

**SERVICE DELIVERY: AN ELUSIVE TARGET- A CASE STUDY OF NKOMAZI
LOCAL MUNICIPALITY**

by

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DECLARATION

I **Nontobeko Portia Mahlalela**, declare that this thesis, which I hereby submit for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Leadership at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, is my own work and has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at any other university.

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Date

ABSTRACT

There are arguments that South African local governments have been found lacking in terms of efficient and effective basic social service delivery. This study developed a conceptual framework as a possible solution to service delivery challenges in Nkomazi Local Municipality. The study was motivated by lack of solutions to persistent service delivery challenges in the local municipality. An interpretivist research paradigm was employed in the study resulting in the use of a qualitative mono method. The case study strategy was used to gather, analyse and use data contextualising it to a natural setting. Non-probability purposive sampling technique was used in the selection of fifty sample elements who comprised twenty-five senior municipal management, fifteen community members and ten owners of small-medium micro enterprises. Data was collected through face-to-face semi-structured interviews.

The study established that a number of challenges exist that militate against the delivery of services in the municipality. It was revealed that the rural nature of the municipality has implications on almost all critical service delivery variables including: the municipality's ability to raise funds for projects, to attract and retain qualified human resources. Findings in this study suggest that most of the conventional service delivery models applicable in developed countries and some of the metros in South Africa cannot be simply implemented in Nkomazi.

The study recommended higher levels of innovation on the part of various stakeholders to resolve service delivery challenges in Nkomazi Local Municipality. There is a pronounced need for better levels of commitment in mounting appropriate interventions at local, district, provincial and the national spheres of government. More solutions and appropriate leadership are required in the municipality as a matter of urgency. The study confirms that existing theoretical models were not sufficiently address service delivery problems, thus, a conceptual framework was developed premised on the South African local government context. This can create further turmoil evidenced through protests which puts the municipality at an untenable situation. The findings of the study steer it to an intervention model that can be adopted to alleviate the service delivery situation.

LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ADB	Africa Development Bank
ANC	African National Congress
ASD	Alternative service delivery
ASSDM	Alternative Shared Service Delivery Model
BRT	Bus Rapid Transit system
CDs	Compact Disks
CDWs	Community Development Workers
DA	Democratic Party
DANIDA	Danish Development Agency
DPME	Department of Minerals and Energy
DWAF	Department of Water Affairs and Forestry
EC	European Commission
EDM	Ehlanzeni District Municipality
EIB	European Investment Bank
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IDASA	Institute of Development Studies South Africa
IDP	Integrated Development Plan
IMF	International Monetary Fund
LED	Local Economic Development
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MFMA	Municipal Finance Management Act
MIG	Municipal Infrastructure Grant
MPCCs	Multi-purpose community centres
MSP	Municipal Service Partnership
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NKM	Nkomazi Local Municipality
NPC	National Planning Commission
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PMS	Performance Management System
PPP	Public Private Partnerships
RSA	Republic of South Africa
SA	South Africa
SABC	South African Broadcasting Corporation
SANRAL	South African National Road Agency
SDBIP	Service Delivery and Budget Implementation Plan
SMMEs	Small-Medium Micro Enterprises
SSDM	Shared service delivery model
Stats-SA	Statistics South Africa
UK	United Kingdom (Britain)
UN	United nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

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DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my late parents; Sesana Priscilla Matsebula and Cuphile Philemon Mahlalela. If God had allowed you to be alive to this day, you would be proud of my achievement.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 Introduction

The study develops a conceptual framework that guide municipalities in monitoring, auditing and improving service delivery. This study also seeks to address service delivery and its challenges at the Nkomazi Local Municipality. Service delivery seems to be an elusive concept given the increasing service delivery protests in a number of municipalities in South Africa. It also looks at the performance of the Nkomazi Local Municipality (NLM) in the implementation of its IDP over the years 2011 to 2016. The integrated Development Plan (IDP) is the basic document that guides local municipalities in their plans for delivering high quality services to communities.

In this chapter, the evolution of the concept of service delivery, its parameters and its relation to politics and governance are traced and discussed in detail. In addition, the introductory chapter provides the contextual setting of the study, followed by the statement of the problem that prompted the study. Other key issues discussed in this chapter include the research aim, objectives, significance of the study, followed by an overview of the theoretical framework, concept of service delivery, research methodology and the structure of the study. The next section presents a background of Nkomazi Local Municipality.

