 59 members (16%) did not have a matric qualification. These are results from a metropolitan municipality. It is likely that the education profile of ward committee members in more rural municipalities will reflect even lower education and skills levels” (Bendle, 2008).

What are the implications of these findings? It is obvious that ward “committees’ effectiveness is constrained by limitations in members’ levels of education, skills and expertise” (Bendle, 2008). As such this study contends that the notion that ward committee member’s level of education translates a positive impact in the decision making process at the Municipal level

2.2.15 Ward Committee oversight role

One of the important roles of the ward committees as independent of political parties is to act as a watch dog on the performance of the councillor and to review the IDP process, (Hollands, 2005). However, the alignment of ward of ward committees with political party structures as perceived in this study put in question their oversight role. The DDP’s experience in working with ward committees has suggested that the ward committees had been largely unable to fulfil their legislative mandate because they were more focused on political mandates. The DDP’s has been with the Department of local government and traditional affairs for a number of years, conducting over 40 workshops

for ward committees in various district in KwaZulu-Natal.

2.2.16 Community engagement in ward committee elections

2.2.16.1 Ward Committee election process hijacked by Party Politics

Piper and Chanza, (2006) study on the operation of ward committees in the Msunduzi Municipality, found that local politics was one of the reasons cited as crippling the operation of ward committees. A councillor was quoted saying “it was up to the community to elect or nominate members of the committee”. Further, a young ward member argued that party politics limited the chances of young people making to ward committees. According to Piper and Chanza (2006), a young man reported that: “when they recruit ward committee members they only take card-carrying ANC members... they do not choose young people... in fact they do not see us as young people”. Therefore the study contends that most of ward committees are not representing a true reflection of the choice of local communities in decision making.

2.2.16.2 Manipulation of Ward Committee Structures by Party Politics

Tshishonga (2007) work on challenges facing ward committees in enhancing local participatory governance argues that “party political bias has had a negative effect in the functioning of the participatory process with regards to the ward committees in the eThekweni Municipality. Community members interviewed are under the impression that, whenever ward meetings or workshops are called, the agenda is often influenced by the party that the councillor is affiliated to”. The study posits further that this “clearly have an adverse effect on the genuineness of public participation and engagement by ward committees in decision making processes”.

2.2.16.3 Politicisation of ward committees by political party influence

Piper and Deacon (2008) investigated

“Msunduzi Municipality, and found that ward committees are very often politicised in one of three ways. Firstly, there is “inter-party” competition, in which political parties vie for control of the committees and where the composition of committees is skewed towards supporters of one or other

party. then there is “intra-party competition” in which ward committees have become embroiled in factionalism within political parties, where one or other faction within the party (typically the ANC) use ward committees to secure greater political power. Finally, there is what Piper and Deacon term “policy-competition” where the role of ward committees, rather than the composition, is defined by the political party. In Msunduzi, the latter has apparently been manifested by ward committees in predominantly DA areas refusing to participate in the municipalities ward committee processes, such as the training that was provided for ward committees... In some cases there is a close relationship between ward committees and branches of political parties. In some instances, the members of both structures are the same. They cite an example of a ward councillor who combined ward committee and ANC branch meetings... to avoid a state of animosity between the two groups which are essentially the same thing.”

The study in line with the above reviewed literature further contends that the politicization of ward committees by political party influence limit their meaningful contribution in decision making process of the municipal council.

2.2.16.4 Representation

To representation relates both the size of wards,

“racial and socio-economic diversity within wards. There needs to be flexibility around this. The City of Cape Town, for example, opted for a ward forum consisting of 20 representatives rather than a ward committee that is restricted by legislation to have no more than ten members (Smith and De visser)”.

According to Piper and Deacon (2008) in the study conducted at Msunduze municipality ward “councillors personally confirmed co-opting members as and when they saw the need arise”. However, according to Piper and Deacon, (2009), cited a handbook issued by the DPLG (2005: 29) as it “cautions against the 'handpicking' of committee members”. In view of the above reviewed literature, thus this study raises a question of

whether local community members are given enough space to play their role in the ward committees' election process. Piper and Deacon, 2008 in the study conducted at Msunduze municipality also found out that the ward councillor and almost all the committee are white business owners previously associated through a City Improvement District committee, many of whom were invited by the ward councillor to sit on the ward committee. Hence, this ward committee more closely resembles a (white) local chamber of commerce rather than the resident population, which is almost fifty per cent black and middle- to low- income. On the above reviewed literature the study puts in question the issue of representative by geographical areas, race and by sector.

2.2.16.5 Power relations

Even though the structures act provide “for the delegation of powers to wards, ward committees this is often seldom in reality”, (Hollands, 2005). However, the study concurs with the above findings but it further argues that the role of ward committees as a link is questionable in decision making process. Hence –

“citizen participation is about power and its exercise by different social actors in the spaces created for the interaction between citizens and local authorities.. the control of the structure and processes for participation - defining spaces, actors, agendas, procedures – lies in the hands of governmental institutions” (Hollands, 2005).

This is perceived by this study as a barrier for effective involvement of citizens.

2.2.17 Conceptualisation of Public Participation

Much has been written on what public participation is and what it should be. As there has also been an increasing influence of participatory approaches, many critics have been aroused as well. This subchapter is going to explore the positive and the negative patterns of public participation. Moreover, this chapter specifically reviews the assumption of the value participation and problematic nature of participation.

2.2.17.1 Defining Public Participation

Arnstein, (2003) defines

“citizen participation as a categorical term for citizen power, where the distribution of power is enhanced to deliberately include the underdeveloped (who could be excluded from the political and economic processes) to obtain their active participation in the future. She further echoes that public participation exists in different types and categories within which power is centred, and the definition could assist in eliminating misinformed perceptions and developing a common understanding on what public participation is”.

Pearce (2010) on the other hand

“identifies two distinct of public participation, *i.e.* direct citizen participation and participation through associations... Direct citizen participation, is a process where all members of the society in their individual capacity participate in decision making processes, the latter is the participation through representation, where a representative is elected or appointed to participate in a decision making process, wherein they represent the views of and are accountable to those who elected or appointed them”.

On the same token, Clapper (1993)

“provides a distinction between citizen participation and public participation, where he contends public participation to be the efforts of all the people included in the public to influence government activities, and citizen participation referring to purposeful activities in which people take part in relation to political units of which they are legal residents... In both the definitions, participation is regarded as an activity”.

2.2.17.2 Principles of Public Participation

The Municipality is committed to enabling participation of all people in decisions of the Municipality that shall affect them. This strategy is designed to outline the expectations in regard to Public Participation. In particular it is designed to:

Assist elected representatives understand, and be informed by, the views of constituencies when making decisions on their behalf;

Assist the officials of each municipality to gain community input into planning, program development, regulation, project development and implementation; and

Help to develop and maintain co-operative relationships between the municipality and the community.

In order to make public participation a reality, the municipalities shall be guided by the eight **Batho Pele principles**:

Consultation - Citizens must be consulted about the level and quality of the public services they receive and, wherever possible, shall be given a choice about the services that are offered. Civic education shall be at the centre of the agenda, to actively empower role players so that they clearly and fully understand the objective of public participation and may in turn take such actions or conduct themselves in ways that are calculated to achieve or lead to the delivery of the objectives.

Service Standards - Citizens must be informed about the level and quality of public services they shall receive so that they are aware of what to expect. This includes being informed of service charters, strategic plans, booklets with standards and service level agreements.

Access - All citizens must have equal access to the services to which they are entitled. The municipality shall ensure that participants in a public participation process fully and clearly understand the aim, objectives, issues and the methodologies of the process, and are empowered to participate effectively. Accessibility shall ensure not only that the role players can relate to the process and the issues at hand, but also that they are, at the practical level, able to make their input into the process.

Courtesy - Citizens must be treated with courtesy and consideration. The municipality shall embrace all views and opinions in the process of community participation; and shall allow differences based on race, gender, religion, ethnicity, language, age, economic status and sexual orientation to emerge, and where appropriate, ways shall be sought to develop consensus in the planning processes to include these diversities. Where citizens

cannot read or write, a municipal official shall be available to assist in writing the citizen's query, complaint or request.

Information - Citizens must be given full and accurate information about the public service they are entitled to receive. The Municipality shall, through its relevant offices, assist in providing information about the Municipal issues and government services available to communities; register indigent households, or provide information concerning account, billing and tariff queries. The Municipality shall ensure both political and municipality administrative accountability by acknowledging and assuming responsibility for decisions, actions, conduct and policies developed. Information shall be available in the main languages of the district/ Local area and wherever possible, arrangements shall be made to facilitate sign language and Braille where needed. Communities shall also be informed through community newsletters, posters, and brochures, press articles in the local media, local radio bulletins, website and all other available channels.

Openness and transparency - Citizens must be told how national, provincial departments and local municipality are being run, how much the budgets are, and who is in charge. The municipality shall promote openness, sincerity and honesty among all the members of Council and municipality administrators in service delivery and the public participation process. The municipality shall present the IDP and budget for public scrutiny and publish the annual report to inform citizens how the municipality's resources were used, including how well the municipality performed.

Redress - Should the promised standard of service not be delivered, citizens shall be offered an apology, a full explanation and a speedy and effective remedy; and when complaints are made, citizens should receive a sympathetic, positive response. Trust is a critical element in the public participation process and invariably trust is used to refer to faith and confidence in the integrity, sincerity, honesty and ability of the process and those facilitating the process.

Citizens shall also be requested to fill in **customer satisfaction questionnaires** to test their level of satisfaction of services provided and all queries, complaints and requests shall be recorded and monitored on a monthly basis to identify trends in information

needs, number of calls received, topic of discussions, where these queries came from and whether the calls were satisfactorily dealt with.

Value for money - Public services should be provided economically and efficiently in order to give citizens the best possible value for money.

The municipality shall ensure that the public participation processes are integrated into the mainstream policies and services, such as the IDP process, Service Delivery Planning and so on. Citizens shall be fully informed about the budget, financial statements, how the money was spent, budget reviews, what projects were implemented, expenditure controls, internal controls, etc to ensure value for money.

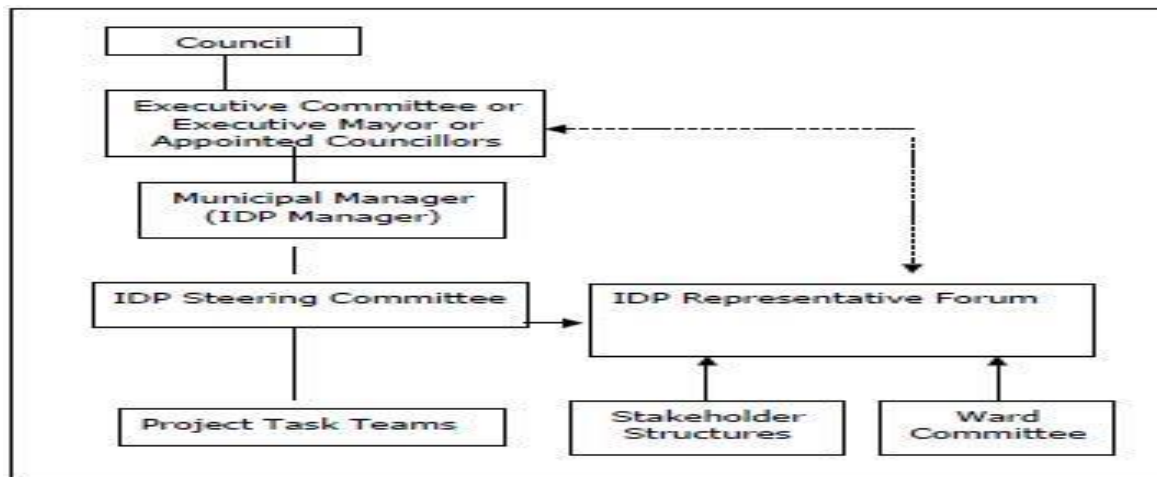
2.2. 18. Participatory Mechanisms

In uMhlathuze local municipality,

“participatory mechanisms take place throughout the IDP process. The IDP process help the project to ensure that the process, plans, goals, and implementation of the planned intervention is inclusive, and importantly address the needs of marginalized groups and minorities to ensure non-discrimination and equality... Participation built up ownership and partnerships which make the projects that are implemented within the community more sustainable. Municipalities are faced with a very challenging task of ensuring that they implement the developmental mandate that they have been tasked with. To implement the objectives of local government as they are clearly spelt out strong organization with dynamic and charismatic leadership that is able to provide a clear direction for the success of the organization as well as to help the organization to achieve what it exists for. This also requires a vision and mission that will serve to steer uMhlathuze municipality in the desired direction with positive outcomes. For the Vision to be realised council has to place much effort in fast-tracking and fine-tuning uMhlathuze’s operational strategies and programmes. The Integrated Development Plan (IDP) plays a crucial role in carrying out the local government mandate. The organizational arrangements

in terms of functions and responsibilities in driving the planning process for the uMhlathuze IDP are illustrated in the figure herewith and discussed briefly thereafter” (IDP, 2011-2012).

Figure: 4 IDP Role players involved during the communication processes.



Source: 2011/2012 uMhlathuze IDP Process Plan

uMhlathuze Municipality’s communication strategy entails that:

“Ward Committee members and Councillors are part of the preparation of ward meetings. IDP community sessions are held in venues closest to the community; Release of print media press when required to local and provincial newspapers are in Zulu and English; SMS’s, flyers and loud hailing are also used as a strategy to sensitise the community to attend the IDP meetings; Monthly internal and external newsletters are used to publish IDP/Budget news; and Council provides transport for community members to respective venues” (IDP, 2011-2012).

2.2.19 Institutional arrangement for public participation in eThekweni metropolitan municipality

Section 160(7) of the constitution states that “a Municipal council must conduct its business in an open manner, and may close its sittings, or those of its committees only

when it is reasonable to do so, having regard to the nature of the business being transacted”.

