RURAL HOUSEHOLD'S SATISFACTION WITH ACCESS TO BASIC SERVICES IN LEPELLE-NKUMPI LOCAL MUNICIPALITY, LIMPOPO PROVINCE

Mr Makalela K.I.
University of Limpopo
E-mail: kagiso.makalela@ul.ac.za
Orcid no: 0000-0002-3399-828X

Dr Asha A.A.
University of Limpopo
E-mail: asha.aklilu@ul.ac.za
Orcid no: 0000-0003-4283-0136

—Abstract —

The decline in public service satisfaction is one of the challenges that democratic South Africa faces. Many municipalities in South Africa have been experiencing difficulties due to poor service delivery. The South African local communities often express their dissatisfaction with municipal service delivery by means of protests. The purpose of this paper is to investigate rural household's satisfaction with access to basic services in the Lepelle Nkumpi municipality, Limpopo province. This research adopted a descriptive survey research design and a standardised questionnaire was used to collect data from 80 participants who were selected randomly. The finding reveals that most of the sample households have access to the services rendered by the municipality, such as water, sanitation and electricity. The municipality has extended its provision of basic services to the rural households. The finding further shows that the majority of the sample households have expressed their dissatisfaction with service provision. The service delivery challenges faced by the municipality include frequent water cut-offs, aged water taps, stolen water pipes and non-existent refuse removal. The municipality is struggling with backlogs due to a shortage of resources, lack of capacity and improper targeting. It is recommended that the municipality should accelerate water provisions inside the dwelling/yard and there should be a mechanism to respond immediately to water faults as well as a need for regular monitoring and maintenance. The municipality should apply the electrical subsidy to indigent households, impose heavy fines on illegal connections and electrify new settlements. Regarding sanitation service, the municipality should provide sanitation by using quality material for building toilets and put in place a

mechanism for regular monitoring and upgrading of dilapidated toilets. It is also suggested that the municipality should enhance its institutional capacity to address the aforementioned challenges to accelerate the provision of basic services to the rural households.

Key Words: Service delivery, Access, household's satisfaction, Rural, Municipality

JEL Classification: H7

1. INTRODUCTION

Access to basic service delivery denotes the provision of basic services, notably water, sanitation, electricity and refuse removal on which rural households are primarily dependent for their daily existence (Draai & Raga, 2011; Reddy, 2016). The South African government has instituted several policy and strategic interventions to accelerate the delivery of basic services to its citizens (Managa, 2012; Mathebula, 2014). The *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996)* gives municipal councils the mandate to ensure that services are delivered to their communities in a sustainable way (Joseph, 2002; Mpofu & Hlatywayo, 2015). The *Local Government Municipal Systems Act No.32 of 2000* requires a municipality to give priority to the basic needs of the local community, promote the development of the local community, and ensure that all members of the local community have access to at least the minimum level of basic municipal services. The *White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery (1997*), inculcates the Batho Pele initiative, as Pretorius and Schurink (2007) show, which strives towards moving public servants to become service orientated, to pursue excellence in service delivery, and to commit themselves to continuously improve service delivery.

The post-apartheid government has taken steps to ensure that access to effective public service is no longer seen as an advantage enjoyed by only a privileged few in the community, but as a legitimate right for all residents, particularly those who were previously disadvantaged (Pretorius & Schurink, 2007). The legislations are built on the premise of enhancing access to basic service delivery to beneficiaries' households (Plaatjies, 2011). Despite the institution of these policies, the decline in public service satisfaction is one of the challenges that democratic South Africa faces. Many municipalities in South Africa have been experiencing difficulties