1.1.1 Background of the Nkomazi Local Municipality

The location of Nkomazi local municipality puts into context the challenges faced by rural municipalities in respect to basic service delivery challenges. The municipality is in the Mpumalanga province, in the eastern part of South Africa. It is part of Ehlanzeni District Municipality, sharing its borders with Mozambique and Swaziland. It is bounded by Mozambique to the east, Swaziland to the south, Kruger National Park to the north, and Mbombela Local Municipality from the south west to the northwest. Nkomazi local municipality has experienced a massive growth in population figures both through natural growth and through migration (Nkomazi IDP:2014-2015). Inhabitants are generally low-income nationals and migrants from the rest of Africa but mainly Swaziland and Mozambique. The population of the municipality was 390 610 people according to the 2015 estimate (StatsSA, 2015). NLM is characterized by a

larger number of females (54%) than males (46%). Almost half of the population in Nkomazi Municipality comprises of youth and children.

The municipality delivers a range of basic social services with limited resources. The high demand for infrastructure and services has put pressure on the municipality's resources. This pressure and other related demands have compromised the municipality's ability to effectively improve the quality of life for all its residents. This social context has put a sharp focus on the state to find ways of improving public investment to deliver a range of services. As a rural municipality, NLM is disadvantaged with reference to revenue generation, financial viability and sustainability of municipal programmes. Due to this rural character, many of the inhabitants are unemployed and poor (StatsSA, 2015). The municipality also has limited capacity to borrow and has not received enough financial support from provincial and national government to address the huge infrastructural backlog and other challenges. Lack of clarity in the shared responsibilities with the province and the national government further handicaps the municipality as resources are not rolled out on time to address the required services. High poverty levels directly affect the municipality's financial ability to provide and maintain existing and expected services to the communities. A detailed discussion and geographic location of NLM will be presented in the fourth chapter of this study.

1.2 The context of public service delivery

The concept of service delivery can best be understood within the context of public service delivery. Service delivery is supported by theories in public administration generally referred to as the new public management (Feldman, Hadjimichael, Lanahan & Kemeny, 2016). New public management has coined the terms 'clientele or citizenry' when referring to the recipients or beneficiaries of basic services (Yanguas & Hulme, 2015). In the new public management domain, the general public are referred to as 'customers'. According to du Plooy (2017) the term 'new public management' appeared in the early 1990s and includes the idea of meeting the needs of the general public through service delivery. Current research stands in support of this notion as basic service delivery is seen in the context of 'citizen participation' and 'citizen engagement' (Tembo, 2014; Kamara, 2017).

Fox and Meyer (2016) identified service delivery as that part of government which compels them to supply goods and services of a public nature, to include certain benefits and satisfactions. In this regard, service delivery is broadened to include both tangible and intangible goods and services. These activities are conducted in most nations by different spheres or structures of government. The major objective of the different functions is to improve the standards of living of the public. Studies by Bolatito and Ibrahim (2014), Clark and Moir (2014), Bryson, Cosby and Stone (2015) and Odolanu (2015), show much of what is referred to as basic service delivery has not changed substantially. For instance, Bryson, Cosby and Stone (2015) support the notion of local government level that improves the living standards of the populace to the next level. This is also explained by Bolatito and Ibrahim (2014) who argue that it is crucial that government services be seen to be proficient. Basic services generally cover amenities such as electricity, housing, education, health, water, waste disposal, roads, and transport (Clark & Moir, 2014). However local municipalities are not limited to these and may extend to cover other things (Bolatito & Ibrahim, 2014;) Odolanu, 2015.

The performance of local government in terms of basic service delivery has come under scrutiny because of a number of perceived weaknesses therein. For instance, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2010; 2011; 2014) noted in a number of annual reports that most of the world's cities face acute challenges in basic service delivery. In addition Raelin (2015) points out that in many developing nations, the issue of basic service delivery remains an urgent challenge that needs to be addressed. Joeffe (2015) argues that the urgency of the matter in developing economies arises from the fact that these basic services are a pressing need given the large number of poor people. Similarly, findings by Khalid (2010) illustrate that even in municipalities in developed nations such as Malaysia, the pressure to provide acceptable levels of satisfactory service remains a major challenge.

The state of basic service delivery highlighted in the rest of the world is also mirrored in South Africa. A number of authors argue that South African local governments have been found lacking in terms of efficient and effective basic social service delivery

(Meylahn, 2014). One of the most notable indicators of this lack has been the rising number of protests in municipalities across the country as highlighted earlier. The Municipal IQ (2016) noted that there were 1225 basic social services delivery protests between 2004 and 2016. The real cause of these protests are often cited as 'poor service delivery' (Phillips, 2014). Problematic areas in service delivery pertain to issues of health and education. Besides these, road infrastructure also remains a topical issue given the level of capital investment often required. The challenges are more acute in rural based municipalities owing to a number of circumstances prevalent in such areas". The protests highlighted above that occurred in the Mpumalanga province alone, illustrate the national trend in terms of basic social service delivery. It is therefore, within this context that the research problem in this study has been crafted.

