

AN OVERVIEW OF CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIC MEASURES THAT WILL ENSURE EFFECTIVE AND SUSTAINABLE MUNICIPAL SERVICE DELIVERY WITHIN SOUTH AFRICAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

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Abstract

Municipal service delivery is still one of the biggest issues facing the world, and public sector reforms haven't worked out so far. The public sector, a vital part of every economy, must effectively handle its problems to avoid limiting economic growth and development. Inadequate service delivery within the government environment has remained a major challenge since the new democratic dispensation. Therefore, this study aims to identify the challenges and strategic measures that will ensure effective and sustainable municipal service delivery. The study will further explore inefficiencies, particularly recurring problems that are not adequately resolved. The study adopted a qualitative research methodology utilizing a conceptual approach. Municipalities require resources like finances, well-trained employees, systems, and equipment to deliver on their constitutional mandate. One way to address the extent to which limited resources affect the ability to deliver on its constitutional mandate is to ensure that service excellence is maintained, which affects query resolution, collections, performance, and accurate data. The municipality can be seen as a vehicle with interrelated, interdependent, and interacting parts that work together to deliver the services required. Whilst some municipalities are managed very well and service delivery is excellent, the overall state of local government service delivery in South Africa is "precariously classified by increasing debtors, qualified audit reports, poor systems, poor performance, poor long-term planning, huge service delivery backlogs, and queries, increasing salary bills, unfunded mandates, government debt, concerns about sustainability, and greater demands and expectations by all stakeholders.

Keywords: municipality, service delivery, effectiveness, decentralization, and sustainability

1. Introduction

It is anticipated that municipalities would be established on a solid basis of stimulating local development by providing their residents with high-quality services. They should endeavour to improve the citizens' living conditions and general well-being since they are a significant and responsive force behind local demands. The level of subpar service delivery is caused by dysfunctional governance systems, bad leadership, corruption, misappropriation of council funds, and poorly implemented recruitment strategies, all of which have individually or in combination led to subpar local governance. Communities have been irritated by the subpar service delivery, which has led to frequent protests, weak leadership, and insufficient governance (Kalonda and Govender, 2021).

As the branch of government closest to the people, local government plays a vital social role in providing the community with essential services. Ndevu and Muller (2018) assert that local government is at the forefront of providing public services. A person's initial interaction with a government agency is frequently through their local government. According to Maphanga (2022), local government functions in a complex and demanding context. For instance, satisfying community needs, maintaining good contact with other government agencies, effectively managing substantial budgets, and abiding by numerous legal requirements. To meet people's demands, municipalities must make the right choices when allocating limited resources (Moyo, 2016).

Rahlagane (2021) opines that local government functions at the local level since it is more accessible and in line with the needs of service delivery. Despite ongoing backlogs, municipalities have so far been instrumental in

reducing poverty and fostering economic growth in low-income households through service delivery. Municipal financial resources, equitable share distribution, conditional subsidies from the federal government, and money collected from water and energy fees, fines, and tax levies are all necessary for the provision of these services. Municipalities can make money, although their capacity vary, according to Magagula, Mukonza, Manyaka, and Moeti (2022). Compared to rural municipalities, urban municipalities (metros) make more money. Tshishonga (2019) avows that certain towns are experiencing financial instability, finding it difficult to increase their revenue, and ultimately experiencing a financial crisis that involves significant debt. The goal of the study is to pinpoint the obstacles and tactical solutions that will guarantee efficient and long-lasting municipal service provision.

2. Materials and Methods

The conceptual approach, which is largely dependent on secondary data, was used in the study's qualitative research methodology. The Republic of South Africa is the subject of the study. Conceptual research helps people identify problems and appropriate solutions in new ways, presents new ideas, and provides new frameworks to guide thought and action. Conceptual research was selected for this study because of its long-term ramifications. The difficulties and solutions that will allow for efficient and long-lasting service delivery are the subject of several journal papers.