due to poor service delivery, and that is mostly attributed to lack of financial capacity and inadequate skills for planning and budgeting (Madzhivandila & Asha, 2012; Mathebula, 2014; Beyers, 2015). It is also evident that the local governance system has not been effective enough to ensure accelerated service delivery to meet the aspirations of people (Nnadozie, 2011). According to Wild, Chambers, King and Harris (2012), there is growing recognition that, despite significant increase in resourcing, public service delivery is still failing precipitously in many developing countries. In the same vein, Kimenyi (2013) argues that making quality services such as water, sanitation, electricity and refuse removal available to the people remains one of the most daunting challenges facing many municipalities. The decline in public service satisfaction is a ubiquitous problem in almost all South African municipalities (Dikotla, Mahlatji & Makgahlela, 2014; Van Rooyen & Pooe, 2016). The local communities often express their dissatisfaction with municipal service delivery by means of protests (Managa, 2012; Van Rooyen & Pooe, 2016; Ndebele & Lavhelani, 2017). The high prevalence of service delivery protests could be linked with public service dissatisfaction (Gordhan, 2012; Reddy, 2016; Ndebele & Lavhelani, 2017). This resulted in an unprecedented wave of popular service delivery protest marred by violence, and civil unrest which has been demonstrated in the form of property destruction (Alexander, 2010; Managa, 2012; Ndebele & Lavhelani, 2017).

Managa (2012) argued that local government is the least trusted of all public institutions in the country, and that has been the case since the first elections in 1994. This shows that, while the new system of local government has been established with genuine intentions to promote democracy and transform the social and economic situation, the system has not lived up to expectations. Continually, this has left ordinary people to assume that the current local government is failing to provide services to communities and as such communities continue to be frustrated and dissatisfied (Van Rooyen & Pooe, 2016).

Studies show that citizen satisfaction with the quality of public services is positively associated with citizen trust in government (Draai & Raga, 2011; Van Rooyen & Pooe, 2016). Others maintain that the causal relationship between satisfaction with the quality of public services and trust in government is often contested (Ndebele & Lavhelani, 2017). In view of this, the purpose of this paper is to investigate rural household's satisfaction with access to basic services. More specifically the paper deals with the level of services, quality of services and

satisfaction of the rural households in the Lepelle Nkumpi municipality, Limpopo province.

2. METHODOLOGY

The target population included 2300 rural households who reside in Ward 11 in Lepelle-Nkumpi Local Municipality, Limpopo province. The municipality falls within the Capricorn District Municipality (CDM) in Limpopo Province and it is located 55km south of the district municipality office in Polokwane city. A convenience sampling technique was used to select 80 households who were available and volunteer to participate in the survey. A descriptive survey research design was adopted to examine rural households' satisfaction with access to basic services in Lepelle-Nkumpi municipality. Aggarwal (2008) explains descriptive research as an approach that is devoted to the gathering of information about prevailing conditions or situations for the purpose of description and interpretation.

The survey used a semi-structured questionnaire to collect data from the participants. A combination of closed and open questions provides the survey write-up with quantifiable and in-depth results. Closed questions produce results that are easily summarised and clearly presented in quick-look summaries while open questions produce verbatim comments adding depth and meaning (Bird, 2009). The questionnaire was pre-tested to ensure that it is precise and unambiguous. The questionnaire was administered through a face-to-face delivery and those participants who had difficulty of understanding were assisted in filling the questionnaire.

3. RESULTS

3.1. Demographics

Demographic profiles of the participants was gathered and analysed to determine the gender, age, level of education and employment status. Table 1 provides a summary of demographic profiles.

Table 1. Summary of demographic profiles of respondents

Profiles	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1. Gender		
Male	25	31
Female	55	69
2. Age in years		
19 or less	2	2.5
20-29	36	45
30-39	18	22.5
40-49	12	15
50 and above	12	15
3. Level of education		
No formal education	8	10
Primary	4	5
Secondary	56	70
Tertiary	12	15
4. Employment status		
Formally employed	12	15
Unemployed	47	58.8
Self-employed	21	26.2

The above table indicates that more than half of the respondents were females and the rest were their male counterparts. This is attributed to the fact that most rural women in the area are still compelled to fulfil their roles as housewives performing domestic work and child rearing at home, while the male counterparts are away either in search of opportunities or for other reasons.