1.3 Research problem

With reference to a myriad of service delivery challenges confronting municipalities, there are gaps in current literature, past studies and theoretical works on service delivery. The absence of a conceptual framework that guides local government to implement strategies, processes and audit trails to monitor or track and report on service delivery issues is a cause for concern, thus, the current study develops a conceptual model to help municipalities improve their service delivery agendas.

In South Africa, most municipalities have been confronted with protests from communities demanding services. Service delivery issues are critical in South African local government as this is the point of contact between government and the people. For some time, community protests have been growing and the municipality is overwhelmed as these strikes are concerned with a wide variety of service delivery issues; water, waste collection, roads, RDP housing, bridges, schools and sometimes electricity connectivity. The NLM in its IDPs over the years from 2011-2016 has consistently shown that the "backlogs over most of the service delivery issues are increasing. Despite setting annual targets on what has to be achieved, the ability of the municipality to achieve the set targets is questionable.. Failure to meet service delivery targets opens up a number of other challenges socially, economically and at a political domain.

Basic social service delivery in local government sphere has emerged as a weakest link in the government strategy that focuses on pushing the frontiers of poverty (IDASA: 2010). Contentions by some authors, among them Zurba (2014); Perez-Lopez, Prior and Zafra-Gomez (2015) are that the legacy of apartheid planning must be reversed into a process and embarking on restorative measures on all fronts, this thinking has forced municipalities to invest heavily on providing equity of basic social services in former 'townships' and informal areas. To this end it is concluded that municipalities often find it difficult to meet the demands of various communities due to massive backlogs in infrastructure, housing needs and all the basic social services required by indigent communities. Zama (2013) suggests that more studies need to be done in order to understand how rural-based local municipalities can deal with their service delivery issues. This is what makes this study relevant, as it grapples with challenges facing a rural municipality to meet its constitutional mandate. Zama (2013) commented on Dipaleseng after the municipality was rocked by service delivery protests that grabbed headlines in 2010. The author argued that as from 2010 till 2015 more service delivery protests were recorded in South Africa than before. Generally, authors agree that there is a need for a better understanding of the real causes of these protests, in order for the authorities to deal decisively with the issues (Du Plessis, 2014; Cameron, 2014; Peters, 2014; Auriacombe & Ackron, 2015; Friedman, 2016). This is attributable to fact that service delivery challenges evolve each time, such that pressure on the municipalities to deliver keeps growing greater now than before.

To a large extent, the service delivery protests in Nkomazi local municipality reflect the crisis in the implementation of its Integrated Development Plans over the years. Generally, the municipality has admitted that implementation of the IDP has been lagging behind (Nkomazi IDP, 2015; 2016). Some of the major concerns highlighted in the municipal IDPs relate to poor ranking of needs by the community in the execution of the Integrated Development Plan. Other issues pertain to ineffective budgeting processes whereby each department does its own processes without consultation or synchronising with the others (Cameron, 2014; Odalonu, 2015; Nkomazi IDP, 2014-2015; Nkomazi IDP, 2015-2016). These challenges have negatively affected the functioning of the municipality and as a result this has led to protests from disgruntled local communities (Peters, 2014). Given the level of the challenges highlighted in the

municipal IDPs, it is pertinent to explore whether the Nkomazi municipality is able to overcome and deliver basic social services to the communities. A report by IDASA (2010) argues that failures by municipalities tend to inflict immense hardships on the citizenry and this stutters social and economic development in general. Such a scenario is inconsistent with the local government legislative mandate that advocates that stakeholder involvement in decision-making at the local level is crucial in planning on issues that affect people's lives (CoGTA, 2014; DDP, 2014).

1.4 Research objectives and aim

The aim of the study is to develop a conceptual framework that might guide municipalities to improve, monitor and report on service delivery. In so doing, the study examines the challenges of providing basic social services in a context of scarce resources and perceived misalignment of limited resources to the IDP's.

Therefore, the guiding objectives to the study were as follows:

- Identify the challenges faced by Nkomazi Local Municipality in respect to its service delivery mandate to its local constituencies.
- Establish the extent to which the municipality fulfilled its service delivery mandate as stated in the five years' IDPs between 2011 and 2016?
- Determine the capability of Nkomazi Local Municipality to fulfil its basic service delivery mandate to its local constituencies.
- Develop a conceptual framework to improve service delivery in local municipalities.
- Identify the disjuncture between basic service delivery plans in the Integrated Development Plans and the actual implementation in the Nkomazi Local Municipality.