3. Results and discussion

Decentralization entails changing how public institutions are governed. Decentralization theory was first thought to be a way to increase public institutions' responsiveness and efficiency. The results of the study demonstrate that basic services are essential for local communities and should be consistently offered. However, in most municipalities, the quality of services is deteriorated by governance issues. Effective service delivery requires the commitment and collaboration of municipalities, pertinent parties, and service recipients; it cannot be accomplished overnight. A local government that 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" is known as a developmental local government. The idea of developmental local governance has been enhanced by municipalities' emergence as important participants in global economic integration (Ramodula and Governder, 2021).

One of the many issues plaguing South African local governments is their incapacity to promote and encourage development in the communities in which the municipalities function. Providing effective and efficient services is a mandate that municipalities are finding difficult to carry out. The study also found that political infighting can have a detrimental effect on other objectives, like environmental sustainability and service delivery. Political infighting has prevented many municipalities from providing communities with appropriate services. Service delivery has been harmed by political infighting, and internal disputes severely impair municipalities' overall effectiveness. Service delivery has suffered because of political infighting; internal disputes severely impair municipalities' overall effectiveness. Political infighting occurs when members of the same political party, such as the mayor, manager, ward council members, or others, quarrel or dispute on political issues such job promotions, resignations, demotions, or the appointment of a particular individual to a post. The study also discovered that most municipalities hire inexperienced employees who are not dedicated to serving the public. The decline in municipal service delivery is mostly caused by officials' poor leadership, a lack of requisite expertise, and unethical behaviour that damages towns' reputations. The absence of institutional capability was explained in the study. Municipalities' ability is always in doubt since they are thought to be unqualified to carry out their duties. For policy implementation to be successful and service delivery to improve, the municipality's capability is essential. Both physical and intangible resources are part of capacity. Financial, human, logistical, and transportation resources are examples of tangible resources; leadership, motivation, honesty, and trust are examples of intangible resources. This study also discovered that the consequences of subpar service delivery are exacerbated by inconsistencies in public procurement. Corruption and fraud cause major problems for South Africa's governmental procurement procedures, costing the nation billions of Rands. Bribery can take many different forms, such as bidders paying bribes to guarantee their proposal is favoured in the project design, swaying tender procedures to favour a certain project, or giving inside information to some bidders while keeping others out. There was a thorough discussion on strategic ways to reduce subpar service performance. Effective service delivery necessitates the implementation of suitable procedures to guarantee the reduction of service delivery backlogs. Appropriate budgetary management and sound governance are necessary for improving accountability measures. Planning well can be a game-changer for better municipal service delivery.

4. Theoretical Framework

4.1 Decentralization Theory on Service Delivery

Decentralization entails changing how public institutions are governed. Decentralization theory was first thought to be a way to increase public institutions' responsiveness and efficiency. Mbate (2017) asserts that the decentralization idea is essential to providing efficient service delivery and sound governance in emerging nations. To transfer power from the central government to local levels of governance, the paradigm is shifting toward decentralized systems.

Pradeep (2011) asserts that during the 1980s, African nations encouraged and implemented decentralization by giving subnational governments more authority, resources, and duties. Because of this, about half of African nations have decentralized their political, economic, and administrative processes in the hope that public demands can be readily met. Since the wants and demands of the populace may be readily met, decentralization is recognized as being closer to the people than a remote, centralized administration. Decentralization, according to Ekpo (2008), involves the transfer of political authority from national governments to subnational governments and could lead to better service delivery. Decentralization is beneficial since it has emerged as the preferred way for citizens to participate in the delivery of products and services and the kinds of services they require (Mudalinge, 2019). People can participate in the planning and decision-making process as a result. Politicians and public employees at the local level of government are presumed to be aware of the requirements of the populace and capable of promptly responding and providing such services. Local governments have a greater understanding of community preferences (Ekpo, 2008). Several countries and other developing nations have implemented decentralization thus far. One of the nations dedicated to implementing decentralization to improve public services is Uganda.