It was found that almost half of the respondents, were between the age group of 20-29, followed by the respondents who were between 30-39 age groups. Only a few proportions of the respondents were between 40-49 age group and 50 years above. This shows that most of the participants are still young.

The finding also indicated that more than half of the respondents were in possession of secondary education, followed by the respondents who had tertiary education. Only a few of the respondents had primary education. This shows that most of the participants have secondary education.

Concerning employment status, the finding revealed that more than half of the respondents were unemployed, followed by the respondents who were self-employed. Only a few of the respondents were formally employed. This shows that unemployment is the major problem among rural households.

3.2. Water

This section provides findings on alternative sources of water, household experiences of water cut-offs, perception on the causes of water cut-off, coping strategies and satisfaction rate on water provision.

3.2.1 Alternative sources of water

Table 2: Households' alternative sources of water

Source of water	Frequency	Percentage
Standpipes in yard	40	50%
Piped water inside the house	7	8.7%
Communal taps	31	38.8%
Other	2	2.5%
Total	80	100%

The above table shows that half of the respondents reported that they have access to standpipes in the yard, followed by the respondents who have access to the communal taps. The remaining a few number of the respondents have piped water inside the house, and a relatively small number of the respondents depend on other sources of water which includes either water tanks or boreholes inside the yard. This shows that most rural households have access to standpipes in yards and communal taps. However, the development literature has shown to provide mixed results as indicated by the General Household Survey conducted by Statistics South Africa (2014) which indicated a substantial improvement in the water provision service since 2002 until to date.

3.2.2 Household experiences of water cut-offs

It was found that the majority of 47 (59%) of the respondents have experienced water cut-offs, while 33 (41%) of the respondents did not experience water cut-offs. This implies that, even though the municipality is continuously

implementing water projects in the village (water reticulation), there is still a huge problem of water cut-offs.

3.2.3 Perception on the causes of water cut-offs

Table 3. The reasons for water cut-offs

Reasons for water cut-offs	Frequency	Percentage
Broken water pipes	17	21.25%
Inadequate water from the main water sources	10	12.5%
Old water taps/Rust	7	8.75%
Deliberate water cut-offs	6	7.5%
Do not know the reason	6	7.5%
Stolen water pipes	6	7.5%
Mountainous areas	5	6.25%
Own water sources in the yard	5	6.25%
Broken pipes that supply water to main dams	5	6.25%
No response	5	6.25%
Water shedding	4	5%
National water scarcity	4	5%
Total	80	100

The table above indicates that the major reasons for the water cut-offs include: broken water pipes; inadequate water from the main water sources; and old water taps as reported by the respondents respectively. This shows that the water supply is not reliable because of a lack of frequent maintenance.

3.2.4 Coping strategies

Table 4. Households' coping strategies for water cut-offs

Coping strategies for water cut-offs	Frequency	Percentage
Ask for water from neighbours	30	37.5%
Buy water from neighbours	25	31.25%
Use own borehole in the yard	10	12.5%
Ask for water from neighbours and pay monthly	9	11.25%
No water cut-offs	6	7.5%
Total	80	100

The respondents reported that during water cut-offs they were using the following coping strategies (most important to the least): resort to asking for water from those who have water in the village; buy water from their neighbours; use their own boreholes during water cut-offs; and ask for water from those that have water in their yard and that goes with a monthly payment. Only a few of the respondents indicated that they did not experience water cut-offs and that includes those who use electric water pumps inside their houses and own boreholes. This shows that most of the respondents either borrow or buy water as a coping mechanism during water cut-offs.

3.2.5 Rate of water provision

Table 5. Perceptions on the rate of water provision by the municipality

Rate of response	Frequency	Percentage
Excellent	19	23.8%
Good	**7**	8.8%
Fair	5	6.2%
Poor	49	61.2%
Total	80	100%

The table above indicates that the majority of the surveyed population in the village rated the provision of water by the municipality as poor. Only a few of the respondents rated it as good. This shows that the majority of rural households are dissatisfied by municipal water service because the municipality has failed to consistently provide reliable water in the village.