Section 152(1)(a),(b) & states that the objects of local government are:

“To encourage the involvement of communities and community organisations in matters of local government. To provide democratic and accountable government to local communities and To encourage the involvement of communities and community organisations in matters of local government”.

The Local Government: Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000 (MSA) states that municipalities must

“encourage and create conditions for the local community to participate in the affairs of the Municipality. To achieve this, the preparation, implementation and review of the IDP and the preparation of the budget in conjunction with other spheres of government and civil society partners through a variety of forums. Stakeholders in the IDP process are key role players with an interest in the integrated development of the Municipality. To engage with the views of these role-players, the Municipality engaged in an integrated workshop process with communities and business. These took place in the form of regional workshops (19 regional and four cluster hearings)...The hearings included a presentation on the budget, the draft IDP and performance management. During the hearings the following sectors were represented: business, labour, ward, committees, amakhosi, NGO, faith based organisations, provincial and national government, parastatals and people with disabilities”.

The Municipality has also come up with an innovative way of taking the Council to communities by holding its meeting at venues in different areas of the Municipality. This has encouraged greater participation of communities in matters of local government.

2.2.19.1 Communication, Participation and Forums

The Municipality has the following structures and mechanisms for community participation:

- Ward councillors
- Ward committees
- Community development workers and community liaison officials
- Stakeholder forums;
- Customer relations programmes which include the customer satisfaction questionnaire programme and the Mystery Shopper programme, where all Customer Centres are evaluated and scored on an objective basis;
- Media; AND
- Surveys.

The Municipality has created more mechanisms for community participation. These include:

- Masakhane Programme (community outreach);
- Mayoral Izimbizo;
- Youth, disability and gender forums;
- Community based planning and
- Rate payers' associations, community based organisations, NGOs and faith based organisations, which we engage with during IDP reviews, budget preparation and the review of the Municipality's performance.

The eThekweni metropolitan Municipality does not take lightly the need for public participation. The municipality strives to comply with the laws of the Republic as well as make it part of its culture, custom and practice. Since its inception in 2000, the eThekweni Municipality has sought to engage communities in all its programmes. Hence in 2002 it has established a dedicated Business Support Unit, through which communities are engaged and their participation championed. In 2006 the eThekweni municipality has adopted a community participation policy. This policy promoted various Units to have community liaison or education divisions (including Durban Solid Waste, Water, and

Housing). The municipality is also committed to ensuring that all citizens are well informed about Municipal governance, management and development of the Municipality.

A communication strategy has been developed and information is given through a number of communication tools, including the Municipal gazette (eZasegagasini Metro) and the Municipal website. The Municipality has adopted and implemented a language policy and encourages citizens to engage with the Municipality in a language they are comfortable with.

2.2.19.2 Councillors

In the eThekweni metropolitan municipality there is a total of 200 Councillors, of whom 100 are Ward Councillors and the balance are Proportional Representative (PR), hence Council operates on an executive Committees System. With regard to Ward Councillors there are 80 male Councillors and 20 female Councillors. In respect of PR Councillors, there are 60 male Councillors and 40 female Councillors. There are a total of 140 male Councillors and 60 female Councillor of political parties represented on Council as follows:

Table 3: Political party representation on council in eThekweni metropolitan municipality

Party NAME	WARD SEATS	PR LIST SEATS	TOTAL
African Christian Democratic Party	0	3	3
African National Congress	73	45	118
Azanian People's Organasation	0	1	1
Democratic Alliance	16	18	34
Independent Democrats	0	3	3
Inkatha Freedom Party	4	20	24
Minority Front	7	6	13
National Democratic Convention	0	1	1
South African Democratic Convention	0	1	1
Truly Alliance	0	2	2
	100	100	200

2.2.19.3 Political Decision-Taking

Decision making politically takes place at the Executive committee (EXCO) and Council. There are weekly meetings of EXCO, which take decisions that are plenary to it. A total of 30 of these meetings take place during the financial year. All EXCO decisions are implemented, including those that were modified.

The Council is the highest decision making authority. It meets once a month to:

1. Ratify EXCO decisions;
2. Consider and decide on recommendations from EXCO
3. Deal with motions as proposed by various role players.

2.3. CONCLUSION

This chapter discussed the controversies and breakthroughs of ward committees in local governance. This chapter x-rayed the gap after an extensive literature review which was conducted. Some of the literature reviewed was positive and some was negative however the whole point of conducting this literature review was to establish facts that could assist in answering the research question of which was fully achieved. Furthermore this chapter provided a synopsis on the conceptualisation of the study on public participation and was discussed thoroughly. This chapter exhausted all possible literature that was in line with research objectives which aimed to answer the research question.

CHAPTER 3

THEORETICAL AND LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK FOR THE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN THE CONTEXT OF SOUTH AFRICA

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses in detail the theory informing the background of the study and further provides a link to related theory that helps the reader understand the phenomenon under study more clearly. The place of a theory in a research is to provide eyes in which scholars can view or learn about the phenomenon. Therefore, this chapter discusses in detail participatory democracy and provide a link towards representative democracy. It further discusses the following concepts: The benefits of public participation ward committees enhancing accountability, responsiveness, accountability and responsibility.

Also, in the new democratic dispensation South Africa, institutions and government structures were democratised immediately after the watershed April 1994 general elections. Therefore, the Constitution of South Africa (Act no.108 of 1996) stipulates the need for democratic and accountable local government, and encourages the involvement of communities and community organisations in local government affairs. Section 152(1) of the Constitution of the republic of South Africa, calls for public involvement in local government, which is required to “provide democratic and accountable government for local communities”. It specifically requires local government to “encourage the involvement of communities and community organisations in the matter of local government”, with “local authorities ... providing strong leadership for their areas and their communities”. The principle behind public participation is that all stakeholders affected a public authority decision or actions have a right to be consulted and contribute to such decision. Therefore, the requirement for effective participation in municipalities is clearly set out in various pieces of legislations and policy documents applicable to local government.

3.2 PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY THEORY

Participatory democracy as a theory was developed by some authors of the 1960s and 1970s, in particular Carole Pateman and C.M. MacPherson. The Port Huron Statement introduces the term “participatory democracy” (“*[i]n a participatory democracy, political life would be based on*

several root principles...”) and presents some fundamental theoretical schemes; these are to be read as being closely connected and logically consequent from one another this is what these authors believed about participatory democracy are stated below:

An image of Man as optimistic on the potential of human self-development; rejection of the notion that individuals are intrinsically “incompetent” and unable to govern their common life or to deal with the issues affecting their lives with a view to the long term; an ideal of individual self-determination, autonomy and independence and, at the same time, an ideal of fraternity as the dominant form of social relationships: “*This kind of independence does not mean egoistic individualism: the object is not to have one's way so much as it is to have a way that is one's own*”, is the key-phrase in this respect the idea that decision-making processes, on issues having social implications and consequences, must be conducted in public and participative ways; “Participatory democracy” is founded on the direct action of citizens who exercise some power and decide issues affecting their lives; Carole Pateman’s view to be especially emblematic: “in the participatory theory, ‘participation’ refers to (equal) participation in the making of decisions, and political equality refers to equality of power of determining the outcome of decisions...”(Pateman, 1970: 43).

A proposition from Sherry R. Arnstein (1969) states that

“Equality of the power that individuals exercise in decision-making is the key of this understanding of democracy and participation...It is neither public discussion, nor public reason-giving, that comes into play here: what matters is only participation in a decisional process and the capability of doing so in conditions of equality that allow all individuals to exercise a fair share of power, and thus affirm their immediate will. The same notion was expressed, perhaps more influentially, since it gained widespread and enduring popularity, by the image of the ‘ladder of participation’... a ladder in which each ‘rung’ denoted the different possible levels of citizens’ participative involvement, depending on the degree of power they were able to exercise – from the lowest level of *non-participation (manipulation, therapy)*, to *tokenism (information, consultation, placation)*, to proper forms of citizen power (*partnership, delegated power, community control*).”

The wide acceptance, but also the equivocalness, of this image (still frequently cited today) are rooted in a sort of implicit requirement of the first theories, and then in the “common feeling”, on the idea of participatory democracy: namely, the idea that “true” participation would be that which confers or attributes “power” to participating citizens. In Arnstein’s short essay we can find an exemplary summary of ideas that will enjoy widespread circulation: for example, the polemical contraposition of “going through the empty ritual of participation and having the real power needed to affect the outcome of the process” (ib: 216): an enduring framework that today often assumes traits that may be more properly defined as “populist”:

Citizens must be able to decide!” is the rallying cry of all those who interpret the meaning of citizens’ direct participation in this light... against the “elite”, the politicians, and every form of mediation and representation. Since the issue of ward committees is part of advancing the participatory democracy the study opted for this theory. Below the theory is discussed as inter-linked to local government participatory system.

The transformation of local government subsequently positioned local government as a sphere of government with its own powers, separate from those of national or provincial government (RSA 1996). With this repositioning, local government was given a new role; that of developmental local government (RSA 1996; RSA 1998a). The White Paper on Local Government (RSA 1998) sets the vision for the new role of local government, which “centres on working with local communities to find sustainable ways to meet their needs and improve the quality of their lives” (RSA 1998a). The involvement of local citizens and communities in meeting the needs of communities is, thus, the key for the new developmental local government (*ibid.*). This approach to a developmental local government is indeed a shift from the way the previous government operated, with a top-down approach to policy and development (Karlsson, Pampallis and Sithole 1996: 116).

According to (Piper and Deacon,2006: 2-3) this refers to “participatory governance” as taking the views and interests of those affected by government more seriously than in the past.This means that municipalities should promote local democracy, as the local community makes up not only the electorate that voted them into power, but the most important stakeholders in local governance. In the South African local government sphere, participatory democracy is affected through the structure of Ward Committees. For Ward Committees to be able to fulfil their

mandate, they need to be sufficiently resourced and capacitated. (Mathekga and Buccus, (2009: 12) argue that technical capacity has been overrated as the main ingredient to improved service delivery at the expense of substantive democracy and active citizenship. In support of the above statement, by implication (Zimmerman, 1986: 3) argues that from the government's standpoint, citizens who share responsibility for decision-making with elected officers, may have the advantage of facilitating the implementation of plans and programmes. In the first instance, the main beneficiary of service delivery is the community. Therefore, if involved, they would ensure that services are kick-started at the earliest convenience.

The concept of “participatory democracy” as envisaged by the Constitution requires that the interplay between the elected representative structures and the participating community is addressed by means of appropriate mechanisms. It is this relationship to which this study suggests that there should not only be meaningful opportunities for participation, but that steps must be taken to ensure that people have the ability and capacity to take advantage of those opportunities. (Section 16 of the Municipal Systems Act, 2000), addresses this requirement directly. It requires that a municipal council “build capacity” and to “allocate resources” to ensure that meaningful participation can occur. As is indicated in s17 of the (Systems Act, 2000), participation of the local community must occur through the political structures, i.e. through engagement with the council and its executive committees. It must also occur via the structures and mechanisms established by the Act, most notably ward committees. However, the obligation to encourage public participation and to provide appropriate mechanisms is not confined to these structures. The section does not establish a closed list of mechanisms. The obligation is an open ended one. The Constitution envisages the extension and expansion of involvement of communities as a guiding principle. It envisages a dynamic and evolving participation of communities in the affairs of local authorities. The study refers to “a continuum that ranges from providing information and building awareness, to partnering in decision-making”. The obligation to encourage public participation at local government level goes beyond a mere formalism in which public meetings are convened and information share.

3.2.1 The benefits of public participation

Deacon and Piper (2006: 2) contends that

“throughout the world, municipalities have come to appreciate that the relationship between government and the governed, is as important as government itself. They refer to a shift from government to governance. This is the latest form of democracy, overtaking the old representative democracy. This paradigm shift is marked by consultation, involvement and serious consideration of the views of those being governed. Many writers and acts propose similar benefits of public participation”.

The National Treasury Guide to Municipal Finance Management for Councillors (2006: 12) states that:

“Effective community consultation, or participatory democracy, and developing mechanisms to better engage with communities, is a central theme of the Municipal Finance Management Act. The aim is to create greater community awareness and promote more accountable decision-making processes by government in line with good financial governance principles...The Municipal Finance Management Act (No. 56 of 2003) promotes a participatory, consultative approach to municipal decision-making, and prescribes very specific matters in which a council must formally engage its community. This approach is intended to engender a greater understanding of community needs, and promote a system of accountability that will lead to a more autonomous, empowered and responsive council. Based on the provisions of the Municipal Finance Management Act (No. 56 of 2003), communities are provided an allowance to participate in the municipal budgeting processes and decisions regarding capital projects for the period in question. This is envisaged to not only foster a better understanding of the community needs by the municipality, but to fulfil the constitutional mandate of a transparent and accountable public administration”.

3.3 WHITE PAPER ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Informed by the *Constitution*, (the *White Paper on Local Government*, 1998) “laid a firm foundation for the establishment of pro-poor developmental local government, strong citizen participation a central element” (Pieterse, 2002). Informed by dictates of the *White Paper*, “developmental local government is 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” (Government of South Africa, 1998). It also highlighted the importance of “democratising development, empowering and redistributing”, while seeking a balance between regulations and facilitating community involvement (Government of South Africa, 1998).

“Incorporated into subsequent pieces of legislation, this policy framework provides a strong foundation for participatory local governance which, ideally, could enable the “full diversity and conflictual interests of the city” to be expressed. The framework and a subsequent legislative package ushered in a system of local government that is intended to pivot on an interactive relationship with communities (Pieterse, 2003:7).

3.4 MUNICIPAL STRUCTURES ACT

Chapter 2 Section 19 of the (*Municipal Structures Act* ,1998) “requires that municipalities, in performing their functions, develop mechanisms to consult with communities and community organisations. They are also expected to annually review the needs of communities along with the municipal strategies devised to meet those needs”. Putu (2006) “contends that the Local Government Municipal Structures Act (1998) requires the municipality to strive, with all the capacity at its command, towards achieving the goals set out in Section 152 of the Constitution”. According to the RSA (Ward Committee Resource book ,2005: 14), these goals or objectives are the following:

“1. To develop mechanisms to engage with the community and community organisations in performing its functions and practising its power. 2. To consider annually the needs of the community and municipal priorities and strategies for meeting those needs and engaging the community in municipal processes. 3. Chapter 4 of the (*Municipal Structures Act*, 1998) requires that a municipality must establish

ward committees with the objective of enhancing participatory democracy in local government” (Putu, 2006:17).