1.5 Research questions

Arising from the study objectives, a number of research questions were therefore developed to address the issues raised in this study. The main concern of the study was *on the performance of Nkomazi Local Municipality in respect to the implementation of its Integrated Development Plan*. This main question was supported by a set of five sub-questions provided below, and these were addressed in different chapters of the study.

- What challenges are faced by NKLM in respect to its service delivery mandate to its local constituencies?
- To what extent has the municipality fulfilled its service delivery mandate as stated in the five years' IDPs between 2011 and 2016?
- What are the perceptions of the leadership in terms of basic social service delivery performance of the municipality?
- To what extent is Nkomazi local municipality capable to fulfil its basic service delivery mandate to its local constituencies?
- How would the proposed conceptual framework help local municipalities to improve service delivery?

1.6 Concept of service delivery

Service delivery has become the yard stick used to assess the responsiveness of governments to the needs of its citizenry at local level. Christensen and Laegreid (2014) argue that the term 'service delivery' in itself is not neutral. It is necessary to gain a deeper understanding of service delivery implications, given that the term contains a host of assumptions, implications for policy, impact on attitudes and the promise to make to citizens. Christensen and Laegreid, (2014) consider the use of the term 'service delivery' as part of a technocratic description of the relationship between citizens and government. At the same time the issue of service delivery occurs within the context of decentralised local government. The sub-sections that follow explore the meaning of the terms decentralisation, integrated development plan and service delivery' to ensure the parameters within which the terms are applied in the understanding of the background of the service delivery challenges in South Africa.

1.6.1 Defining decentralisation

Bel, Fageda and Mur (2014) define decentralisation as an evolutionary process used in local government for allocating administrative, fiscal or political power to municipalities. In the global perspective, Bel and Warner (2014) suggest that decentralisation deals with issues of balancing resources, equity among communities, and accountability among the civil service. This is an attempt to rein in the challenges of centralised government systems, which have been heavily criticised as unresponsive. The notion of decentralization in South Africa finds its expression in the

Constitution (Republic of South Africa, 1996). According to Bekink (2013), the South African government created three autonomous spheres of government in order to decentralise government and at the same time introduce the concept of accountability to the grassroots.

With reference to the South African Constitution, there are three spheres of government: national, provincial and local. These three spheres are said to be distinctive, interdependent and yet interrelated (African Peer Review Mechanism, 2007). In terms of section 104(1) and section 125(5) of the Constitution, the legislative authority of a province and the implementation of provincial legislation is assigned to the provincial legislature. At the local government level executive and legislative authority is vested in the municipal council, as stated in section 151(1) of the constitution (The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 2010). Some of the key legislation pertaining to local government was enacted between 1998 and 2003. The most prominent of these laws include the Local Government: Municipal Structures Act of 1998, the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act of 2000, the Local Government: Municipal Electoral Act of 2000 and the Local Government: Municipal Finance Management Act of 2003 (African Peer Review Mechanism, 2007). These laws have been instrumental in ensuring certain levels of accountability, and ensuring public involvement in the affairs of the state (African Peer Review Mechanism, 2007). Despite several challenges, all decentralised institutions such as the Nkomazi Local Municipality obtain a certain level of support from the state to ensure that they function properly.

The three spheres are alleged to allow for the strong exercise in decentralisation by ensuring that at each level different stakeholders are involved in the governance processes. These levels relate to the roles and responsibilities at national, provincial and local government and each level is endowed with appropriate frameworks and tools to carry out their mandate. Despite the perceived independence of these spheres, they are still subject to both constitutional and national legislative requirements (CoGTA, 2016). Each sphere, especially municipalities, is required to consider only the relevant functions that are legally imposed on it by the laws of South Africa. Constant review of the law implies that each of the sphere's terms of duty keep

on revolving. In addition, municipal powers are exercised according to certain predetermined and procedural legal parameters, in order to safeguard the bureaucratic processes.

South African laws provide for a range of institutional structures to deal with issues of local governance. One of the structures is the Ward Committee, comprising elected officials from the local area. The Ward Committee is the most basic structure dealing with grassroots issues and the Ward Councillor is the face of the local people. These structures are critical in the development of the integrated development programme. This process involves all local stakeholders in the development of service delivery plans for the municipalities. Community development workers is a third structure that contributes to service delivery. Community development workers act as a conduit between the local people and municipal administration. A final mechanism used in local government are the *Imbizos* also known as the 'citizen forums'. These are basic leadership gatherings that discuss all issues of concern and giving voice to the public on wide ranging issues (African Peer Review Mechanism, 2007).