3.3 Electricity

This section presents findings on access to electricity, electric cut-off, coping strategies and the rate of electricity provision by the municipality.

3.3.1 Access to electricity

The finding indicated that the majority of 78 (97%) of the respondents have access to electricity in their households, while 2 (3%) of the respondents indicated that they do not have access to electricity in their households. This shows that most of the rural households have access to electricity. The finding is complemented by the Lepelle-Nkumpi IDP (2017/18) which indicated a mere 8% for the municipality in terms of electricity backlog. It was also found that the majority 51 (64%) of the respondents indicated that they have experienced

electricity cut-offs, while 29 (36%) of the respondents indicated that they did not experience electricity cut-offs.

3.3.2 Electricity cut-offs

Table 6. The reasons for electric cut-offs

Reasons for electricity cut-offs	Frequency	Percentage
Electrical faults from the transformer	16	20%
Overload and broken transformer	15	18.75%
Heavy wind and rainfall	14	17.5%
Load shedding	10	12.5%
Stolen electrical cables	10	12.5%
Electrical bridging/illegal connection	9	11.25%
Maintenance and installation of transformer	6	7.5%
Total	80	100

The table above shows the variety of reasons pertaining to the electrical cut-offs. These major reasons include electrical faults emanating from the transformer and overload and broken transformers (which includes either leaking or burning), cut offs due to natural caused including heavy wind and rainfall.

3.3.3 Coping strategies

Table 7. Households' coping strategies for electricity cut-offs

Coping strategies for electricity cut-offs	frequency	percentage
Candles for lights and firewood for cooking	28	35%
Candles for lights and gas stove for cooking	16	20%
Candles for lights and paraffin stove for cooking	15	18.75%
Solar system	9	11.25%
Battery lights and gas stove for cooking	7	8.75%
Battery lights and paraffin stove for cooking	5	6.25%
Total	80	100

The table above shows that the main coping strategies for electricity cut-offs adopted by households include the following: buying candles for light and firewood for cooking during electricity cut-offs; using candles for lights and gas stoves for cooking; and using candles for light and paraffin stoves for cooking.

This shows that the majority of respondents use firewood, paraffin and gas stoves as alternative source of energy for lights and cooking during electric cut-offs.

3.3.4 Rate of electricity provision

Table 8: Perceptions on the rate of electricity provision by the municipality

Rate of response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Excellent	44	55.0%
Good	26	32.5%
Fair	7	8.8%
Poor	3	3.7%
Total	80	100%

The table above indicates that more than half of the respondents reported that the provision of electricity was excellent, while a few of the respondents rated it as poor. This shows that just over half of the rural households have expressed their satisfaction with electric service.

3.4 Sanitation

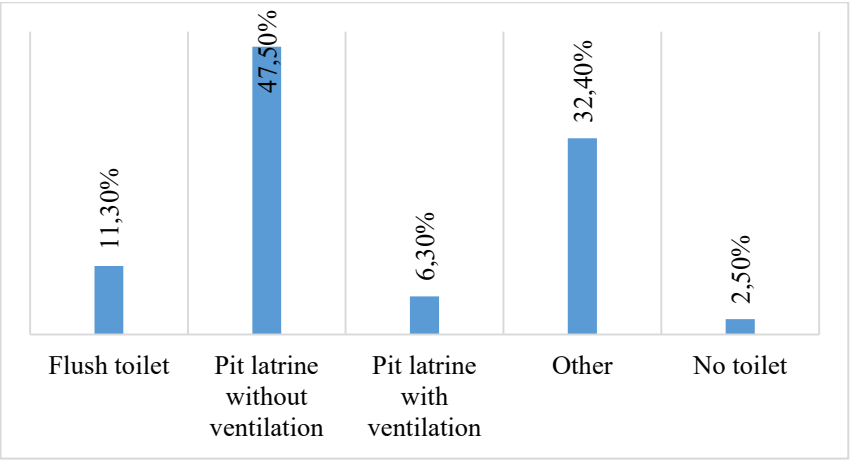
This section provides finding on access to sanitation, types of sanitation and the rate of sanitation services by the municipality.