The Municipal Structures Act (1998)

“binds the municipality to making rules controlling the procedure for electing members of the ward committee. Importantly, the Act makes provision for the establishment of ward committees as a possible way of encouraging public participation. In this regard, the (Local Government Municipal Structures Act, 1998:52) stipulates that ward committees may only be established by Metropolitan and Local Municipalities of certain types with a ward participatory system. The Municipal Structures Act, (1998:52) further emphasises that the aim of a ward committee is to enhance participatory democracy in local government” (Putu, 2006:17).

3.5 MUNICIPAL SYSTEMS ACT

The Municipal Systems Act (2000) stipulates that

“municipalities must involve local communities in the development, implementation and review of the municipalities’ performance management systems. They must also allow communities to participate in setting appropriate key performances indicators and targets. The Act provides for community involvement in local development planning and budget processes, as well as in monitoring and performance review activities (in sections 2 and 5). Section 5 highlights the rights and duties of the public in relation to municipal functions. The public should be able to contribute to decision-making processes, and should be informed of pertinent council decisions.

Chapter 4 requires that municipalities build the capacity of communities, stating in section 17(2) that “a municipality must establish appropriate mechanisms, processes and procedures to enable the local community to participate in the affairs of the Municipality” (Putu, 2005).

“Section 33 requires that municipalities devise ways to consult the public on needs and priorities, and to involve them in the drafting and review of Integrated Development Plans (IDP). Chapter 3 of the same Act requires the creation of conditions that can enable participation by the disabled, illiterate and other especially disadvantaged sections of communities. All this seems to merit the comment that although the governance model in South Africa is still evolving ... it is clear that South Africa is committed to local development and service delivery using a decentralised system of government with strong community involvement” (Gwagwa & Everatt, 2005).

The challenge, it seems, is to set both those elements in harmonized motion. “Among the specific tools for bringing about a system of participatory governance development at the local level are Ward Committees” (Houston, *et al* 2001). Chapter 4 (section 4) of the *Municipal Structures Act* requires “that municipalities set up ward committees, which are to be chaired by ward councillors, and which are to serve as representative structures through which communities can participate in local governance and development activities, including planning and budgeting” (Putu, 2005).

3.6 WARD COMMITTEES

Ward committees are *advisory* bodies and are intended to make government “more responsive to the people’s needs and aspirations” (Department of Provincial and Local Government, 2005:10).

Ward councillors convene these committees, which can comprise up to 10 people drawn from the ward community. The *Municipal Structures Act* requires that ward committees represent a ‘diversity of interests’. Members are expected to represent the interests of the ward as a whole; they are not elected as representatives of specific local structures or interest groups. The ward councillor represents the committee in the municipal council and is required to report back regularly to the committee. In theory, then, the committee serves as an institutional channel of communication and interaction between communities and municipalities (Bolini & Ndlela, 1998).

3.7 CONCLUSION

The chapter provides an in-depth understanding of participatory democracy and its application in local government, furthermore this chapter discussed the controversies and the breakthroughs of participatory democracy theory as applied in ward committees. This chapter also provided synopsis of the connectedness of participatory democracy and ward committees. It was clear from this chapter that participatory democracy in local government context can never be fully understood apart from these important stakeholders, the community, the representative's i.e ward councillors and the ward committees.

This chapter also unpacks the various legislative frameworks in which public participation is rooted in South Africa. It was deduced that

“it is important for ward councillors and officials to oversee the proper implementation of the provisions of these Acts for promoting public participation. The statutes provide for communities to participate in a range of government-created regulatory structures, such as the IDP representative forums and ward committees. The problem regarding the implementation of these Acts stems from the notion that communities or the change agents do not understand these Acts and their implementation becomes difficult. There is, therefore, a need for ward committees and councillors to educate and inform beneficiaries of development about these Acts” (Bolini & Ndlela, 1998).

Chapter 4

DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

According to (Cooper and Schindler, 2006:716), a research report is a document that describes the research project. As such this report carries, the findings, analysis of the findings, interpretations, conclusions, and recommendations. Therefore, this section provides an analysis of the information which was gathered during the interviews with research participants. The research participants included municipal officials, ward councillor, members of the Ward Committee, and the Community members. This was an important exercise because it provided answers leading to the question of the Institutional arrangement to support the functionality of Ward Committees within the local spheres of governance in South Africa. Since the functionality of ward committees depends on the views, feelings and perspectives of those who are directly involved in both the process and implementation of the system, this study considered eThekweni Metropolitan municipality and uMhlathuze local municipality. This was necessary because a focus on the two municipalities provided an opportunity to juxtapose the functionality of ward committee within both Metropolitan environment and poor local municipal environment.

Prior the interviewing process was undertaken, the participants were informed that they would be participating on a voluntary basis and that they could withdraw from the interview process at any stage. Furthermore, it was emphasised that participation would be anonymous, the names of the participants would not be recorded, and, as a result, the information obtained would be confidential and used only by the interviewer. The intention of acquiring information was based on the assumption that the respondents are the people who are directly involved in the operational processes within the Ward Committee. The interview process developed particular themes which aimed to clarify pertinent subjects involving the Ward Committee. This research used open-ended questions, aimed at acquiring rich information from the respondents. The findings and discussion begin by eThekweni metropolitan municipality and then discuss uMhlathuze local municipality. The findings will be discussed base on the two research objectives and end by juxtaposing the results.

4.2 ETHEKWINI METROPOLITAN MUNICIPALITY

4.2.1 Limitations of ward committee engagement in local governance

4.2.1.1 Conflict of interest between Ward Councillor and Ward Committee

Ward committees being highly political, this means that there is a high struggle for access to power and resources within the ward committees. The general perception within communities is that the closer to a municipal one is, the better access to opportunities, power and recourses they have and so ward committees become and contested space for access to these (politicised space). More often than not, there are tensions between ward councillors and ward committee members as each strive to access or maintain power (in the case of a ward councillor). And so, the intensions of ward committee members are viewed with much scepticism by the municipal councils they serve. Thus according to the participant:

“We aspire to be councillors as well because councillors are close to the council therefore they have power to influence the agenda and override our word. We all aspire to be close to the council so that we will be in a position whereby we will be able to report back to the community”(Focus group participant: July 2014).

The research observed that ward committees make input on critical issues affecting the communities they present but ward councillors do not share the agenda or the minutes of council meetings with them. Ward committees attended council meetings as observers but found that they were unable to follow the discussion as they were the words “noted” and “agreed” by the rest of the council to items in the agenda they had no knowledge of. In the end this limited ward committee members’ understanding and participation in municipal decision-making processes.

4.2.1.2 Communication

Communication channels between the municipality and the ward committees are crucial for the development of local citizen. However the research found out that there was lack of communication between the municipality and ward committees and this appeared to be a serious stumbling block for ward committee to participate meaningful in municipal processes.

Thus, according to a focus group participant:

“We are confused when it comes to this duty ,we do not know whether we should report to the councillor or just live this duty of being communication channel because we are told that the resource book discourages us from being communication channel for the ruling party nor any other political party but on the other hand the very same,(Department of Provincial and Local Government: Ward Committee Resource Book ,2005:37) stipulates that the ward committee

should, in a broad sense, be a communication channel for the entire community residing in the respective ward. Our big problem is how do we separate ourselves from political parties whilst our chairperson is political and demanding us to serve the interest of the party which gave us such an opportunity” (Focus group participant: July 2014)

Based on the above insightful knowledge the research deduced that there is a confusion that is perceived as being caused by the way the system of ward committees operate furthermore there is no structured ways of communication between council, ward councillors, ward committee and community in eThekweni metropolitan municipality. The operational plan for ward committees and a communication strategy to give guidance on how ward committees must operate have not yet been established by the municipality.

4.2.1.3 Language bearer in the dissemination of information

The language that is used in passing the information towards local citizens makes it difficult for them to understand and this has a direct impact on their contributions in the decision making process. Thus according to the participant:

“We tell our councillor and Ward committee members that we do not fully understand English but they are persistent in giving us pamphlets which are written in English, therefore we do not see the need why we should attend the meetings because they always speak English and we hear sweet little nothing” (Focus group participant: July 2014) .

Based on these findings, the research deduced that the language is a barrier in the information flow towards local citizens and this limits the contribution of the local citizens on developmental programmes. On the other hand ward committees should work hand in hand in fulfilling it. However, this research found out that it is very difficult for the ward committees to ensure that the municipality complies with this requirement due to illiteracy challenges as some ward committee members cannot read or write and also lack access to a computer. According to Smith & De Visser (2009:20), “it has been noted that the ability of ward committees to function effectively as communication channels between municipal councils and communities is constrained by poor municipal communication strategies and lack of accessible information at ward level” of which is also considered to be the case in uMhlathuze local municipality.

4.2.1.4 Lack of Consultation in the IDP process

It has been evident that the eThekweni metropolitan municipality do not always value the consultation part of engaging its local citizens hence the research found out that the ward committees and their local communities are always urged to endorse plans that are already prepared by the municipality without their input. Thus according to a focus group participant:

“We are tired of what is done by the municipality to us, particularly of being called to contribute but at the end of it all, the agenda is just simple they just want us to say yes towards their plans. Every now and then we endorse IDPs we are not part of and now we do not understand its language.”(Community member participant: July 2014)

The research deduced that the way in which the municipal councils have packaged the information often seriously preclude useful committee input around budget processes. This becomes clear when dealing with the ward committee’s involvement in IDP review processes. Without a clear understanding of targets and indicators in respect of specific projects there can be no serious councillor accountability. These results are supported by the work conducted by Harrison (2003:10) as he has noted “Initial attempts to prepare IDPs occurred under difficult circumstances.

4.2.1.5 Lack of Resource

“Ward committees are often poorly resourced and may therefore not meet the expectations of residents. There is as a rule not a good relationship between ward committees, Community Development Workers (CDWs) and councils. The extent of the reported tensions between these parties are of such a nature that it often undermines the functionality of ward committees and may be one of the contributory factors in the escalation of community protests”.

With specific reference to eThekweni metropolitan municipality, the speaker has been assigned the responsibility of dealing with public participation, hence the establishment of Ward Committees. A full time municipal official has been appointed to facilitate public participation, and report to the office of the speaker. Ward committees believed that it by intention that at some

point they would not receive a stipend, because they know that there are CDWs who are fully paid therefore they can do without them, thus a member of the focus group further argued that:

“The municipality allocates a budget based on council priorities which are unknown to us as ward committees, they forget us; the process is not transparent and favours connected politicians, while communities are being disadvantaged. Influential politicians and connected business people have hijacked the process; the ward which I represent does not have a budget for the current financial year; we have submitted the IDP for the ward, but no project has been allocated; how do I explain this to the community?” (Focus group participant: July 2015).

The researcher observed that there is a lack of financial reimbursement and resource provision for ward committees. This is also regarded as one of the most significant impediments in the performance of ward committees. Very few municipalities seem to have allocated some kind of a budget meaningfully for the operation of ward committees. Even those who have done so appear to have done so out of responsibility rather than out serious acknowledgement and consideration of the value that ward committees add to the greater governance of municipalities. The above perception is based on the limited amounts budgeted. A lack of or limited budgets result in training, transportation and other resources like office space, stationery and cell phones for everywhere communication are in short or no supply at all. This would definitely compromise the effective functioning of ward committees. Based on this observation, it is evident that political influence by powerful politicians prejudices municipal programmes. This observation implies that the IDP process is either not owned by the communities, or the budgeting processes are not transparent. This therefore raises questions around the level of participation of ward councillors and Ward Committees in these processes. However, this has huge impact in the operation of ward committees since it touches funding of which ward committees cannot function without.

4.2.1.6 Insufficient Training for Ward Committees

The municipality is also providing training for the Ward Committee members in various areas of their scope of work, which includes community facilitation, communication, and report writing. Training is facilitated by accredited training providers. All the respondents indicated that they had received formal training offered by various service providers. Thus, according to a research

participant:

“The training which I have received helped me to understand the roles and responsibilities of the Committee; how we should work with the community, ward councillors, and traditional leadership”. (Focus group participant: July 2014)

Based on this observation, the training provided to Ward Committee members should be encouraged, as it enhances the ability to function and to be of good service to the community. However, a one-size-fits-all approach should be discouraged, as Ward Committee members are not on the same level with regard to education.

4.2.1.7 Limited power of Ward Councillor

Ward Councillors are highly respected figures in the local communities because it is believed that they bring about transformation to the local citizens. But as much as they are praised for their wonderful work there are surmounted by many problems. Thus according to the participant: “Ward councillors are limited to suggesting initiative on the other hand lacks power to take decisions in the council meetings.”(Interview: 2014)

It has been observed by the research that councillors are also limited by highly political jargons used by the facilitators of the meeting; hence they find it difficult to cope with it. Therefore, the research deduces that the voice of the local communities is not represented by the mouth piece of the councillor and this limits their contributions in decision making process.

4.2.1.8 Limited power of Ward Committees

The research found out that the ward committees are limited by the legislation to act only as advisory structure whilst on the other hand this legislation conflicts with other roles of ward committees as such the role of acting as a watch dog towards the Councillor in terms of performance. Therefore, the research suggest that this limitation is detrimental to their contribution in decision making process, in actual fact it lessens the command of ward committees as a voice of the local citizens in the decision making process of the council. Thus, according the participant:

“We keep on reminding ourselves that we do not have power to tell our councillor what we feel is against the will of the citizens we represent, because we are afraid of being asked a question of are you still our member or not?...We then keep quiet and we do as our councillor will suggest.”(Focus group participant: November 2015).