Leeson (2013), argues that two key components support the goal of giving subnational governments more authority. First, when local government is located closer to its constituents, it typically provides better services. Second, every person is entitled by the constitution to request public services from the nation's public institutions. Furthermore, public officials are expected to collaborate with other organizations (CBOs, NGOs, and CSOs) to identify and effectively solve the primary concerns due to the spatial proximity of the subnational level (Mbate, 2017). Public scrutiny of decentralization is required to stop public employees from misusing their power.

5. Literature Review

5.1 The Role of Developmental Local Government in Service Delivery

Developmental local government can be viewed as a local government that is devoted 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" is the stated goal of developmental local government (White Paper on Local Government, 1998). The idea of developmental local governance has been enhanced by municipalities' emergence as important participants in global economic integration (Ramodula and Govender, 2021).

One of the issues facing South African local governments is their inability to promote and encourage development in the communities where the municipalities are located. Providing effective and efficient services is a mandate that municipalities are finding difficult to carry out. It has been difficult to change municipalities to support the function of development. Thusi and Selepe (2023), encapsulate that municipalities encounter significant obstacles in their efforts to address the backlogs that have been left behind by historical imbalances. Municipalities must collaborate with residents and use a developmental approach to overcome these obstacles. Since democracy first emerged, local governments have taken centre stage in developmental objectives, claim Masuku and Jili (2019). The White Paper on Local Government (1998) recognizes the evolution of local governments, where "participation" and "development" are seen as interconnected.

Madumo and Koma (2019) assert that the goal of developmental local government is to achieve shared national development objectives and to provide residents with development possibilities. By supporting initiatives and programs for socioeconomic development, it also sought to improve people's futures. The local economy may grow, and new jobs may be created as a result. According to Mathebula (2014), towns have a significant impact on LED and are supposed to collaborate with nearby companies to generate investments and jobs. In practice, this means that municipalities would implement their development policies to meet the demands of local communities while promoting the values of local democracy.

5.2 Predominant Service Delivery Challenges Within Municipalities

For small communities, basic services are essential, and they must be frequently offered. However, in most municipalities, the quality of services is deteriorated by governance issues. Effective service delivery requires the commitment and collaboration of municipalities, pertinent parties, and service recipients; it cannot be

accomplished overnight. The issues that have been found to impede service delivery in numerous communities are listed below.

5.2.1 Political infighting

Dlamini (2017) asserts that political infighting has negatively impacted service delivery; internal conflicts have a catastrophic impact on the general performance of towns. According to Rahlagane (2021), political infighting occurs when employees of the municipality, such as the mayor, manager, ward council members, and other officials from the same political party, quarrel or disagree on political issues like job promotions, resignations, demotions, or the appointment of a particular individual to a position.

These internal disputes between rival political parties lead to inefficiency and devastation in the provision of municipal services. Most party members frequently disregard the obligations of municipalities as well as the needs and desires of the populace. Tsako (2020) accentuates that the sociopolitical issues in municipalities were brought on by the sluggish pace of service delivery in communities. Denial and other issues, such as political assassinations, are more likely to occur among party members who are unable to get nominations or positions for themselves. Political infighting and violence are commonplace in all of South Africa's provinces, usually following an appointment to a particular office. According to the Mail and Guardian (2023), a political assassination within the municipality is connected to the murder of a municipal councillor in Mkhondo Local Municipality in Gert Sibande, Mpumalanga Province.

The community suffered greatly as a result, and many were afraid to apply for such jobs for fear of becoming the targets of such murders. The country's recurrent political assassinations are a result of factionalism within political parties; when members of a party have different political philosophies, infighting breaks out and competitors emerge (Tsako, 2020).

Tsako (2020) asserts that political concerns might have a detrimental effect on the provision of services as well as other objectives like environmental sustainability. Political infighting has prevented most municipalities from providing communities with appropriate services. Political infighting, according to Dlamini (2017), has harmed service delivery; internal disputes have a disastrous effect on municipalities' overall performance. Political infighting occurs when members of the same political party, such as the mayor, manager, ward council members, or others, quarrel or disagree on political issues, such as job promotions, resignations, demotions, or the appointment of a particular individual to a post (Rahlagane, 2021). These internal disputes between rival political parties lead to inefficiency and devastation in the provision of municipal services. Many party members frequently disregard the obligations of municipalities as well as the needs and desires of the populace. Tsako (2020), encapsulates that the sociopolitical issues in municipalities were brought on by the sluggish pace of service delivery in communities. Members of the party who are unable to obtain nominations or posts for themselves are more likely to be in denial and cause more problems, such as political assassinations.