3.4.1 Access to sanitation

The finding indicated that the majority of 74 (92%) of the respondents surveyed indicated that they have access to sanitation services from the municipality, while 6 (8%) of the respondents indicated that they do not have access to sanitation services. This shows that most of the rural households have access to sanitation service. However, despite the improved access to sanitation facilities, many households still continued to be without any proper sanitation facilities (Statistics South Africa, 2014).

3.4.2 Sanitation typologies

Figure 1. Types of sanitation



The figure above indicates that almost half of the respondents were using a pit latrine without ventilation, followed by others who were using self-made toilets build with either bricks and/ or corrugated iron in their households. A few number of the respondents were using flush toilets, predominantly those who have piped water inside their houses. This shows that majority of respondents have access to pit latrine without ventilation.

3.4.3 Rate of sanitation provision

Table 9. Perceptions on the rate of sanitation provision by the municipality

Rate of response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Excellent	12	15.0%
Good	21	26.3%
Fair	15	18.7%
Poor	32	40.0%
Total	80	100%

The table above shows that the majority of the respondents rated the provision of sanitation service provided by the municipality as poor, while only a few rated it as excellent. This shows that most of the rural households have expressed their dissatisfaction with municipal sanitation service.

3.5 Refuse removal

It was found that all the respondents who were participated in the survey indicated that their municipality did not provide refuse removal services in the rural villages. This implies that the municipality does not provide a refuse removal service for rural households.

4. CONCLUSION

The purpose of this paper is to investigate rural households' satisfaction with access to basic services in the Lepelle- Nkumpi municipality, Limpopo province. It was assumed that access to basic services does not entirely guarantee satisfaction by the beneficiary households. Hence, this paper focuses on the level of services, quality of services and satisfaction of the rural households.

It was found that 58.7% of the sample households had access to water inside the dwelling/yard. The Census 2011 data indicated that 51% of households had access to water inside the dwelling/yard in the municipality. It can be concluded that the municipal water provision has improved since 2011. Despite the improvement in water provision, more than half (59%) of the sample households have reported their dissatisfaction with municipal water provision due to frequent water cut-offs.

The finding further showed that 97% of the sample households had access to electricity. The Census 2011 data indicated that 92% of households had access to electricity in the municipality. This suggests that the municipality has improved access to electricity since 2011. Overall, the sample households have reported their satisfaction with electric supply despite the prevalence of electric cut-offs.

The finding highlights that 53.8% of the sample households had access to the pit latrine. The Census 2011 data showed that 76% of households had access to pit latrine in the municipality. Therefore, there could be insignificant progress in terms of sanitation services in rural context. Almost half (40%) of the sample households have expressed their dissatisfaction with municipal sanitation service

to the rural households. The finding further revealed that all sample households had no access to refuse removal by the municipality. It can be concluded that refuse removal service in rural areas is rarely provided by the municipality as compared to townships.

It is recommended that the municipality should accelerate water provisions inside the dwelling/yard and there should be a mechanism to respond immediately to water faults as well as a need for regular monitoring and maintenance. The participants suggested that the municipality should apply the electrical subsidy to indigent households, impose heavy fines on illegal connections and electrify new settlements. Regarding sanitation service, the municipality should provide sanitation by using quality material for building toilets and put in place a mechanism for regular monitoring and upgrading of dilapidated toilets. The municipality should provide plastic bags and big steel waste bins and hire people for weekly refuse collection in rural context. Finally, the municipality should focus on improving its existing capacity to plan, implement and efficiently use available resources to reduce service backlog in terms of water, sanitation and refuse removal services in rural areas of the municipality.

REFERENCES

Aggarwal, Y.P. (2008). *Statistics of Education*. (2nd Ed.). Delhi: Sterling.

Alexander, P. (2010). Rebellion of the poor: South Africa's service delivery protests–a preliminary analysis. *Review of African Political Economy*, 37(123), 25-40.