Besides the above formal local institutions, the local initiatives that form part of local governance include various meetings with the municipality in council meetings and other similar fora. These decentralised structures present the mechanism for the delivery of basic social services and hence the following section discusses the concept of service delivery within the South African context.

1.6.2 Integrated Development Planning

With reference to the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, the objective of local government is to provide services to communities consistently. This also requires that the service delivery be sustainable and should result in the elevation of the targeted community through visible social and economic advancement. To undertake this mandate implies that the local community has to be involved in the in matters of local government, either individually or through some of the bodies that represent them.

With reference to the Municipal Systems Act No 32 of 2000, each municipality has to prepare an integrated development plan for their area of jurisdiction. In this regard, the

IDP is a vehicle to develop territorial strategies in order to respond to socio-economic and environmental problems. The planning system which exists in South Africa today which includes laws, policies, institutions and practices has been shaped to respond to the problems which are defined as significant.

The Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000 shows that performance management is a process where a municipality assesses or measures its ability to implement municipal strategy in the form of the Integrated Development Plan. It is important for a municipality to measure its performance against set goals and objectives in order to fulfil the needs of the people. This is the major reason for the existence of municipalities. Municipalities are expected to account for service delivery to communities in any particular financial year. This is achieved through a what-gets-measured-gets-done approach in the form of an Annual Performance Report. Municipalities must, therefore, submit to the Office of the Auditor General an Annual Performance Report at the end of a financial year together with Annual Financial Statements. In addition, the Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000 requires municipalities to establish a performance management system. While on the other hand, the Municipal Finance Management Act 56 of 2003 compels municipalities to align IDPs and budgets with Service Delivery and Budget Implementation Plan. These practices give municipalities opportunities to make sure plans are in place and a budget is available to implement these development plans. Any deviation from these requirements implies non-compliance of municipalities, inadequate planning would take place, and no reporting or measurement of activities would happen.

A 'compliance driven approach' to integrated development planning has been the focus of many criticisms (Jayne, 2017). Compliance driven is an approach which seems to push the IDP process not as an inclusive process but something to satisfy legislative requirements. As argued elsewhere in this study, the objective of service delivery should be to transform the lives of the people. This includes making sure that people are aware of development needs and can prioritise what they need without being coerced through a process of which they really have not much say (World Bank, 2014). Among other things, service delivery should ensure that there is collective effort, and that socio-economic opportunities are availed (McDonagh, 2017). Lives and

livelihoods should experience real change for the better (Saad-Filho, 2016), and this should all be oriented towards raising human consciousness (Conto, Conte, Fiore & Djelveh, 2015).

The drafting of the IDP has fallen into the trap of a compliance-driven approach challenge (Lovan, Murray & Shaffer, 2017). In this regard, the arguments are that community involvement is mere lip service done to fulfil legislative requirements (Vivian, 2014; Oi, 2015). While authors generally agree that communities do participate, the challenge is that the level of participation is not considered to be sufficient to conclude that the IDP process is an inclusive process (Edwards, 2017). Indeed communities participate in the IDP Representative Forum meetings, community IDP hearings, imbizos and ward committees. However, general observations indicate that these consultation processes do not lead to the outcomes envisaged for service delivery and the same 'involved' communities turn out to be driving mass protests against their municipalities complaining of lack of service delivery (Mdlongwa, 2014). The example of the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system, caused a widespread public furore from the very point of initial roll-out (Sowetan, 2013). It serves as an example of service delivery consultations gone wrong, as stakeholders claim they were not consulted whereas the authorities of the system claim that the consultations were thorough. Whatever the circumstances, the launching of the BRT system was opposed so strongly such that arguments of initial involvement of the stakeholders have been rendered suspect. Given these kinds of challenges of public participation, the nature of service delivery is therefore, generally shaped by a number of variables at play in the local space. This study is expected to bring to the fore those factors by exploring the NLM and is expected to contribute to understanding the issues of service delivery.