In South Africa, political infighting and violence are widespread occurrences in all provinces; they typically occur when someone is appointed to a certain position. The murder of a municipal councillor in Mkhondo Local Municipality in Gert Sibande, Mpumalanga Province, is linked to a political assassination within the municipality, according to the Mail and Guardian (2023). The community suffered greatly as a result, and many were afraid to apply for such jobs for fear of becoming the targets of such murders. The country's ongoing political assassinations are a result of factionalism inside political parties, and when party members have different political philosophies, infighting breaks out and competitors emerge (Tsako, 2020).

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As a result, the community was devastated. Tension and obstacles to service delivery are frequently caused by political infighting and other disputes between municipal political and managerial organizations (Mkhatshwa and Khumalo, 2020). Additionally, Rahlagane (2021) affirms that a municipality's relationship with its community may be affected when it faces an issue that affects its citizens. Because those in charge of carrying out the local government's mandate are more preoccupied with political violence, this issue has a detrimental effect on service delivery. Since most municipalities experience political infighting and violence, which negatively impact service delivery, Strong political leadership is required by the local government.

5.2.3 Incompetence and Poor Leadership Skills

Unskilled employees who are not committed to serving the public make up many municipalities. The decline in municipal service delivery is largely caused by officials' poor leadership, a lack of requisite expertise, and unethical behavior that damages municipalities' reputations (Rahlagane, 2021). The leadership of towns determines how well they succeed. According to Ndudula (2013), a municipality's ability to operate effectively should not be

impacted by its political or administrative leadership. Instead of acting incompetently or unprofessionally, public servants are encouraged by the Batho Pele ideals to deliver high-quality services and be dedicated to helping people. While municipal leaders prioritize self-enrichment over addressing the needs and interests of communities, most local communities are better able to identify the shortcomings of municipalities.

Mbandlwa and Fagbadebo (2020) emphasize that immoral leadership causes and encourages citizens to lose faith in the government in addition to impeding the provision of services. Rural communities with a high percentage of illiterate residents frequently exhibit a lack of ethics in local government leadership. Because illiterate people lack adequate knowledge of the towns' intentions, the leaders purposefully abuse their position. Public officials are notorious for their degrading propensity to take bribes and offer false promises to the public (Odaro, 2012). The ineffective human resource management system undermines public confidence in residents, which in turn leads to obstacles in the delivery of services (Kalonda and Govender, 2021).

Rahlagane (2021) and Masuku and Jili (2019) aver that municipalities are unable to provide communities with acceptable services due to a shortage of technical professionals, including managers, engineers, and scientists. Such competence enhances the performance of towns and the quality of services they provide to the public. Because unqualified and inexperienced public officials predominate in public offices, the government is unable to deliver efficient services. Kalonda and Govender (2021) argue that effective leadership is essential to service delivery and promotes good governance, both of which may help local governments achieve their goals. Public employees with the necessary skills to operate offices are necessary for local government to fulfil its duties (Maphanga, 2022).

5.2.4 Poor oversight mechanism

In terms of section 195(1)(f) of the Republic of South Africa's 1996 Constitution, "Public Administration must be accountable," and democratic governance is inherently dependent on accountability. According to Mbugua (2013), accountability is the obligation placed on those affected by such decisions to answer for their actions. Both the person who assigns responsibility and the person who accepts it are presumed to be involved, and both pledge to report on how it was executed.

Mundzendzi (2016) avows that public accountability entails that people in charge of managing and controlling public offices must answer to the public and give explanations for their decisions. Kraai, Holtzhausen, and Malan (2017) state that inadequate governance and a lack of accountability are the main issues facing municipal government.