Base on this observation, it is concluded that this legislation has huge implication on how ward committees play their role of being the voice of the local citizens or contestation space in decision making process since it permeates exploitation of ward committees by councillor.

4.2.1.9 Community incapacity issues

Some officials claimed that the public was beginning to understand the IDP process better, and was discovering how best to ensure IDP drafts reflect their inputs. But when asked whether an average resident out on the street would know what the IDP was, everyone agreed that the answer was ‘probably not’. And everyone complained that the public doesn’t understand the planning process – which hinders not only their desire to participate in the IDP but also the quality of that participation and their understanding of what may eventuate as a result. IDP documentation was routinely criticised for being too difficult to read, let alone to understand, and too long. This effectively alienates many people who take the trouble to try and engage with the process.

Thus according to the research participant:

We were not consulted nor involved in their IDP. Furthermore as I have viewed it, I saw that it was gathering dust. It was intimidating. If it was intimidating to an activist like me, then imagine how intimidating it is to ‘ordinary’ people. (Community member participant: July 2014).

“The community members, although on the whole supportive of the idea of participation, expressed a feeling of being tired of being used as rubber stamps without real power. Their experience of public participation was almost entirely limited to *izimbizo* gatherings. Some assessments showed that many ward councillors do not bother to attend ward committee meetings and even if they do ward committee

issues are often not prioritised in council meetings” (Silima 2013).

4.2.1.10 Lack of relevant information sharing

For the ward committees to perform their respective duties effectively as a communication channel between the municipality and community, the municipality must have a communication strategy in disseminating information. The municipality, as mentioned in the previous chapter, is constitutionally bound to give information to the community.

Ababio (2004:286) further argued that

“community participation can only be possible if the community is provided with timely, accessible and accurate information. community participation in municipal government and administration requires that the community be well informed about participation and government issues”.

This can only be achieved if there is a communication strategy and policy which give guidance on channels for communication. As mentioned earlier, the ward committees are agents of communication between the community and municipality. In eThekweni metropolitan municipality however, the study revealed that there is no communication strategy that gives guidance on how the ward committees are provided with information and equally how the ward committees should disseminate it to the community. This affects the effectiveness of the ward community in communicating with the community especially when there is no guiding tool. Some of the remarks made by the respondents were as follows: “we receive the information very late from the municipality; ward committee members are taken for granted and are not treated well like other government structures”. However, the “trend has been that the ward community receive information through a ward councillor and Office of the Speaker and disseminate it through a community meeting”. Everatt, Marais & Dube (2010:238) in their case study of Gauteng,

“observed that municipal documents were either too long, difficult to understand as they are written in highly technical concepts, not available in commonly spoken languages, or not available at all. This makes it difficult for the ward committees to disseminate information that they are not sure of and do not understand”.

The eThekweni metropolitan municipality is also encountering similar challenges, with particular reference to language.

4.2.1.11 Political will

The framework guiding the establishment and the role of ward committees stipulates that to enable ward committees to effectively play a meaningful monitoring role to council and make input in council deliberations, ward councillors are to, upon receipt of an agenda of the council meeting, share this with ward committees so that they prepare and inform the meeting on issues of relevance to them. Ward councillors are to also share the minutes of the council meeting with the ward committees, or share critical issues that emerged from a council meeting with ward committees:

“We are really spectators in most meetings because all the items appearing on the agenda are all new to us, since our councillor do not share the agenda with us prior the council meeting” (Focus group participant: July 2014”

In wards 51, where the research was conducted, ward committee members lamented of not being afforded an opportunity to prepare for council meetings in advance and to make input on critical issues affecting the communities they present. Ward councillors do not share the agenda or the minutes of council meetings with them. Ward committees attend council meetings as observers but they are unable to follow the discussion as they are words such as “noted” and “agreed” by the rest of the council to items in the agenda they had no knowledge of. The research deduced that in the end this limited ward committee members’ understanding and participation in municipal decision-making processes.

4.2.1.13 Ward Committee oversight role

The empirical findings shows that the Ward Committee members are losing confident of the progress and pursuits of their duties because sometimes councillors do not take their advice, however, they are mostly concerned with how community members perceive the Ward Committees performance. Performance management is treated as a technical and legal issue, ultimately oversee by the Auditor general. The issue of performance should not be treated broadly in the Big Mama workshops but must be treated as a separate entity. Monitoring and evaluation are valuable mechanism in the function of the municipality, because it acts as eyes of

the municipality in a question of whether ward committees make an impact in decision making process. According to a research participant:

I 'm the one who should give you the mandate as a chairperson of the structure and you guys should know who report to who, to be clear on that, a person who is responsible of leading you can't be led by you, get that in your minds. (Focus group participant, July 2014)

These results are supported in the work conducted by (Smith 2008:14) as he asserts that:

“the role of ward committees to monitor the performance of ward councillors as independent civil structures is another difficult issue... Not only is this role not properly defined but on the whole ward councillors resist being evaluated by ward committees. One of the most important tests of the effectiveness of ward committees is their impact on municipal decision-making. In this regard research suggests that ward committees in general have no significant influence on the decisions made by council” (Smith 2008:16).

The research deduces that the effectiveness of Ward Committees can only be regulated by implementing a mechanism for monitoring and evaluation. So long as ward committees role of acting as watchdog towards the performance of the councillor is not taken serious the monitoring and evaluation system will not be as much effective. Therefore, the monitoring and evaluation should be applied in both sides meaning it should measure the performance of the ward committees and the councillor. The Office of the Speaker should be in a position to assess the performance of Ward Committee through monitoring and evaluation key performance indicators, in order to intervene where required. Critical to this, is that the intervention should be well calculated, as some ward councillors who might be found to have contravened the public participation process, are politically influential, and therefore ‘untouchable’

4.2.1.14 Level of education and skills of ward councillors and ward committees

The researcher found that the low level of education of ward committees and councillors impedes their meaningfully contribution in the decision making process and in discussing matters of high importance regarding service delivery. They have special difficulty countering the technical

presentations of the integrated development plan. Councillors and ward committees are also swallowed and intimidated by educational status of the government officials. These are invariably more educated, very well known, and more self-confident. Councillors elected on the basis of wards therefore, found it difficult to push through for the issues brought by the people they represent at the grassroots level. On the other hand, when essential planning skills and experience of local authorities in the planning process are lacking, they also become another obstacle for more meaningful participation for disadvantaged groups. Thus, according to a research participant, approximately only four members out of ten members of the Ward Committee can read and write:

“The majority of Ward Committee members including the councillor who’s part of the ward committee cannot read and write. The members are being trained through a number of programmes which empower them on community facilitation processes, and also to understand their constitutional mandate. The municipality is providing support in order to ensure that the messages which need to be conveyed to communities are not lost in the process. (Focus group participant: July 2014)”

Based on the observation above, it is evident that the municipality is willing to assist ward committees with capacitation issues. Hence it is said that they are being trained in a number of programmes, however the study deduce that the municipality has a challenge of assessing the kind of training that is needed by ward committees .It is gain evident that basic education is a missing ingredient which can help to supplement technical training provided by the municipality.

4.2.2 Community engagement in ward committee elections

4.2.2.1 Dynamics of Ward Committee election process

In this research, the nomination and election showed to have been relatively unproblematic from the respondent’s perspectives and more or less in line with the process envisaged in national guiding policy. After the nominations for candidates to represent sectors and or geographical area were called for and community meetings were convened to elect members onto the committees. A show of hands was usually considered sufficient for the actual election .However there was an element of politics in the process and it was deeply flawed:

We were elected because we have potential to take the organisation somewhere, our councillor knows who is really working in the ward area and whose not, and therefore it was going to be a big mistake not choose those who are working. (Focus group participant: July 2014).

The research, therefore, concluded that the process of ward committee election in ward 51, was politicised. These results are supported in The DPLG's Ward Committee Resource book states that 'there have been situations where party political influence has played a significant role in ward committee nomination processes', admitting that 'many ward committees are seen to be party-aligned' (DPLG, 2005: 31).

4.2.2.2 Domination of ward committees by Politics

The responses from the field work indicated that ward committees members from ward 51 in eThekweni metropolitan municipality were manipulating the system through their political party influence, since the ANC was not leading this ward but the ward councillor whose legal representative of this ward were coming from the UDM. There were more than two centres of powers, therefore, these two centres of powers caused tensions and competition which were perceived as undermining ward committee as a link in decision making on behalf of the community. Thus, according to the councillor who was a participant in interview meetings:

“ I am the one elected by the people to represent them in decision making process of the Council but members of the ward committee are now trying to undermine my power and always want to tell me what to do, just because there are the ANC members, real it is difficult for me to do my work under this circumstance”. (Focus group participants, 2014).

Based on this observation, it can be deduced that in order for the councillor to play its role well in decision making process a support is needed from the ward committee members vice versa, the ward committees need the support from the side of the councillor as well. This should not be compromised by political affiliation of ward committee members.

4.2.2.3 Bias ward committees

National guidelines advised ward committees to avoid:

- to merely reflect and replicate the existing arrangement of political power on the elected council;

- Should not function as a communication channel for the ruling party or for any party for that matter, as the councillor and his or her supporting political structure already perform this function;
- Should not provide a forum for the losing candidate to fight for municipal election all over again. (2005:39).The ward committees under study ward 51,(Ottawa Park Gate),crossed over all the three above mentioned warnings. The responses from the field work indicated that ward committees members from ward 51 in eThekweni metropolitan municipality were dominated by political party influence, particularly the ANC though the ward councillor whose legal representative in ward 51 were not coming from the ruling party but from UDM . It was also discovered that some Ward Committee members use their political affiliation as a passport to become Ward Committee members in order to receive a stipend income to survive. In most ANC led wards, the branch political head becomes the ward councillor, who is in turn the chairperson of the Ward Committee. Because of these two centres of powers there was tensions and competition which were perceived as undermining ward committee as a link in decision making on behalf of the community. Thus, according to the councillor who was a participant in interview meeting:

“I was elected because aims always present in my parties meetings and aim not just a member but a loyal one. Therefore we can’t allow our party to be run by people we do not know. My loyalty worked for me.”(Focus group participant: November 2015)

Therefore, the research deduced that some Ward Committee members use their political affiliation as a passport to become Ward Committee members in order to receive a sustainable income. So long as the branch in the ward is led by the ANC, the branch political members becomes the ward committee members. This often creates confusion in as far as the responsibilities are concerned, and thus ends up establishing the Ward Committee as a mere extension of a political party. As a result, the Ward Committee is used as a platform to attract the attention of high profile political leaders.

4.2.2.4 Representation

Pivotal “is the question of whether participation diminishes or perpetuates existing inequalities between classes, social groupings, and men and women” (Johnson & Start, 2001).

“There is a risk that participation processes favour those who already have the capacity and resources to access the circuits of decision-making – that the ‘new’ channels for participation replicate existing lines of marginalisation and reinforce dominant discourses” (Gaventa & Cornwall, 2001).

A very important question is to what extent are ward committee members representative of the communities and interest groups within their wards. The research found out that there was a lack of representation which is inclusive and meaningful. While attempts have been made in the process of nomination and electing the committees to ensure that some level of representation of key sectors and geographical areas is achieved in the composition of the committees, the process of representation in this case appears to be structurally inadequate. The research deduced that the level of consultation between the members and their designated sectors/geographical areas is in most cases insufficient. Especially in the case of sectorial representation, the level of consultation with and participation of the broader stakeholder groups within the sector appears to be superficial. Thus, according to a member of the focus group:

We have maximum participation of women, youth and people with disabilities in our Ward Committee system. Even though this is voluntary work and people do not get paid for the service they do, the members chose to volunteer their service to the community. (Focus group participant: July 2014).

The research observed that part of the problem is that ward committee members have not been equipped with necessary skills through training to be able to effectively consult with their wider sectorial communities. The findings illustrate that the Ward Committee does conform to the stipulations set out in *Section 17 (2) of the Municipal Systems Act*, which obliges community advisory structures to increase their representation of women, and people with disabilities. Based on this observation, it can therefore be concluded that the Committees are gender unbalanced and unrepresentative of sectorial groups. Therefore they are failing to represent the interest of their community.

4.2.2.5 Power relations

Throughout the research, it has been established that relationships between ward councillors and Ward Committees form the basis for engagement. To a greater extent, it has been established that

some Ward Committee members have alleged that the problem is with the ward councillors, as they often do not recognise particular members as being part of the committee, and the members indicated that they retaliate by not being co-operative with the councillor. Thus, according to a research participant:

The ward councillor does not consult us, she only consults her party; she uses us to rubber-stamp programmes, the planning processes of which we did not participate in; we cannot wait for her term to end. (Focus group participant: July 2014).

For this and other reasons, Ward Committee members have developed a perception that their councillors do not represent their genuine interests in the municipal council. Ultimately, a hostile perception towards the councillor ensues. Monitoring and evaluation systems can assist in this regard, to ensure that municipal policies are adhered to at all times.

4.2.2.6 Functioning and attendance of meetings

The ward councillor is the chairperson of the Ward Committee, and therefore, calls for Ward Committee and community meetings and sets the agenda for the meetings. One of the problems affecting the Ward Committee system in eThekweni metropolitan municipality is that of poor attendance of crucial meetings. Thus, according to a committee member who was present at the focus group meetings. A member of the focus group who participated in the research said that:

“The community has lost interests in these meetings. The ward councillor and Ward Committee members come to us to rubber-stamp their decisions. They consult with the Committee when it suits them and for compliance purposes. We cannot participate because the ward councillor and his team set the agenda for us; it is very difficult”. (Focus group participant: July 2014)

Based on this observation, it could be reasonably concluded that community members attend meetings depending on the nature of issues intended to be discussed in such meetings and, as a result, the attendance of a public meeting is proportional to the agenda of that particular meeting. Based on this observation, it is evident that community members attend meetings when the matters on the agenda address their needs, such as housing, water, electricity and employment opportunities.