Beyers, L. J. E. (2015). Service delivery challenges within municipalities in the Capricorn District of Limpopo Province. *Journal of Human Ecology,* 50 (2), 121-127.

Bird, D.K. (2009). The use of questionnaires for acquiring information on public perception of natural hazards and risk mitigation – a review of current knowledge and practice. *Natural Hazards and Earth System Sciences,* 9, 1307-1325.

Dikotla, M.A., Mahlatji, M.R. & Makgahlela, L.A. (2014). Knowledge management for the improvement of service delivery in South Africa's municipalities. *Journal of Public Administration*, 49(3), 847-859.

Draai, E. & Raga, K. (2011). Client satisfaction and trust in the South African Public Service. *Africa Insight*, 41(2), 84-97.

Gordhan, P. (2012). Keynote address on Annual Conference of the Institute of Municipal Finance Officers 8th October 2012, Boksburg Gauteng. Ministry of Finance.

Joseph, C. (2002). Improving service delivery. *Occasional paper No 8*. Johannesburg: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung.

Kimenyi, M.S. (2013), Accountability and service delivery in Africa. *Journal of African Development*, 15(1), 11-17.

Lepelle-Nkumpi Local Municipality Integrated development plan (IDP). 2017/2018. Lepelle-Nkumpi Municipality. http:/www.Lepelle-Nkumpi.gov.za Accessed on 23rd August 2016.

Madzhivandila, T. S. & Asha, A. A. (2012), Integrated development planning process and service delivery challenges for South Africa's local municipalities. *Journal of Public Administration: Special Issue,* 1(47), 369-378.

Managa, A. (2012). Unfulfilled promises and their consequences: A reflection on local government performance and the critical issue of poor service delivery in South Africa. *Africa Institute of South Africa Policy Brief, 76* (May 2012).

Mathebula N. (2014). Service delivery in local government through socio-economic programmes: successes and failures of the Comprehensive Rural Development Programme (CRDP). *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences,* 5(20), 132-140.

Mpofu, M. & Hlatywayo, C.K. (2015). Training and development as a tool for improving basic service delivery: The case of a selected municipality. *Journal of Economics, Finance and Administrative Science*, 20,133-136.

Ndebele, C. & Lavhelani, P. N. (2017). Local government and quality service delivery: an evaluation of municipal service delivery in a local municipality in Limpopo Province. *Journal of Public Administration*, 52(2), 340-356.

Nnadozie, R. C. (2011). Access to adequate water in post-apartheid South African provinces: an overview of numerical trends. *Water SA*, 37(3), 339-348.

Phago, K. (2009). Integrated Development Plan (IDP) in South African local government: the case of the City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality. *Journal of Public Administration*, *44*(3), 483-491.

Plaatjies, D. (2011). *Future inheritance: Building state capacity in democratic South Africa*. Auckland Park, South Africa: Jacana Media.

Pretorius, D. & Schurink, W. (2007). Enhancing service delivery in local government: The case of a district municipality. *South African Journal of Human Resources Management*, 5(3), 19-29.

Reddy, P. S. (2016). The politics of service delivery in South Africa: The local government sphere in context. *The Journal for Transdisciplinary Research in Southern Africa*, *12*(1), 1-8.

South Africa, Republic. (1996). *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa*. Pretoria: Government Printers.

South Africa, Republic. (1997). *White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery.* Pretoria: Government Printers.

South Africa, Republic. (2000). *Local Government: Municipal Systems Act*. Pretoria: Government Printers.

Statistics South Africa. (2014). South *Africa General Household Survey*. Pretoria: Statistics South Africa.

Van Rooyen, E. J. & Pooe, S. (2016). City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality: a role model in managing quality service delivery? *Journal of Management & Administration*, 1,138-152.

Wild, L., Chambers, C., King. M. & Harris. D. (2012). *Common constraints and incentive problems in service delivery.* London: Overseas Development Institute.