For any function to be carried out effectively and efficiently, the Municipal Structures Act (No. 117 of 1998) requires the municipal council to form committees. According to section 79 of the Municipal Structures Act (No. 117 of 1998), these committees are responsible for making sure that municipal councils implement an efficient supervision system. Supervising the executive's work to improve service delivery and people's living situations is part of oversight.

To promote and uphold accountability and ethics for public authorities, municipalities are required by the Municipal Finance Management Act (No. 53 of 2003) to compile annual reports and present financial accounts at the end of the fiscal year. Accountability is the top priority in municipal governance (Van Niekerk and Dalton-Brits, 2016). The South African Local Government Association emphasizes the significance of accountability and the need to take appropriate action against unlawful conduct by public authorities (SALGA, 2021).

Many municipalities have a high rate of political patronage and nepotism, which is the primary cause of the accountability system's perceived inefficiency and lack of accessibility for local populations. Municipal administrators and council members, according to Masiya, Davids, and Mangai (2021), do not improve supervision and monitoring systems because they typically do not take the required steps to address problems like poor performance and financial malfeasance. One of the things that makes subpar performance and violations of municipal laws worse in municipalities is the absence of internal and external oversight.

5.2.4 Lack of Institutional Capacity

The competency of municipalities is always questioned since they are perceived as being unfit to perform their functions. Molobela (2019) opines that the municipality's capacity to properly implement policies and improve service delivery is crucial. Capacity includes both material and intangible resources. Tangible resources include things like money, people, logistics, and transportation; intangible resources include things like integrity, trust, leadership, and motivation (Molobela, 2019). Managa (2012) asserts that for many underprivileged populations yearning for better service delivery, a lack of experience has disastrous results. Many towns are in hardship as a result of municipalities' staffing shortages, which have made bad service delivery worse. Municipalities have numerous challenges that impair their day-to-day operations and performance, including resource and budgetary limitations. Furthermore, according to Beyers (2015), most towns specifically, local governments in rural areas lack the infrastructure, funding, and competent staff necessary to fulfil their purpose.

The fact that a lack of skills indirectly slows down the delivery of services is highly unsettling, particularly for technical and managerial roles that go unfilled for extended periods. This is explained by a lack of project and financial management expertise, which causes some municipal projects to be delayed and never finished (Managa, 2012). By placing incompetent ANC cadres in positions, the government almost destroyed municipalities' administrative capabilities and made the issue of subpar service delivery worse (Zulu, Yalezo, and Mutambara, 2022). Municipalities' administrative capabilities are occasionally questioned, particularly when it comes to providing services; therefore, it is important to implement new, strategic methods to carry out these tasks. Section 139 of the Republic of South Africa's 1996 Constitution states that if administrative duties are not fulfilled, provincial action may be required. According to the provision, "the relevant provincial executive may intervene by taking any appropriate steps to ensure the fulfilment of that obligation when a municipality cannot or does not fulfil an executive obligation in terms of the Constitution or legislation."

5.2.5 Public Procurement Irregularities

Public procurement, according to Mahlangu (2019), is the process by which a public sector organization purchases goods, services, and construction projects from vendors in the domestic and foreign markets while adhering to the values of cost-effectiveness, fairness, transparency, and competition. An alternate method of providing services to guarantee that the wants of the populace are satisfied is public procurement (Lukhele, Botha, Mbanga, 2022).