4.2.2.7 Accountability towards the local communities

A politician's inability to promote community participation and the lack of high level political and bureaucratic support for participating at a local level also contributes to non-participation. Communities will participate effectively if they see that their voted leaders communicating with them (Gaventa & Valderrama, 1999; Cuthill, 2003:382). The other challenge facing the Ward Committee system eThekweni metropolitan municipality is accounting processes to the communities. The first point to arrive at was that ward councillors are elected representatives of the people, therefore ward councillors should consult and engage with the community across the political spectrum. The Ward Committee system promotes a political system, where communities from the various political parties would nominate candidates to represent them in council. Once that process has been formalised, elections are then conducted in the ward for the appointment of Ward Committees to assist the ward councillor. Ward councillors have a responsibility to ensure that they submit their ward action plans to the Office of the Speaker. They are also responsible for issuing the invitations to meetings of the Ward Committee, and constituency meetings. Some ward councillors account to their constituency, while others account to the political parties that nominated them for councillor positions. It must be acknowledged that some councillors are chairpersons of branches of their political parties, therefore, accountability changes depending on the powers and influence of the Branch Executive Committee. According to a research participant:

I develop the plan of action with the Branch Executive Committee (BEC), we engage the Ward Committee and community, and submit the priority plan to the municipality..... I account to the party which elected me; I pursue the party programme of action, therefore the Ward Committee and the community must buy in into the programmes. (Focus group participant: July 2014).

The party is in charge of community programmes, therefore a top-down approach applies, which is a recipe for conflict. It is also important to note that Branch Executive Committee members dominate the Ward Committee. Therefore, discussion which happens at the party structures is taken through the processes for rubber-stamping. Based on this observation, it is evident that ward councillors have varying understandings with regard to municipal processes and procedures.

4.2.2.8 Municipal support to Ward Committees

With specific reference to eThekweni metropolitan municipality, the speaker has been assigned the responsibility of dealing with public participation, hence the establishment of Ward Committees. A full time municipal official has been appointed to facilitate public participation, and report to the Office of the Speaker. The ward committees believe that they are not responsible for the planning of developmental projects in their areas. The municipality facilitates the IDP process, prioritise the needs of the municipality, and allocate budgets. The municipality budgets according to priority areas, not per ward, and as a result ward councillors are always at loggerheads with communities because they cannot explain the lack of developmental projects in their areas. This was disclosed by a member of the focus group who argued that:

The municipality allocates a budget based on council priorities which are unknown to us as ward councillors; the process is not transparent and favours connected politicians, while communities are being disadvantaged. Influential politicians and connected business people have hijacked the process; the ward which I represent does not have a budget for the current financial year; we have submitted the IDP for the ward, but no project has been allocated; how do I explain this to the community? (Focus group participant: July 2014)

Based on this observation, it is evident that political influence by powerful politicians prejudices municipal programmes. This observation implies that the budgeting processes are not transparent. This therefore raises questions around the level of participation of ward councillors and Ward Committees in these processes.

4.2.2.9 Relationships with the community

The sample of community members, which were selected to participate in the research, felt that they have certain expectation from the Ward Committee representatives, yet councillors and the municipality have different expectations. This largely stems from the fact that there appears to be no clear cut understanding of the role that Ward Committees are supposed to perform. Thus according to the research participant:

The ward councillor and Ward Committee dictate terms to us; they do all the planning on their own and come to us with an already finalised plan; we are not the owners of our own

development; what has been submitted in the IDP is not what the community wants. (Focus group participant: July 2014):

Ward Committee programmes should talk to the needs and expectations of the community. The community want to see action, and ‘feedback sessions’ are not seen as an incentive for the community to attend meetings.

4.2.2.10 Involvement of the public

The establishment of Ward Committees is aimed at promoting local democracy by enhancing participation by the citizens in local government matters. As such, the purpose of Ward Committees is to ensure that involvement and participation by members of the public are as effective as possible, so as to improve decision-making in the local sphere of government. More often, when the municipality invites the members of the public to a meeting intended to address their issues collectively, the municipality is often faced with the challenge of poor attendance. However, this depends on the nature of the issues intended to be discussed in such meetings. As a result, the attendance of a public meeting is proportional to the agenda of that particular meeting. For example, when a public meeting is called to address issues of crime prevention or substance abuse, the attendance is poor, but when an agenda has described housing or employment, the venues are full to capacity. This shows that different wards have different needs and, as such, a one-size-fits-all approach where the agendas are drawn unilaterally by the municipality will not be effective.

4.2.2.11 Lack of co-ordinated action plans

A plan of action is a very important tool which is used to direct the organisation towards the successful completion of their goals. It is therefore, imperative for the Ward Committees to set targets and draw strategies which will translate into plans of action for members to implement. Furthermore, Ward Committees must consult with stakeholders in the planning processes, which will result in collective ownership of the plan of action. During the research, it was established that most Ward Committee members were not involved in setting the agenda of the Ward Committee’s affairs. The branch leadership dictates terms to the Ward Committee, and in some

instances, ensure that the Ward Committee account to them, not the community. Debates and discussions at Ward Committee meetings are suppressed, by referring to the branch of a political party for ratification. The latter has created sour relationships between ward councillors and Ward Committee members and, as a result, some Ward Committee members are engaging the Office of the Speaker, disregarding the set channels of communication.

4.2.2.12 Monitoring and evaluation mechanism

The effectiveness of Ward Committees can only be regulated by implementing a mechanism for monitoring and evaluation. So long as ward committees role of acting as watchdog towards the performance of the councillor is not taken serious the monitoring and evaluation system will not be as much effective. Therefore, the monitoring and evaluation should be applied in both sides meaning it should measure the performance of the ward committees and the councillor. The office of the Speaker should be in a position to assess the performance of Ward Committee through monitoring and evaluation key performance indicators, in order to intervene where required. Critical to this, is that the intervention should be well calculated, as some ward councillors who might be found to have contravened the public participation process, are politically influential, and therefore 'untouchable'. The empirical research shows that the Ward Committee members are losing confident of the progress and pursuits of their duties because sometimes councillors do not take their advice, however they are mostly concerned with how community members perceive the Ward Committees performance. Performance management is treated as a technical and legal issue, ultimately oversee by the Auditor general. The issue of performance should not be treated broadly in the Big Mama workshops but must be treated as a separate entity. Monitoring and evaluation are valuable mechanism in function of the municipality, because it acts as eyes of the municipality in a question of whether ward committees make an impact in decision making process.

4.3 UMHLATHUZE LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

4.3.1 Limitations of ward committee engagement in local governance

4.3.1.1 Conflict of interest between Ward Councillor and Ward Committee

Ward committees being highly political, this means that there is a high struggle for access to power and resources within the ward committees. The general perception within communities is that the closer to a municipal one is, the better access to opportunities, power and recourses they have and so ward committees become and contested space for access to these (politicised space). More often than not, there are tensions between ward councillors and ward committee members as each strive to access or maintain power (in the case of a ward councillor). So, the intensions of ward committee members are viewed with much scepticism by the municipal councils they serve. Thus according to the participant:

“We aspire to be councillors as well because councillors are close to the council therefore they have power to influence the agenda and override our word. We all aspire to be close to the council so that we will be in a position whereby we will be able to report back to the community”.(Focus group participant: July 2014).

The researcher observed that ward committees make input on critical issues affecting the communities. They present but ward councillors do not share the agenda or the minutes of council meetings with them. Ward committees attended council meetings as observers but found that they were unable to follow the discussion as they were the words “noted” and “agreed” by the rest of the council to items in the agenda they had no knowledge of. In the end this limited ward committee members’ understanding and participation in municipal decision-making processes.

4.3.1.2 Communication

The research also found lack of commitment to attendance at key WC events and communication that was either lacking or without substance. This has created an impression that WC lack impact on municipal affairs and has possibly disillusioned committee members regarding the value of their participation. Members of the public alluded to a lack of transparency and community participation in decision making within the municipality and claimed that input from ward committees is undermined by officials. Several respondents noted

a very weak link between the ward committees and the community at large. Hence, municipalities may operate on the false assumption that ward committees represent the community and are able to feedback information to the community.

“We are really confused about this issue of communication and we are in admittance that we not doing well in communicating with our local communities because the councillor wants us to report to her on the other hand the council want us to report to it. Being chaired by the councillor gives us no choice but to communicate things to her” (Focus group participant: November 2015).

There the research deduces that the absence of a straight forward communication strategy creates issues for the tripartite alliance in terms of information they ought to share.

4.3.1.3 Language bearer in the dissemination of information

The language that is used in passing the information towards local citizens makes it difficult for them to understand and this has a direct impact on their contributions in the decision making process. Thus according to the participant:

“We tell our councilor and Ward committee members that we do not fully understand the English but they are persistent in giving us pamphlets which are written in English, therefore we do not see the need why we should attend the council meeting because they always speak English and we hear sweet nothing” (Interview ,2015).

Based on these findings, the research deduced that the language is a barrier in the information flow towards local citizens and this limits the contribution of the local citizens.

4.3.1.4 Lack of Resource

Ward committees identified the lack of resources and incentives provided by the municipality as the main reasons for the inefficiency of ward committees. The sustainability of ward committees are closely linked to the provision of adequate financial, administrative resources and infrastructure they identified the following as essential to ensure that ward committees function properly and become sustainable thus according to the research participant :

“We do not have the following things, then how are we expected to perform above our means to do. We lack office space – currently agreement are that ward committees share office accommodation with the ward councillors, but very few ward councillors have offices for themselves; others are accommodated far from the communities they serve. We do not have a dedicated budget –We sometimes have to have to use the resources of the ward councillors – We find this arrangement unacceptable. Transport allowance – We do get imbrued for our traveling expenses up to a certain maximum; or the municipality will provide transport, but the administration is perceived to be unhelpful in this regard (focus group participant in November 2015).

A focus group participant in November 2015 asserts that ‘Ward committee members also reported that it is not possible to visit communities in outlying areas as transport is too expensive. Salary – The major gripe is that ward committee members contribute significantly to the municipality without being paid for their services. Ward committee members mentioned that initially they were promised that they would be paid sometime soon. This did not happen and the lack of interest and motivation can, in part, be blamed on broken promises. Because of the fact that legally ward committee members are not entitled to remuneration, these calls stopped short of a call for payment and tended to involve an ambiguous call for “reimbursement”, “allowances”. Participants clearly understand the concept voluntarism, but express great dissatisfaction with the perception that they should continue to be volunteers’.

The researcher discovered some factors that contribute towards their demands for payment and/or incentives include:

1. Past promises that ward committee members be remunerated. Poverty and unemployment – some may perceive their position as an opportunity to earn an income.
2. Perceptions that the position is equivalent to that of development workers. Indications are that WC membership is often perceived primarily as a ‘stepping stone’ towards improved livelihood prospects, either as a councillor (with an allowance etc.) or a member of the administration.
3. uMhlathuze respondents suggested that “(ward committee tasks) take up a lot of their time and effort and they should be rewarded for the benefit they bring the municipality.” Ward committee membership is therefore seen as a possible avenue out of unemployment and

poverty and notions of voluntarism may have little bearing on why people from disadvantaged neighbourhoods seek membership on ward committees.

These results are supported by the work conducted by (Gaventa & Valderrama, 1999; Cuthill, 2003:382; Tosun, 2004:11 & Makgoba & Ababio, 2004) as it is eluded that participation at local government becomes an unfunded mandate since financial resources to implement development activities proposed by communities are often abandoned due to lack of financial resources. There the research deduces that without funding ward committees remain limited from performing their duties.

4.3.1.5 Insufficient Training for Ward Committees

The municipality is also providing training for the Ward Committee members in various areas of their scope of work, which includes community facilitation, communication, and report writing. Training is facilitated by accredited training providers. All the respondents indicated that they had received formal training offered by various service providers. Thus, according to a research participant:

The training which I have received helped me to understand the roles and responsibilities of the Committee; how we should work with the community, ward councillors, and traditional leadership. (Focus group participant: November 2015)

Based on this observation, the training provided to Ward Committee members should be encouraged, as it enhances the ability to function and to be of good service to the community. However, a one-size-fits-all approach should be discouraged, as Ward Committee members are not on the same level with regard to education.

4.3.1.6 Lack of Will

The framework guiding the establishment and the role of ward committees stipulates that to enable ward committees to effectively play a meaningful monitoring role to council and make input in council deliberations, ward councillors are to, upon receipt of an agenda of the council meeting, share this with ward committees so that they prepare and inform the meeting on issues of relevance to them. Ward councillors are to also share the minutes of the council meeting

with the ward committees, or share critical issues that emerged from a council meeting with ward committees.

“The BEC is the custodian of the agenda and we are really spectators in most meetings because all the items appearing on the agenda are all new to us, since our councillor do not share the agenda with us prior the council meeting” (Focus group participant: November 2015).

In wards 6 where the research was conducted, ward committee members lamented of not being afforded an opportunity to prepare for council meetings in advance and to make input on critical issues affecting the communities they present. But they were told that the BEC have already compiled the agenda any member of the ward committee who wish to add any rising matter on the agenda will do so in the sitting of the meeting. However, in the sitting of the meeting all members were requested to raise their hands in voting for the minutes forward, after all ward committees make a smaller number in the council meeting, they were then swallowed by the vote as a means of silencing them. Furthermore, political jargons were used in the communication by members of the council yet ward committees are very young political and they were not able to understand a thing.

4.3.1.7 Limited power of Ward Councillor

Ward Councillors are highly respected figures in the local communities because it is believed that they bring about transformation to the local citizens. But as much as they are praised for their wonderful work there are surmounted by many problems. Thus according to the participant: “Ward councillors are limited to suggesting initiative on the other hand lacks power to take decisions in the council meetings.”(Interview, 2015).

It has been observed by the research that councillors are also limited by highly political jargons used by the facilitators of the meeting; hence they find it difficult to cope with it. Therefore the research deduces that the voice of the local communities is not represented by the mouth piece of the councillor and this limits their contributions in decision making process.