1.7 Significance of the study

This study is significant in that it provides an understanding of the factors that influence the implementation of the integrated development plans in Nkomazi Local Municipality. Service delivery issues are at the centre of the interaction between the state and its citizens hence there is need to understand the issues which are at the core of driving a wedge between these two. When the citizens are protesting this could be interpreted

as a sign that they are not getting value for money from the government. However before any such conclusion can be drawn, it was necessary that the real issues be investigated. This study sought to add to the existing knowledge on service delivery on how to address issues especially in a rural municipality. Numerous studies have been done on service delivery yet what is often lacking are the holistic solutions on how to deal with all the issues. Service delivery involves many issues and hence when a piecemeal study is done, new issues evolve which need to be resolved. Similarly dealing with service delivery issues in a piecemeal fashion often leads to firefighting and this opens the local municipality to new and sometimes recurring service delivery challenges, in different areas but at different times. Often a solutions needed to address the challenges once and for all and that is the main objective of this study.

What should come out of this study is a conceptual framework that might be used by local government authorities to improve service delivery. It is not possible to eliminate service delivery protests because the nature of service delivery evolves over time. However, with this study, the model proposed could be adopted by NLM and adapted by other similarly placed municipalities. The suggested model is an improvement of other models that have been suggested before and has tried to close any gaps that made previous models difficult to implement.

1.8 Overview of theoretical works guiding the study

In this section, the author briefly discusses six theoretical works that explain local government and service delivery in terms of their usefulness and possible challenges in application by local authorities. Theoretical frameworks are imperative in research because they enable the author to explain, understand and predict challenges surrounding a phenomenon under investigation because they comprise clearly defined concepts operating in unison (Creswell, 2012). Researchers use theoretical works to challenge and extend existing knowledge, whilst situating the study into a specific scholarly discourse. When exposed to a broader body of literature, researchers are compelled to demonstrate an understanding and application of theories and concepts to address the problem under investigation (Chigada, 2014).

For other purposes, theories assist researchers in making intelligent decisions as they conduct investigations (Graziano & Raulin, 1993). For this study the theoretical frameworks assisted in the research by pointing out the possible boundaries of the research, which type of literature to search and include, how to craft appropriate research questions, and also gave direction in identifying possible research participants (Teddie, 2007). The identified and appropriate theoretical works were:

Democratic participatory theory: whose aim is to ensure that all stakeholders especially residents in a municipality are involved, engaged, participate and consulted in the development of their area.

Efficient services theory: The theory aims at improving service delivery through various collaborations with 'esteemed' efficient providers.

Developmental local government theory: This theory states that local government state agencies should be instruments for development for a given locality.

Agencification-Role of service delivery agencies: An approach that uses special purpose semi-autonomous vehicles/institutions to promote development of a locality.

New public management delivery forms: This is an approach that gathers all kinds of collaborative mechanisms involving private, public and non-governmental organisations to promote local development.

Sustainable livelihoods approach: An approach that focuses on livelihoods of the local space and assets available in order to promote sustainable livelihood.

The above models will be explored in detail in the second chapter of the study to determine which theories or models have been used in South Africa and how they helped to resolve the service delivery issues for the Nkomazi Local Municipality which is the subject of this study. A key theme among all the models, or approaches and theories pertaining to service delivery is that they attempt to focus on socio-economic impacts (Madumo, 2015).

1.9 Overview of the research methodology

The research plan that was used to gather, interpret, analyse and use data is briefly discussed in this section. A detailed discussion is presented in chapter five. Successful research should be supported by a coherent research plan which outlines the processes and procedures undertaken during the study (Kuhn, 1970). A set of values and belief system precede any research, therefore, the author decided and chose the interpretivist paradigm to inform the direction which this study followed. Ngulube (2010) states that interpretivism focuses on theory development. From an epistemological perspective, the author was interested in understanding the problem under investigation. Epistemology is the study of warranted belief and knowledge (Stanford, 2016). A case study research strategy was used in this study with the objective of putting together different research components (Yin, 2014).

An exploratory research design was used because the research problem was not clearly defined and was not well researched before. Wilson (2014) states that exploratory research designs help to explain and have a better understanding of the problem but does not give conclusive results. The study was not structured, but interactive and open-ended, flexible and adaptable to changes as the research progressed. The exploratory research design was used to find out the possible causes of the problem.

A qualitative research method was used in this study because the author relied on participants' expressed viewpoints which were then used to draw some conclusions for the research (Taylor, Bogdan & DeVault, 2015). The choice of the qualitative method was appropriate for the study because the author was able to make an objective assessment of the NLM case. By using the qualitative method, the author was able to extract vital perspectives from research participants.

Semi-structured face-to-face interviews and document analysis were the main data gathering techniques used in this study. Sim, Saunders, Waterfield and Kingstone (2018) state that different sources such as documentation analysis are used to interrogate or verify comments made by the participants. The interviews were used to generate independent and individual opinion from the participants that undertake

service delivery and from those that experience service delivery challenges in the municipality.