The nation's economy depends heavily on public sector procurement, which entails a collaboration between the public and private sectors to deliver services. To guarantee that the public sector procurement process is just, open, equitable, and economical, a policy framework was established. Public policy procurement, according to Naude and Dzuke (2017), is centred on inconsistencies in its management process and is viewed as a prime target for corruption. Public procurement procedures in South Africa are severely hampered by fraud and corruption, which cost the nation billions of Rands. Bribery can take many different forms, such as bidders paying bribes to guarantee their proposal is favored in the project design, swaying tender procedures to favor a certain project, or giving inside information to some bidders while keeping others out. Lukhele, Botha, and Mbanga (2022) encapsulate that most issues that impact the public procurement process occur during the advertisement, bid review, and contract phases. According to Aphiri (2016), there is widespread corruption in the awarding of bids, including nepotism and subpar work produced by inept contractors with political connections, which sparks public outcry against the government. Service providers may build subpar structures using cheap labor and subpar materials. For instance, an R290 million emergency project bidding fraud scam involving high officials occurred in Msunduzi Local Municipality (The Citizen, 2023). By giving the contract without following the correct tender procedures, the officials broke the Municipal Finance Management Act (No. 53 of 2003). There are rumours that when municipalities issue tenders, they don't follow the law. Council members and executive mayors are not allowed to meddle in bid committees or supply chain management procedures, according to Section 117 of the Municipal Finance Management Act (No. 53 of 2003). According to Manaka (2021), bidders for large construction projects give government officials substantial kickbacks, bribes, and other benefits.

5.2.6 Pressing Governance Challenges Within Municipalities

The code of conduct described in the White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service (1997) serves as a guide for public employees to ensure adherence to moral ideals and professionalism.

Public law norms of accountability, transparency, fairness, and legality must be followed by them. According to the Department of Cooperative Government and Traditional Affairs, communities have suffered greatly because of poor municipal government (2022). Both internal municipal variables and external factors impact the functioning of municipalities, which leads to issues with service delivery and inadequate governance. Mlambo and Masuku (2020) argue that certain municipalities are under administration because of maladministration and poor governance, demonstrating that inadequate leadership in local government plays a major role in subpar service delivery. According to Ngcamu (2019), public perceptions show that the democratic government is seen as being more corrupt than the apartheid regime, which results in corruption impacting administrative processes, investments, public resources, and accountability.

Dlamini (2017) emphasizes that effective administration may be a calculated way to lessen community demonstrations over service delivery. Adherence to the rule of law, open handling of public monies, and resolving administrative problems that impede good governance in municipalities are all components of good governance. One of the biggest challenges to municipal performance and service delivery is political factionalism. Transparency, accountability, equity, competence, and integrity are all components of good governance. IDASA, 2010), to eliminate corruption and guarantee public involvement in decision-making.

Furthermore, according to Dlalisa (2009), to achieve efficiency and cost-effectiveness, governance necessitates technical proficiency and competence. The value of creative approaches to enhance government-citizen

performance and interaction is acknowledged by good governance. Beyers (2015) avers that a key tactic in accomplishing the Millennium Development Goals is excellent governance, which emphasizes maternal health, gender equality, universal primary education, efficient service delivery, poverty and child mortality reduction, and more. The goals of good governance are to increase the well-being of citizens, encourage economic growth, advance political stability, encourage accountability, and guarantee democracy's victory (Kalonda and Govender, 2021).

5.3 Strategic Measures to Minimize Poor Service Delivery

Effective service delivery necessitates the implementation of suitable procedures to guarantee the reduction of service delivery backlogs. Appropriate budgetary management and sound governance are necessary for improving accountability measures. Planning well can be a game-changer for better municipal service delivery.

5.3.1 Effective oversight and accountability mechanisms

Accountability can take the form of horizontal or vertical (ex-ante or post-ante) manifestations. To promote public accountability for the services rendered annually, municipalities are required by the Municipal Finance Management Act (No. 53 of 2003) to prepare and adopt annual reports (Zulu, Yalezo, and Mutambara, 2022).

. To enhance the basis of independence, Kraai, Holtzhausen, and Malan (2017) contend that accountability demands the division of powers between the legislative and executive branches. The municipal government actively engages in good governance by encouraging accountability.