4.3.1.8 Community incapacity issues

Some officials claimed that the public was beginning to understand the IDP process better, and was discovering how best to ensure IDP drafts reflect their inputs. But when asked whether an average resident out on the street would know what the IDP was, everyone agreed that the answer was ‘probably not’. And everyone complained that the public doesn’t understand the planning process – which hinders not only their desire to participate in the IDP but also the quality of that participation and their understanding of what may eventuate as a result. IDP documentation was routinely criticised for being too difficult to read, let alone to understand, and too long. This effectively alienates many people who take the trouble to try and engage with the process.

Have you seen the IDP document? I have. It’s gathering dust. It’s intimidating. If it’s intimidating to an activist like me, then imagine how intimidating it is to ‘ordinary’ people. (Interview: 2015)

The community members,

“although on the whole are supportive of the idea of participation, expressed a feeling of being tired of being used as rubber stamps without real power. Their experience of public participation was almost entirely limited to certain individuals. Some assessments showed that many ward councillors do not bother to attend ward committee meetings and even if they do ward committee issues are often not prioritised in council meetings” (Silima 2013).

4.3.1.9 Limited power of Ward Committees

Strictly speaking, ward committees do not possess formal, autonomous power. They cannot take decisions in their own right; their power is mediated by their respective councillors. They are institutionally subordinated to ward councillors, who are the vehicles through which committees take up issues and interact with council or beyond. It is the councillors who represent ward residents.

"...a ward committee is not a structure with a mandate to govern in the ward. This duty rests

solely with the ward councillor. Members of the ward committee do not carry any mandate from a constituency ... Ward committee members are merely people within a community, that know sectors of the community well, and are thus able to assist the ward councillor around certain issues of governance".(Interview: 2015).

Based on these findings the research deduce that, such constraints seem to mark deliberate attempts to avoid creating 'dual power' scenarios pitting councillors against ward committees. Unfortunately they do not seem to be achieving that objective.

4.3.1.10 Ward Committee Power Fiasco over Boundary

Power struggles in the modern days is one of the biggest issues encroaching in our societies. However such power struggles are not expected to prevail even in diplomatic structures such as ward committees. Thus according to the research participant:

“Traditional leaders in our ward prevent us in bringing the development because they believe we want to take their land. This is not true but an issue is how we prove this is not true because they do not allow us again to address them.”(Focus group participant, November 2015).

Based on the statement above, the research deduce that the conflict caused by unclarified lines of duties between the traditional leaders and ward committees limits their contributions in decision making process hence they spend much time in fights and lose touch with the community they represent.

4.3.1.11 Ward Committee oversight role

The effectiveness of Ward Committees can only be regulated by implementing a mechanism for monitoring and evaluation. So long as ward committees role of acting as watchdog towards the performance of the councillor is not taken serious the monitoring and evaluation system will not be as much effective. Therefore, the monitoring and evaluation should be applied in both sides meaning it should measure the performance of the ward committees and the councillor.

The Office of the Speaker should be in a position to assess the performance of Ward Committee through monitoring and evaluation key performance indicators, in order to intervene where required. Critical to this, is that the intervention should be well calculated, as some ward councillors who might be found to have contravened the public participation process, are politically influential, and therefore ‘untouchable’. The empirical research shows that the Ward Committee members are losing confidence of the progress and pursuits of their duties because sometimes councillors do not take their advice, however they are mostly concerned with how community members perceive the Ward Committees performance. Performance of the management is treated as a technical and legal issue; ultimately overseen by the auditor general. The issue of performance should not be treated broadly in the Big Mama workshops but must be treated as a separate entity. Monitoring and evaluation are valuable mechanisms in function of the municipality, because it acts as eyes of the municipality in a question of whether ward committees make an impact in decision making process.

4.3.1.12 Level of education and skills of ward councillors and ward committees

It has been suggested by previous studies in the reviewed literature that ward committees effectiveness is constrained by member’s low education, skills and expertise. Councillors and ward committees members do not possess high educational levels but what is most problematic is the fact that they even lack English command making it difficult for them to understand highly technical written documents which carries vital important information to be conveyed to the local communities. Therefore this makes the quality and commitment of individual ward councillors and ward committee members questionable.

“Ward committee members and ward councillors do not understand and speak English fluent on a basic level, if there are to represent us in the council where there is a very high standard of English proficiency ,how are they going to manage, these are the questions we always ask ourselves.”(Focus group participant: November 2015)

It can therefore, be deduced that the majority of ward committee members and councillors have low levels of education and this limits their performance in playing their role in decision making process.

4.3.2 Community engagement in ward committee elections

4.3.2.1 Dynamics of Ward Committee election process

Party political influence played a significant role in nomination process and some municipalities, for example, the political party branch held caucused to get consensus on the nomination process. Ward councillors generally had a direct role in deciding which interest would be recognised within their ward. Few councillors or ward committee members agreed with the principle of alignment between the dominant party in the ward and the affiliation of those serving on the WC, however in reality this was usually the case. A strong view prevailed that party dominance on the WC did not necessarily translate into a partisan orientation for the WC. Most respondents were not concerned that party influence within ward committees would alienate civil groups who were not party aligned. A significant number of respondents felt that the composition of ward committees had been shaped by cronyism. In general it was not clear that ward committees had succeeded in delivering a diversity *of interests* as required by the Municipal Structures Act. However, there had been much effort devoted to ensuring equitable gender representation.

4.3.2.2 Domination of ward committees by Politics

Ward committees are viewed as potentially powerful actors that are positioned as lynchpins of democratic local governance and development, and that can influence and mobilise communities around particular issues. However this was not the case in ward 6. Thus according to the research participants:

“These ward committee members are not serving our interest as people who elected them but they are serving the interest of the councillor and the party this councillor belong to.”(Interview: 2015)

The hopes of vesting in

“ward committees as quasi ‘silver bullets’ of democratic governance and development is mixed with their usefulness for advancing all manner of (official and other) agenda carries the risk of creating alternative or contending sites of power and influence in wards. The automatic functionality of ward committees as

neutral conveyors of public interests and ‘voices’ has been found to be highly questionable. Added to this are perceptions of divided loyalties among some ward committee members. The researcher encountered allegations that ward committees are sometimes ‘captured’ and used to advance the material and/or political ambitions of specific individuals or interest groups. In one of the wards studied, ward committee members were accused of promoting or undermining proposals and projects on the basis of whether they and their social networks stood to gain from them” (Silima 2013).

4.3.2.3 Bias ward committees

Ward committees have become little more than the extension of political parties, irrespective of which political party. The question of the legitimacy of the ward committees to the exclusion organisation and structures –for example (Piper and Deacon, 2008) indicate that ward committees in Msunduzi municipality have adversely impacted on organisations already on existence. Ward committee election process in ward 6, was found not immune to these issues as such the election process was influence by the Councillor in who she wished could be included in the nine members of the ward committees.

“What can we say or do .The Councillor elect those whom she wants, for people like us with bad blood we will be nowhere to be found on the list. Therefore it’s a waste of time to think a community member like us can be taken to serve in this structure.”(Interview: 2015)

The research deduced that they are lots of complications in the election process of ward committees, first and for most the issue of legitimacy and secondly the issue of political influence, thus these two issues have a direct impact on their duty of being a voice of the local in decision making process.

4.3.2.4 Representation

This need to be openly debated should not be regarded as taboo subjects .Democratically elected, ward committees are a mixed bag. Typically, they are elected at public meetings, but the legislation does not stipulate quorums for those meetings. Councillors and/or their

political parties can, should they wish, stack such meetings with favoured candidates, under-publicise the meetings or call them on an inconvenient date. Committees supposedly representing the community at large therefore can in fact comprise *de facto* appointees. And there *is* a strong sense that ward committees are often dominated by political forces, even stacked with the cronies of councillors or other interest groups in the ward. Thus according to the participant:

“After all the hard work of nominating people to represent us, we just see the faces we are not familiar with and not even one person from our choices. Therefore we feel we are not represented sectorial.”(Interview, November 2015)

Based on the observation, the principle of "a diversity of interests" can also create confusion. Which interests must be represented among all interests of the community that are much more numerous than 10? The task of selecting interests to be represented was left to municipalities. Municipalities could thus adapt the structure of ward committees to the local context. Yet the risk was that if municipalities did not undertake this task, ward committees would not be effective. Municipalities that enacted by laws determined more or less concretely the electoral procedure to be followed in order to ensure representativeness. The regulations determined by laws, however, are not very precise which might open a gap between the principles and their implementation. On the other hand, in the municipalities that did not enact a bylaw, the electoral procedure is not further determined at all.

4.3.2.5 Power relations

“One problem is that countervailing platforms of power have been created – councillors on one hand, ward committees on the other – each elected in a different manner (which then also affects perceptions of loyalty, legitimacy and accountability). They might be meant to work smoothly together toward the same objectives, but the reality is turning out to be messier” (Silima 2013).

“Our chairperson (Councillor), take decisions alone, we are even doubting whether she is representing us .We are just called when we are needed but there is no straight forward way of working in collaboration.” (Focus group participant: November 2015)

For this and other reasons, Ward Committee members have developed a perception that their councillors do not represent their genuine interests in the municipal council. Ultimately, a hostile perception towards the councillor ensues. Monitoring and evaluation systems can assist in this regard, to ensure that municipal policies are adhered to at all times.

4.3.2.7 Functioning and attendance of meetings

One prominent duties of the ward committee is that of holding a meeting in order to consider the issues of their local community for the upcoming municipal agenda. However the research found out that this duty was not properly handled. It is observed that when staging meetings there are frequent dilemmas. Meetings

“turnouts on weekends are poor, and that most public meetings are held on weekday evenings, usually around 19h00 or 19h30. Though, in semi-rural areas, weekends tend to work better (long commutes between work and home during the week mean many people arrive home too late to attend meetings (Silima 2013).

Based on the observation on meetings attended by stakeholders such as business people,

they seemed to go faster, and they understood the processes better. There is also a feeling that stakeholders come to these meetings because they want to identify business opportunities. This is natural – citizens attend to influence resource allocation decisions as well – but, as we discuss later, there is a clear need to balance the access points available to often poor, illiterate and under-resourced citizens, and those of the private sector. The playing is not level and we should not pretend it is; and the IDP processes need to be reviewed accordingly (Silima 2013).

4.3.2.8 Channel of accountability towards the local communities

Silima (2013) noted that

“the meetings attended by the community were held in the evenings and people in some instances were transported to the venue. For women in particular, providing safe transportation is critical. At some meetings it was noted that officials were taken to task on a range of issues. During question time community members

wanted to know things ranging from why projects were not implemented to why councillors were not present at the meeting” (Silima 2013).

Some of the questions were:

- Why the clinic is still not finished and does not appear in the IDP plans?
- How much money has been spent thus far and what for?
- Why are trees growing wild and left unattended?
- Why is the councillor not present at the meeting?
- Why the children (ward committee members) of the councillor failing to answer?

“As ward committees we are accountable to the councillor not the community it is by sayings that we are accountable to the community, the ward councillor demands that we account to her”.(Focus group participant: November 2015).

The researcher observed that people raised questions relating to their own ward and specific areas of interest, as the research have noted throughout –.Since the Councillor is the chairperson of ward committee there is a belief that they work hand in hand with the ward committees to represent local citizens in decision making process. However, the rationale is so, ward councillors cannot protest against decisions that they help make.

The same kind of reasoning is given for ward committees, they are an extension of council, the foot-soldiers of a municipality and in turn part of municipal leadership structures and so they also cannot protest against the municipality council they are effectively part of. This places the accountability of ward committees with the councillor and the municipal council and not with the communities who elected them. This kind of reasoning is however not surprising when one looks at how ward committees are constituted in the first instance.

They are a manifestation of a municipality political arrangement and thus a manner in which the municipality’s majority party expresses itself in communities and so they cannot protest against their political mother body. If the national guidelines were followed and ward committees were truly the representative bodies of communities in municipal governance, they would champion community struggles. They would follow community struggles to the logical end, and if it means a petition or a peaceful protest, they would support and even lead

4.3.2.9 Municipal support to Ward Committees

Every municipality in South Africa should have an institutional arrangement to support ward committees e.g. the office of the speaker should have action plan for this to happen. However according to the research participant.

“We as ward committee members do not receive enough support from the municipality. A particular point we always raise the issue of stipend we receive, we much believe we should be paid the payment as equal of that of the CDWs – because “they do the same job, why should they differ?” The members of the committee who were interviewed also suggested that the committee could be more effective with resources such as computers, telephone, fax and stationery. Ideally, they would have an office to work from.”

The research deduces that in order for ward committees to perform effectively they is a need for incentive as a motivation to do more or well.

4.3.2.10 Relationships with the community

The relationship between the ward committees and the local communities is very important in many ways but most prominently for the sake of delivery of services to the public. Therefore, throughout the research this relationship was viewed as unbalanced because the ward committees seemed to cling on the councillor and the council on the other hand abandoning the community which elected them. Thus according to the participant:

“We always ask ourselves who are these ward committees serving after we elected them because they always say the councillor has said this or the municipality has said this. Then this is what we normally ask when you are going to listen to our issues.”(Focus group participant: November 2015)

The research findings in this case are indicating that the tripartite relationship is not balanced therefore there is a need for re-direction in this relationship.

4.3.2.11. Involvement of the public

The establishment of Ward Committees is aimed at promoting local democracy by enhancing participation by the citizens in local government matters. As such, the purpose of Ward Committees is to ensure that involvement and participation by members of the public are as effective as possible, so as to improve decision-making in the local sphere of government. More often, when the municipality invites the members of the public to a meeting intended to address their issues collectively, the municipality is often faced with the challenge of poor attendance. However, this depends on the nature of the issues intended to be discussed in such meetings. As a result, the attendance of a public meeting is proportional to the agenda of that particular meeting. For example, when a public meeting is called to address issues of crime prevention or substance abuse, the attendance is poor, but when an agenda has described housing or employment, the venues are full to capacity. This shows that different wards have different needs and, as such, a one-size-fits-all approach where the agendas are drawn unilaterally by the municipality will not be effective.