1.10 Delimitation of the study

Service delivery, which is the subject of this study is indeed a broad topic, and this study sought to establish how issues of service delivery remain an elusive concept at the NKLM. Some of the core issues that were studied and fall under service delivery include provision of water, sanitation, road and storm water drainage, electricity, housing (RDPs) and refuse collection. Most of the protests that are conducted in Nkomazi or in some of the local municipalities involve one or more of these issues. In order to answer the question of whether service delivery is an elusive concept in the Nkomazi Local Municipality, understanding the status quo for each of these key service delivery issues was very important.

1.11 Limitations of the study

Generally the study was constrained in terms of time, of which the specific details are elucidated in Chapter Four on the research methodology. However, the nature of the participants involved in this study is such that they are mostly in management positions and seems to be perpetually busy. Obtaining an audience with some of them was a challenge. The challenge of time also meant that the researcher had to reschedule work programmes in order to be able to meet the required set of participants. Having overcome all possible limitations imposed on the research, the findings are expected to address directly the context of Nkomazi Local Municipality but are not expected to apply in general to all other rural or similarly placed municipalities.

1.12 Organisation of the study

This study is divided into eight chapters which are summarised as follows:

Chapter One – Orientation to the Study

This chapter introduces the whole study, giving definitions, and major discussions on service delivery issues in general. The chapter gives an outline of the context of the study setting the parameters for the whole study.

Chapter Two – Theoretical Framework

The chapter presents a number of theoretical models of service delivery. The discussions centre on how each of these models are applied in different parts of the world and how effective they are as well as the challenges associated with their use.

Chapter Three – Literature Review on Service Delivery and Local Government

The literature review in this chapter highlights the general issues concerning service delivery in other parts of the world, including South Africa. This provided information for bench-marking purposes.

Chapter Four –Service Delivery and Implementation Challenges

This fourth chapter reviews extended and detailed literature analysing the nature of service delivery challenges in South Africa. In addition the chapter also provided further bench-marking case studies from sub-Saharan Africa so that recommendations would be more relevant to the Nkomazi Local Municipality case study.

Chapter Five- Research Methodology

This chapter focuses on the research methodology adopted for this study. Issues discussed include the population, sampling, the data collection techniques used, and the nature of the research instrument applied.

Chapter Six – Data Presentation Analysis and Interpretation

Chapter six gives an outline of findings and interprets all the primary and secondary research data findings for the Nkomazi Local Municipality.

Chapter Seven– Sustainable Livelihoods Approach

This chapter discusses the adopted model for the study; the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach. In addition, the chapter explains the findings based on the model within the context of service delivery challenges in the municipality.

Chapter Eight – Conclusion and Recommendation

Chapter eight provides recommendations, possible solutions to the challenges of the Nkomazi Local Municipality as well as the conclusions of the study.

1.13 Chapter summary

This inception chapter introduced the nature of the study to be undertaken based on the Nkomazi Local Municipality. This entailed giving a brief background to the nature of the challenges in basic service delivery. The nature of the research problem was highlighted together with the aims and objectives that the research seeks to achieve. In addition, a brief theoretical outline of service delivery issues was given, outlining some of the key concepts such as ‘integrated development planning’, decentralisation and service delivery. These concepts were explained in the context of the South African environment”. The introductory chapter also gave a brief outline of the significance of the study, and the limitations of the study were also outlined. The next chapter presents the literature review on service delivery and local government.

CHAPTER TWO:THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the theoretical works that underpin service delivery. In this Chapter a total of six frameworks and or models on local government and service delivery will be discussed in terms of their usefulness and possible challenges in application by local authorities. Emphasis will be put on some models that have been used in South Africa and how they may resolve the service delivery issues for the Nkomazi Local Municipality which is the subject of this study. A key theme among all the models, or approaches and theories pertaining to service delivery is that they attempt to focus on socio-economic impacts (Madumo, 2015). Most approaches take the local economic development dimension as a way of promoting 'collaborative governance'.

The purpose of theories is to provide explanations of phenomena with regards to their strength, direction and any relationships that may link them. Researchers find theories to be significant in that they enable them to predict the outcomes of phenomena (Black, 1999). For other purposes, theories assist researchers in making intelligent decisions as they conduct investigations (Graziano & Raulin, 1993). For this study, the theoretical frameworks assisted in the research by pointing out the possible boundaries of the research, which type of literature to search and include, how to craft appropriate research questions, and also gave direction in identifying possible research participants (Teddie, 2007).