The local government must record and justify its decisions and activities within the context of good governance; if those decisions contradict the law, the government will be penalized (Hamza, 2014). Unfortunately, crooked politicians who accept bribes, engage in corruption, and break local laws are common at the local level of government. Therefore, whether they are aware of the wrongdoing, leaders must take responsibility for such behaviour (Mbandlwa and Fagbadebo, 2020). Building stronger ties between residents and local government representatives improves the ability to handle many facets of service provision." According to Madumo (2015), accountability is crucial to maintaining stability and acceptance in each democratic system. Municipal governance comprises establishing administrative, legal, and constitutional boundaries for public officials exercising authority as well as guaranteeing accountability, the rule of law, transparency, and public involvement. It gives citizens the necessary safeguards against their representatives (Anticevich, 2010). Increased service supply is anticipated because of efficient oversight and accountability. To improve oversight inside a municipality, Section 65 of the Municipal Finance Management Act (No. 53 of 2003) calls for the creation of internal and external audit units (Van Niekerk, Dalton-Brits, 2016). As an accounting officer, the municipal manager is responsible for the overall performance of the municipality and is entrusted with managing the financial and risk management operations as well as ensuring efficient internal control.

5.3.2 Municipal planning and budgeting

After policy development, planning is the first step in the service delivery chain and attempts to close the gap between budgeting and policymaking. The public has trusted municipalities to manage financial resources effectively, and they are seen as caretakers of public funds. Municipalities must adopt IDPs and match their ability and resources with the implementation plan by the Municipal Systems Act (No. 32 of 2000). Makalela (2019) encapsulates that the IDP is a five-year strategic development plan that assists towns in fulfilling their developmental missions and meeting the growing requirements of their citizens to ensure service delivery. The amount of money municipalities set aside for service delivery programs or development projects specified in the IDPs determines how well municipal services are delivered. For towns to effectively accomplish their goals, IDPs must be applied and taken into consideration. One essential instrument for municipal planning is the budget. It is viewed as a tool that complements the municipality's execution strategies and service objectives. Mkhathshwa and Khumalo (2020) contend that local government should function more like a business and not be dependent on outside funds.

In terms of Section 53 of the Municipal Finance Management Act (No. 53 of 2003), the yearly budget must be approved before the start of the fiscal year. Additionally, section 53 (1) (c) (ii) instructs the municipal mayor to authorize the Service Delivery and Budget Implementation Plan (SDBIP).

The SDBIP, according to Makalela (2019), is an annual report that includes the estimated revenue and expenses that a municipality is expected to incur. It is a tool that improves the implementation of service delivery by concentrating on the requirements of local communities in accordance with yearly goals. To guarantee that operations are conducted efficiently, the SDBIP must be in line with agreements on the supply of outsourced services with private service providers and municipal organizations.

5.3.4 Good Governance

Adopting excellent governance practices is viewed as a viable remedy for the inefficiencies in service delivery that have been caused by poor governance in municipalities. According to Dlamini (2017), good governance is a set of operational procedures that a public organization must have to efficiently serve the general public. The components of effective governance are essential for promoting socioeconomic growth and accelerating the provision of services. According to Moyo, corporate and leadership governance are crucial for enhancing the effectiveness of public institutions (Maphanga, 2022).

Strong leadership is necessary for effective governance to inspire employees, accelerate service delivery, and achieve institutional objectives. Effective leadership, according to Masuku and Jili (2019), should increase the legitimacy of public servants by fostering accountability and openness. Leadership, decision-making, public spending, moral behaviour, accountability, and transparency are all foundational to good governance. According to Moyo (2016), the democratic government inherited several problems and backlogs in service delivery from the time of apartheid. The government must employ strong administration and make efficient use of its limited resources to clear these backlogs. The Municipal Council should serve as the main advocate for and steward of good governance in local communities.

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Effective governance requires strong leadership to motivate the workforce, expedite service delivery, and pursue institutional goals. Masuku, Jili (2019) argue that effective leadership should enhance the credibility of public functionaries through accountability and transparency. Good governance is rooted in the quality of leadership, decision-making, public expenditure, moral conduct, accountability, and transparency.

Moyo (2016) propounds that the democratic government inherited several problems and backlogs in service delivery from the time of apartheid. The government must employ strong administration and make efficient use of its limited resources to clear these backlogs. The Municipal Council should serve as the main advocate for and steward of good governance in local communities. According to Masiya, Davids, and Mangai (2021), the South African government needs public servants who are passionate about serving the people and who uphold the values of good governance. Fundamental ideas that are important to the change of service delivery are part of good governance. These values, which serve as the cornerstone for a suitable method of offering the public quality services, include democracy, accountability, transparency, and efficiency and effectiveness.