4.3.2.12 Lack of co-ordinated action plans

A plan of action is a very important tool which is used to direct the organisation towards the successful completion of their goals. However management by objective system should be devised when developing such strategy in order to involve stakeholders from the subordinate position of the relationship. Some of the things that must appear in this strategy is Ward Committees targets and which will translate into plans of action for members to implement. Furthermore, Ward Committees must consult with stakeholders in the planning processes which will result in collective ownership of the plan of action. During the research, it was established that most Ward Committee members were not involved in setting the agenda of the Ward Committee's affairs. The branch leadership dictates terms to the Ward Committee, and in some instances, ensure that the Ward Committee account to them, not the community. Debates and discussions at Ward Committee meetings are suppressed, by referring to the branch of a political party for ratification. The latter has created sour relationships between ward councillors and Ward Committee members and, as a result, some Ward Committee members are engaging the Office of the Speaker, disregarding the set channels of communication.

4.3.3 Challenges facing ward committee system

In the course of the study, the researcher discovered the following as inhibiting factors against ward committee systems in the two communities investigated:

- There are major funding and capacity challenges.
- Wards, especially in rural areas, are sometimes too large to make for functional ward committees. Many ward committees are hamstrung by the lack of administrative support, resources and training of its members.
- Most municipalities are unable to pay the out-of-pocket expenses of ward committee members.
- Communities too must take a share of responsibility. Communities do not often use the space for community participation effectively or at all.
- Of course, residents are not often aware of their rights to participate and the spaces open to them, and municipalities do not always inform them appropriately. But this is not enough of an explanation.
- Partly, it is necessary for community organisations to improve their understanding of the local government system and how to engage with municipalities.
- As much as community participation is crucial to the success of municipalities, it should not romantic.
- Communities are far from monolithic and immune from capture by elites who primarily represent their own narrow interests.
- Many communities, particularly in informal settlements, are very handicapped.
- They are highly contested, complex and multi-layered, with fluctuating leaderships, with different strata or factions constantly competing for hegemony.
- Exactly how representative of the communities the leaders are and how stable, is not always clear. Identifying needs, priorities and targets in these communities and ensuring participation in implementation of plans, programmes and projects can be difficult.
- Ensuring effective community participation in these conditions can be very challenging. But it is all the more necessary.
- Weak/poor policy implementation
- Poor understanding/diagnosis of policy issues

- Creates division in society
- Reinforces existing differences and powerlessness
- The extent to which the public is involved in decision-making ‘depends on the attribute of the core problem; some problems demand more involvement, others less’
- Often, poor understanding of public participation leads to poor design and implementation of opportunities for the public to participate in government’s decision-making process.
- Not enough has been done to foster a culture of community engagement among councillors and especially administrators, as is required by the law.
- Many municipalities meet the policy and legislative requirements for community participation in a nominal, compliance-driven, ritualistic manner.
- Ward committees are often dominated by political party activists, sometimes almost becoming adjuncts to party structures or sites of contestation between political factions, instead of representing the diversity of civil society interests in the ward community that they are meant to.
- What seems to be a challenge in the composition of Ward Committees is to determine the sectors which need to be represented in the committees, because a Ward Committee can only cater for ten sectors and in most wards, more than ten sectors exist
- Participation of ward committees and councillors without power to participation.

eThekwini-Metro Municipality	uMhlathuze local Municipality
Similarities	Similarities
Prevailing political influence in the election process of ward committees	Prevailing political influence in the election process of committees
Manipulation of ward committees by party politics on whose interest they should serve	Manipulation of ward committees by party politics on whose interest they should serve.
The issue of educational levels of ward committees impedes their meaningful contribution in decision making process	The issue of educational levels of ward Committees impedes their meaningful contribution in decision making process
Sectorial representation remains a challenge in ward committee elections	Sectorial representation remains a challenge in ward committee elections
Community capacitation remains a challenge	Community capacitation remains a Challenge
Information sharing is problematic in this Regard	Information sharing is problematic in this Regard
Power relations between ward committees and councillors is in a turmoil	Power relations between ward committees and councillors is in a turmoil
Contrast	Contrast
Fiasco over boundaries-in this case ward committees seems working relationship with traditional leaders	Fiasco over boundaries-in this case ward committee seem to be in conflict with the traditional leaders because of power relations over space sharing in service delivery.
Ward committee relationship with the community is balanced	Ward committee relationship with the community is unbalanced
Channel of accountability indicated to be smooth etc.	Channel of accountability is problematic, this needs to be re-defined etc.

4.4. CONCLUSION

Through an empirical study undertaken, this chapter was able to ex-ray the institutional arrangement catered to support the functionality of ward committees in eThekwini metropolitan. This chapter highlights the importance of the existence of Ward Committees for the greater benefit of the citizens. The chapter also exposes particular misconceptions about the expectations of the residents in terms of the roles and functions of Ward Committees in facilitating public participation. Ward Committee

members are elected by the community, and should therefore account to the community; regular meetings to give feedback to the community are required. At the same time, the community should support Ward Committee activities and initiatives, attend meetings and participate, which will result in ownership of the developmental agenda in their area.

This research concluded that the problems that encompasses the ward committees in some instances are similar in both metropolitan municipal environment and the local municipal environment, however there are slight differences informed by structural dynamics. What has been perceived in the findings of these two municipalities is a lack of direction in the functionality ward committees attributed to the lack of the institutional arrangement to support the functionality of ward committees. It was found that there was no clear standing pertain followed by the municipality in their institutional arrangement to support ward committees but it is left in the hands of the municipalities to create rules to guide their ward committees in line with the national guidelines. Therefore it can be concluded as well by noting that in both municipalities the issue of incapacity of ward committee members and councillors are raising alarming situation for public participation in decision making process in South Africa.

Municipal authorities tend to act as gate-keepers and controllers rather than as facilitative bodies that allow and enable communities' greater voice and control over resources and resource allocation. Local authorities are accused of being either unwilling or unable to share decision-making control with communities, especially in relation to project identification (Silima 2013).

Chapter 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Since 1994, there has been a widely observed commitment in South Africa to participatory governance within both government and civil society, which has been given legal standing and encouragement through the country's Constitution and other pieces of progressive legislation. While in many instances, implementation has lagged behind the ideals of legislation and policy, it has to be said that never in the country's history has law and policymaking and development practice been as democratic and participatory as under the present dispensation. At the level of the local state, the commitment to participatory governance is reflected in an impressive host of laws and policy documents, and is intended to be realised through new modalities of development that require formal participatory processes and institutions in local governance. Since 2001, Ward Committees have emerged as a key institutional mechanism intended to contribute towards bringing about people-centred, participatory and democratic local governance.

5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- A central component of the communication role of ward committees should relate to the municipal IDP and budget processes. Ward committees should be a key conduit for communication between communities and municipalities on community priorities and development strategies. In order to effect this, one requirement is for municipalities to make planning and budget information disaggregated to ward level available, and to package it in much more accessible and user-friendly formats, which ward committees can then engage with.
- Processes need to be institutionalised for input from ward committees to be channelled to key decision -makers within council, such as portfolio committees and Executive Committees. In this regard, the role of the Speaker's office is very important and

adequate capacity within this office needs to be put in place. The possibility of ward committees reporting directly to portfolio committees should also be explored.

- Councillors should have a strong commitment to non-partisanship and participatory development. It is also important that councillors understand the culture of participation. The findings of this study suggest two sides of the coin: one is that the role of ward councillor of being a chairperson of the ward committees infiltrates the structure through politics and end up causing ward committees to give up what they stand for. The other is not necessarily undesirable for councillors to be the chairs of ward committees, as long as they have the necessary skills and understanding of the two sets of rights the constitutional right of an individual and the political right. Of which in many cases are the one that causes issues on the operations of ward committees.
- Where it is clear that municipalities are unable to meet the demands of citizens that are channelled via the ward committee, this needs to be openly and carefully communicated back to communities, with reasons as to why it is so.
- The policy states clearly that ward committees should not be served as extensions of political parties and they should not be subject to the control or manipulation of ward councillors. Policy or legal measures might be options to discourage the unnecessary politicisation of ward committees. All these are good sayings but ward committees really need to be protected by law in being constituted or regulated by municipal systems Act because so long as that is still the case the question will be how they are going to contest with the very council which make it possible for their establishment.
- Much effort should be put by the local government in assessing the real training needs of ward committees and Councillors because providing trainings without knowing the real needs can have an impact on finance since wrong training can be provided and yield negative outcomes, this emanates from the fact that some ward committees and councillors need basic education not technical training.
- Budget should be well calculated thought in the rescue or assistance of ward committees and it should be as if the office of the speaker is helping them on the side deal but there must be a proper way of doing this since this is required by law.
- It is important for local government to take heed of the fact that if people are not motivated by means of incentives they cannot perform to the level of their best. More to

this the stipend for ward committee members covers what needs to be sorted. They should not beg for it but it should be paid as stipulated in the legislation. This covers members' costs of participation is important, especially in contexts of poverty where committee members cannot be expected to absorb the financial costs of participating on the ward committee.

- More effort should be invested by the municipality in this regard e.g Fundraising initiatives should be devised for the assistance of ward committee programmes. The funding should assist especially weaker municipalities to provide for capacity-building training, resources and stipends forward committees.
- Ward committee election process should be outsourced to the independent electoral commission and should be conducted through the ballot system not by a show of hands. However, at the same time, there is the need for caution about thinking that ward committees are representative of communities – they represent certain interests, but can never can they be truly representative of everyone. These are formidable difficulties. One way of starting to address them would require setting more demanding criteria and procedures for the election of committee members. This of course goes well beyond the remit of the Department, but if we are to deepen the quality and impact of participation, it needs to be acknowledged that many of the key challenges are systemic.
- This is very critical as such democracy can only be realised at the local level when the right of citizens who voted ward committees and councillors in power is respected however this needs more clarity in legislation because it is confusing indeed as to who reports to who in the tripartite alliance of Councillor-Ward committees and the Community.
- Ward committees should not be viewed as the only mechanisms or channel for public participation in local governance. Councillors and officials in particular should be cautioned against this notion otherwise this will undermine other good participatory structures.
- A one-size -fits -all approach to community participation should not be taken. As far as possible, a rich web of participatory processes should be fostered. These can include, for example (Schmidt, 2008) community- based planning, citizen juries, area assemblies, online polls, radio talk programmes and citizen surveys. It is also important to recognise

that different communities have different traditions and needs when it comes to participation. As Schmidt points out, poor communities need much more intense forms of support and engagement as part of generating economic, social and service development, while wealthier, better resourced communities need a different, less intense, mode of engagement. This also raises the question of whether all wards need to have ward committees. In some wards, where other effective structures for community participation exist, it may not be necessary for there to be a ward committee as well. However, this would require a change to Municipal Structures Act, which currently states that municipalities that choose to have ward committees must have committees for every ward (Section 73(1))

- Municipalities should dispose much relevant information as possible in order to assist ward committees about the functioning of the municipality and available programmes and projects. Information needs to be co-ordinated in a way is accessible as possible. This means that it should be written in appropriate language befitting, translated into local languages where possible and should not use technical jargon. Municipalities should carry their mandate of selling the ward committees well in the local communities.
- Networking should be devised between different wards within and between municipalities to keep being informed on general issues that are affecting ward committees and reviving information sharing spirit
- The community do not always understand the structure of the council and these needs to be explained. There is further work that could be developed by councillors themselves and education providers. This research suggests that there is a need for some outreach work to teach citizens about the municipality's democratic structures and how they can get involved.
- Ward committees should not be considered as agents of delivery or managers of development projects and funds (as provided for by the Local Government Laws Amendment Act) as they are structurally and technically not equipped to fulfil this role. For ward committees to act as effective communication channels requires a strong system of representation, both sectorally and geographically. It also requires that municipalities include in the terms of reference for ward committees or in their ward committee policies that communication is the primary function of ward committees.

Furthermore, this role should be more effectively communicated to communities. The evidence suggests that there is a misunderstanding of the role of ward committees in terms of their being seen by communities as an extension of the municipality.

- To turn this situation around called for political acknowledgement of the role ward committees could and should play in decision-making processes and the facilitation of that role. Legislation guides how this could be done, what is missing is political will to implement what is captured in legislation. In this final part, some of the implications of the findings and recommendations for improving the functioning of ward committees and the value they can contribute to local participatory governance and development are drawn out.
- Simpler versions or summaries of documents should be produced and disseminated. In the past, service NGOs played vital roles in these respects, by supporting the knowledge, analytical and advocacy capacities in communities around specific issues of concern (especially around land tenure and housing). In areas where those resources exist, they should be drawn on more systematically. Beyond that, other improvements are called for. For example, easy-to-digest material outlining the IDP and setting the stage for upcoming participatory activities are seldom available.
- They should be establish firmer and more exacting guidelines for the election of ward committee members. (Currently, the procedures and guidelines are left to municipalities to decide.) At the very least, quorums must be stipulated.
- Traditional leaders and Ward committees should be provided with a training that covers a scope of separation of duties and superiority when it comes to service delivery.
- This research calls for a change of policy in terms of how ward committees are constituted in order to add more members where wards are big.
- The oversight role of ward committees in acting as watch dogs in service delivery and monitoring and evaluation should be revitalised
- Criteria for the selection of ward committee candidates should include a certain level of education this is perceived in this research as of great help in the effective functioning of ward committees.
- Councillors' powers should not be overestimated, either – so much so that some councillors seem to find it difficult to pursue their concerns and views (and those of their

constituencies) effectively in ultimately decisive forums such as municipal councils, party caucuses and the like. The real power lies at the Metro, municipal and provincial levels. The official should assist the councillors but should not subvert them.