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5.5.5 Democracy

Democracy requires citizens to actively participate in and communicate with their representatives during the decision-making process (Chidu, 2011). Public institutions in South Africa are run according to democratic principles, which place a strong emphasis on accountability, transparency, fairness, and openness. The division of powers between the legislative, executive, and judicial branches is a feature of this democratic architecture (Dlalisa, 2009). Every level of government, whether it be local, provincial, or national, must adhere to democratic values. Regardless of a person's level of political participation, this system of government serves their interests.

5.3.6 Accountability

One of the most important values in the nation's constitutional democracy is accountability. According to Moloto, Mkhomazi, and Worku (2020), officials' unethical behaviour, in which the values of public service are not respected, is the reason why citizens' requirements are not being met. In municipalities, political instability and bloodshed have resulted from a lack of accountability. According to this notion, people in positions of authority must answer to the public as well as the legislature (Mundzedhzi, 2016). This is justified by the idea that to prevent corruption, checks and balances are necessary. In conclusion, it can be concluded that local government effectiveness and efficiency can be improved by ensuring accountability and obedience to laws and regulations.

5.3.7 Efficiency and effectiveness

Municipalities should use resources wisely and efficiently to increase their ability to provide communities with high-quality services (Ndevu and Muller, 2018). This idea guarantees that public servants behave in the public

interest. Efficiency becomes essential since local governments have limited resources to address the population's expanding needs. It requires the economic use of public resources to produce the intended results. As stewards of public monies, municipalities are supposed to use these resources to make service delivery easier. Additionally, competence and incorruptibility are demanded of public personnel (Dlalisa, 2009).

5.3.8 Transparency

Municipalities should create an atmosphere that encourages openness and transparency by making public inspection the standard, claims Dlalisa (2009). This means making sure that all public procedures and initiatives are transparent to all. Every stakeholder must have access to information, which is also essential for boosting public confidence in local governments. People may make better judgments for themselves when they are informed about development projects thanks to transparency.

5.3.9 Good Financial Management

The successful execution of service delivery programs in municipalities depends on solid budgeting procedures and efficient financial management. Due to a lack of administrative expertise and the misappropriation of resources for corrupt purposes, local governments frequently have financial difficulties because of financial mismanagement (Mkhatshwa and Khumalo, 2020). Often, municipalities are unable to carry out projects successfully. Municipalities must "take reasonable steps to ensure that the resources of the municipality are used effectively, efficiently, and economically," as stated in the Municipal Finance Management Act (No. 56 of 2003). Effective financial management is essential to guaranteeing sufficient service delivery and the accomplishment of municipal initiatives.

6. Conclusion

The paper gave an exposition of the role of developmental local government, predominant challenges of service delivery, and strategic measures to minimize poor service delivery.

To rectify the injustices of the apartheid era, the ANC-led government has worked to repair historical imbalances through service provision since the beginning of democracy in 1994. Many people express displeasure with the service delivery arrangements, which are characterized by significant backlogs, notwithstanding these attempts. Since public monies intended for service delivery projects are frequently embezzled and vanish without a trace, the widespread problem of corruption has contributed significantly to the extensive harm. One of the main reasons why public services in most government organizations are declining is corruption. All public institutions in the nation have experienced widespread corruption, which has weakened public confidence in the government and contributed to rising rates of violence and substandard living conditions. People believe that local governments are no longer acting in the public interest and are acting against the interests of their residents. People believe that violence is the primary answer to the issues they face because of public discontent. Effective municipal management is hampered by political meddling, and this interaction is the source of problems for many governments. Since public services must be distributed equally and evenly, political meddling in municipal management is necessary to achieve successful service delivery. Public servants must recognize and complement their unique duties and collaborate to accomplish goals.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest to this paper, as well as the published research results, including the financial aspects of conducting the research, obtaining and using its results, as well as any non-financial personal relationships.

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Data availability

Data will be made available on reasonable request.

Use of artificial intelligence

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