- It is a responsibility on the part of the political parties to deploy suitable persons to council posts. The possibility of shifting to directly elected councillors deserves stronger consideration – and should begin by opening space for debate

5.3 CONCLUSION

This calls for an institutional re-arrangement which in turn must flow from on-going dialogue, monitoring and evaluation, and learning by doing. The researcher mentioned at the outset that he regard this as an unfolding process, not a completed or cemented edifice, and as such the model that has been developed over the last few years should be revised as required. Currently, there are multiple points at which participation can be short-circuited, by any of a range of actors who have the power or influence – or access to the system – to do so. The range of players and institutions at local level need to be better stream-lined around core functions and outcomes. And community participation needs to be insulated from manipulation by any agency that begins to act as ‘the’ voice of that community.

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Focus group Discussion Guide

Ward Committee members	Municipality Name:
------------------------	--------------------

	Ward Number :

Informed Consent: I Leo Muntu Sibiya, Masters of Public Administration Candidate in the University of Zululand. This discussion is being conducted to get your inputs in a research study entitled: Institutional arrangement to support the functionality of Ward Committees. I am especially interested in your feelings/attitudes/perceptions about the study and any suggestions you may have. The aim of the study is to inform evidence-based local governance practices and policy restructuring in South Africa in a bid to create conducive environment for Public Participation in local government. I am especially interested in your feelings/attitudes/perceptions about the study and any suggestions you may have

Please note that the participation is voluntarily, and that it will not cause any harm as whatever information the participants will provide will remain strictly confidential between me and them. I pledge to ensure anonymity where required .There are no foreseeable risks in participating in this study, and if the participants may have any question or concerns about participating in this study, They will be allowed to contact my supervisor at the following number 0835019538. They will be allowed to withdraw from the study at any time of their choice without any negative or undesirable consequences towards them.

1. Do political parties manipulates ward committees Yes\No. if yes....can you explain how?

.....

2 .Are ward committees sectorial represented Yes\No ...if .No. Can you explain?

.....

3. In your view do ward committee nomination and election procedure promote equal representation?

.....

Are the trainings provided to the ward committee members and councillors sufficient?
 Explain in your own view.

.....

4. Are there any clashes between traditional leaders and ward committees in your ward – Ye/No if yes ... Please explain.

.....

5. There is also an existing view that there are good relations between ward committees and traditional leaders in certain wards. If you think this is true, can you explain this in relation to your ward.

.....

Structured Questionnaires

Community member	Municipality Name:
	Ward Number :

Informed Consent:

I Leo Muntu Sibiya, Masters of Public Administration Candidate in the University of Zululand. This discussion is being conducted to get your inputs in a research study entitled: Institutional arrangement to support the functionality of Ward Committees. I am especially interested in your feelings/attitudes/perceptions about the study and any suggestions you may have. The aim of the study is to inform evidence-based local governance practices and policy restructuring in South Africa in a bid to create conducive environment for Public Participation in local government. I am especially interested in your feelings/attitudes/perceptions about the study and any suggestions you may have

Please note that the participation is voluntarily, and that it will not cause any harm as whatever information the participants will provide will remain strictly confidential between the researcher and the respondents. I pledge to ensure anonymity where required .There are no foreseeable

risks in participating in this study, and if the participants may have any question or concerns about participating in this study, They will be allowed to contact my supervisor at the following number 0835019538. They will be allowed to withdraw from the study at any time of their choice without any negative or undesirable consequences towards them.

6. What are the challenges facing the Ward Committee System in your municipality?
7. Does the educational levels of ward committee members and councillors translate a positive impact in decision making process of the council?
8. Does the ward councillor account to the community?
9. Do ward councillors have power to participate?
10. Does the municipality consult the community in the development of the IDP document?
11. Do ward committees and councillors consider the community as an important stake holder in their planning?
12. Are the ward committee's members elected on the bases of their commitment to serving their community or elected on the basis of their political affiliation?
13. Does the local government capacitate the local communities?
14. What are the issues arising from the ward committee meeting in your own view
15. Does attending times of ward committee meetings have a positive or negatives impact?
16. Do ward committee members consult adequately with the sectors/ communities they represent?
17. Do ward committees play their oversight role in monitoring and evaluations?

Face to face -Interviews

Interviewee Category

Councillor:	Municipality Name:
	Ward Number :

Informed Consent:

I Leo Muntu Sibiyi, Masters of Public Administration Candidate in the University of Zululand. This discussion is being conducted to get your inputs in a research study entitled: Institutional arrangement to support the functionality of Ward Committees. I am especially interested in your feelings/attitudes/perceptions about the study and any suggestions you may have. The aim of the study is to inform evidence-based local governance practices and policy restructuring in South Africa in a bid to create conducive environment for Public Participation in local government. I am especially interested in your feelings/attitudes/perceptions about the study and any suggestions you may have. Please note that the participation is voluntarily, and that it will not cause any harm as whatever information the participants will provide will remain strictly confidential between myself and them .I pledge to ensure anonymity where required .There are no foreseeable risks in participating in this study, and if the participants may have any question or concerns about participating in this study, They will be allowed to contact my supervisor at the following number 0835019538. They will be allowed to withdraw from the study at any time of their choice without any negative or undesirable consequences towards them.

18. Does the municipality support the ward committee?

19. Does the municipality have a communication strategy for communicating with ward committees.

Municipal council members	Municipality Name:
	Ward Number :

Informed Consent:

I Leo Muntu Sibiya, Masters of Public Administration Candidate in the University of Zululand. This discussion is being conducted to get your inputs in a research study entitled: *Institutional arrangement to support the functionality of Ward Committees*. I am especially interested in your feelings/attitudes/perceptions about the study and any suggestions you may have. The aim of the study is to inform evidence-based local governance practices and policy restructuring in South Africa in a bid to create conducive environment for Public Participation in local government. I am especially interested in your feelings/attitudes/perceptions about the study and any suggestions you may have

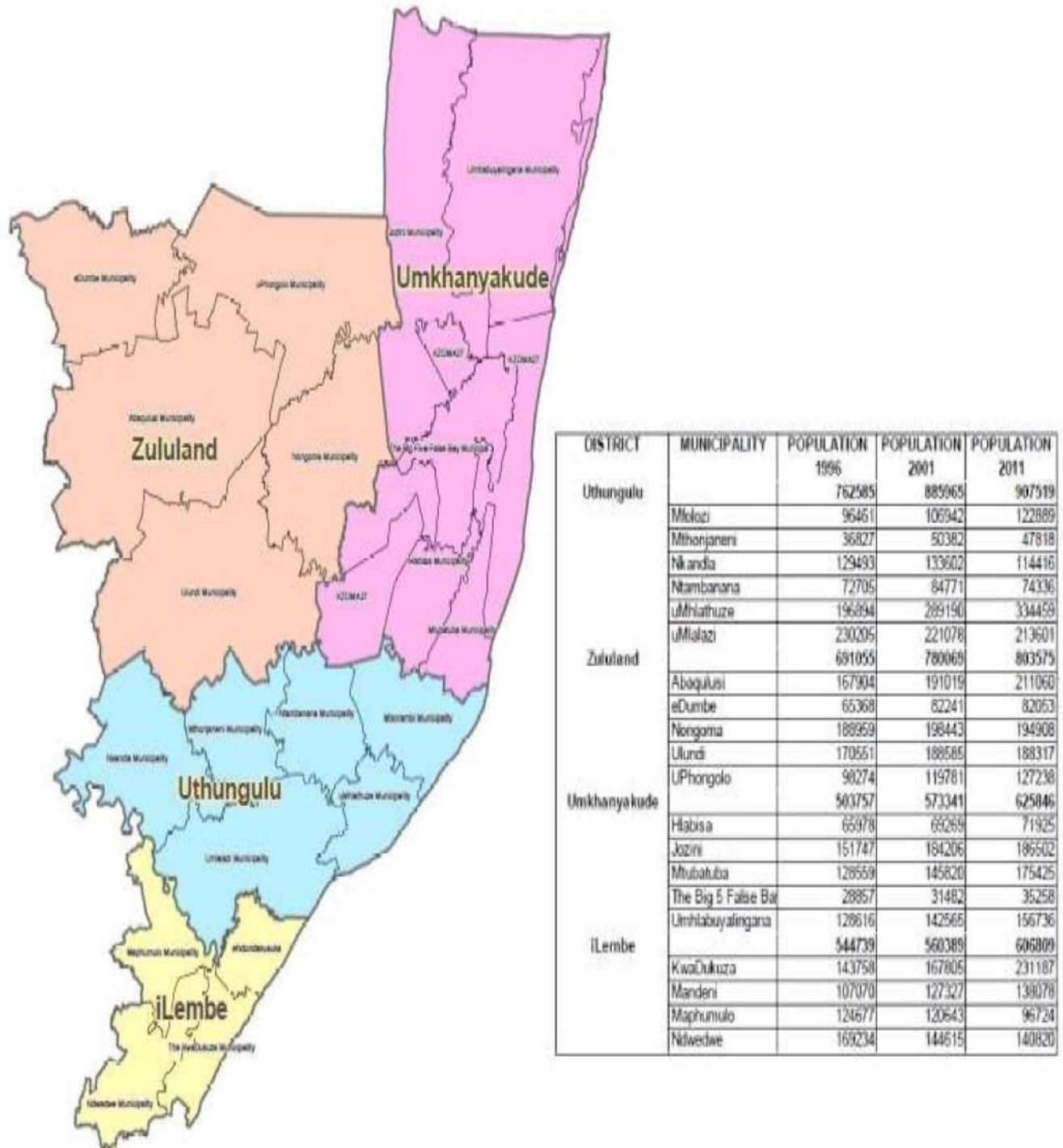
Please note that the participation is voluntarily, and that it will not cause any harm as whatever information the participants will provide will remain strictly confidential between myself and them .I pledge to ensure anonymity where required .There are no foreseeable risks in participating in this study, and if the participants may have any question or concerns about participating in this study, They will be allowed to contact my supervisor at the following number 0835019538. They will be allowed to withdraw from the study at any time of their choice without any negative or undesirable consequences towards them.

20. Does the municipal budget make provision for the function of ward committees/

21. Is there an institutionalised procedure for intergrading ward committees into the IDP?

Map of Ward 51(Ottawa Park Gate)

Figure1: Map 1: uMhlathuze in Regional Context



(Source: uMhathuze, IDP Review, 2013/2014, p.XX)

P.O Box 4002
Sundumbili
4491
10 December 2014

REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH INTERVIEWS

Dear Sir

I Leo Muntu, Sibiya, a Masters of Public Administration Candidate in the University of Zululand, student number 201001535. Hereby write this letter to request for your permission to conduct research in your area or jurisdiction and departments. The study necessitated participants which are part of your staff members, ward 6, ward committee members and few community members in the title: **Institutional arrangement to support the functionality of Ward Committees.**

The aim of the study is to inform evidence-based local governance practices and policy restructuring in South Africa in a bid to create conducive environment for Public Participation in local government. I am especially interested in your feelings/attitudes/perceptions about the study and any suggestions you may have.

Please note that the participation is voluntarily, and that it will not cause any harm as whatever information the participants will provide will remain strictly confidential between myself and them .I pledge to ensure anonymity where required .There are no foreseeable risks in participating in this study, and if the participants may have any question or concerns about participating in this study, They will be allowed to contact my supervisor at the following number 08365019538. They will be allowed to withdraw from the study at any time of their choice without any negative or undesirable consequences towards them.

The study is conducted for the purpose of fulfilling the requirement for Masters in Public Administration for the following candidate who belongs to: University of Zululand

For more information you are free to call the researcher:

Mr Leo Muntu Sibiya at

0719384868, E-mail address:sibiyaleo@gmail.com Fax: 0865852547

P.O Box 4002
Sundumbili
4491
10 September 2014

The Municipal Manager
eThekweni Municipality
Durban
4000

REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH INTERVIEWS

Dear Sir

I Leo Muntu Sibiyi, Masters of Public Administration Candidate in the University of Zululand. Hereby write this letter to request for your permission to conduct research in your area and departments. The study necessitated participants which are part of your staff members, ward 51 ward committee members and few community members.

The title of the study is: **Institutional arrangement to support the functionality of Ward Committees**. The aim of the study is to inform evidence-based local governance practices and policy restructuring in South Africa in a bid to create conducive environment for Public Participation in local government. I am especially interested in your feelings/attitudes/perceptions about the study and any suggestions you may have.

Please note that the participation is voluntarily, and that it will not cause any harm as whatever information the participants will provide will remain strictly confidential between myself and them .I pledge to ensure anonymity where required .There are no foreseeable risks in participating in this study, and if the participants may have any question or concerns about participating in this study, They will be allowed to contact my supervisor at the following number: 0835019538. They will be allowed to withdraw from the study at any time of their choice without any negative or undesirable consequences towards them.

The study is conducted for the purpose of fulfilling the requirement for Masters in Public Administration for the following candidate who belongs to: University of Zululand For more information you are free to call the researcher: Mr Leo Muntu Sibiyi at 0719384868, E-mail address:sibiyaleo@gmail.com

Fax: 0865852547



5 Mark Strasse Civic Centre
Business District
Private Bag X1004
Richards Bay 3900
E: reg@umhlathuze.gov.za
T: 035 907 5000
F: 035 907 5444/5/6/7
Toll Free No: 0800 222 827

www.umhlathuze.gov.za

Your ref:
Contact: MR V SINGH

Our file ref:
In response to DMS No: ORIGINAL
Date: 15 OCTOBER 2015

ATTENTION: MR LM SIBIYA
University of Zululand

Sir

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT REASERCH

Your letter dated 11 October 2015 that was sent to the Municipality requesting permission to conduct research refers.

You are hereby granted permission to conduct your research within the City of uMhlathuze.

In respect of your request to interview officials from the Public Participation Unit and Ward Councillors, please liaise with Mr Phiwe Mhlongo (035-907 5050) Manager: Public Participation who shall assist you further.

I wish you all of the best with your dissertation and await a bound copy of the dissertation upon completion of your studies.

Yours faithfully


MS SS MASONDO
DEPUTY MUNICIPAL MANAGER: CORPORATE SERVICES



ALL CORRESPONDENCE MUST BE ADDRESSED TO THE MUNICIPAL MANAGER