2.2 Service delivery models and theories

Service delivery occurs within the ambit of local government and hence a number of authors propose theories for local government to cover service delivery issues (Olowu, 2012). On the other hand, others authors regard service delivery issues as matters of local economic development and hence their theories are biased towards local economic development issues (Cloete, 2015). As a field of study, local government is a major field, whereas local economic development is considered as a subfield through which service delivery is measured (Subban & Theron, 2014). Some authors argue that there is no model of local government (Nchuchuwe & Oviasuyi, 2015), instead,

what is widely available in literature are models of service delivery that purport to resolve the growing service delivery challenges (Odalonu, 2015; Dickovick, 2015).

Odalonu (2015) identifies three models of local government which have shaped the debate on local government and have their origins from the field of public administration as well as local government studies. The most popular models include: *Democratic participatory model, Efficiency-services model and Developmental model.*

2.3 The Efficiency – Service Theory

According to Ola and Tonwe (2014), the efficiency-service theory sets local government in the context of public service provision. The central theme in this theory is that local government systems are established for the express objective of providing social services. The most common of these social services include road maintenance, law and order, refuse collection, primary education and sanitation (Chukwuemeka, Ugwuanyi, Ndubuisi-Okolo & Onuoha, 2014). Cruz, Ferreira and Marques (2014) argue that as the name of the model depicts, the *efficient-service* seeks to promote the perspective that local government exists to ensure efficient-and Tonwe (2014) and Dan (2014) argue that government is preoccupied with the provision of the most efficient service to the people. This preoccupation transcends all aspects of service delivery including efficient use of resources that are in the control of the local government bodies. Such an argument supports the view that what is more critical at local level is not the participation of the communities in a democratic dispensation but the efficiency of the government processes used by the local municipality (Chukwuemeka et al., 2014).

Other contenders of the efficiency-service theory include Vining, Boardman and Moore (2014), who suggest that local governments are well-placed to provide the needed amenities at the local level. This arises from the fact that local governments are at the grassroots level, located right in the communities, and can easily identify what the local requirements are. Central government is seen as being too far removed from the people, and would not be able to timeously respond to the demands made for service delivery (Brooks, 2014). In most developing economies, the identified local government functions cover activities from collection of rates to establishment and maintenance of

cemeteries. Within this context, the local authority has to ensure that indigents are catered for, roads are built, transport system is managed, cycle tracks are kept clean and in pristine condition, food stalls do not pose a danger to the public, slaughter houses are hygienic, public recreational places are well kept, homes for the destitute are taken care of, and burial grounds are ever in abundant supply. These activities require a lot of construction of access routes, development of streets, provisioning of reliable street lighting, appropriate drainage, space for parks, gardens, and general open spaces (Bolatito & Ibrahim, 2014).

The duties of the local authorities are quite expansive in and this requires that they be appropriately resourced in order to carry out their mandate (Ackron & Auriacombe, 2016a). Odolanu (2015) remarks that local government fills in the gap that central authorities would not be able to fulfil. This role is then served effectively and efficiently by the local government units, as they reach out to the people at the local communities (CoGTA, 2014).

The major weakness of the Efficient Services Model is that it de-emphasises the need for inclusivity or democratic participation by beneficiaries as long as the services are being provided effectively and efficiently. The model puts prominence in ensuring that services are provided as efficiently and effectively as possible. However it does not give specific ways of measuring *efficiency or effectiveness* as these are subjective terms. Measuring efficiency or effectiveness has been left to other models to deal with. The model also makes service delivery a serious challenge in growing democracies such as South Africa where local people feel they need to be included in the decisions that affect them. As discussed in the literature review in chapters three and four, there is growing discomfort among citizens that local authorities seem to have their own priorities for service delivery which are not related to what the communities really want. In order to address this concern the next model, allows elements of democracy in the service delivery process.

2.4 Democratic Participatory Model of Local Government

Unlike the efficient services model, proponents of the Democratic Participatory Model of Local government seem to be correcting the weaknesses of not including the local

people in the service delivery decision making. In this section the discussion traces the development of democratic participation and how it has been applied in South Africa.

2.4.1 Democratic participation

Democratic participation is widely regarded as a way of introducing inclusivity in decision making. Individuals are allowed to shape the future of their locality by being directly involved in the public decisions. Kamara (2015) traces the origins of citizen participation to ancient Greece and colonial New England. Before the 1960s, governmental processes and procedures were designed to facilitate 'external' participation. In the 20th century, citizen participation was first made prominent in the mid-1960s in the United States of America (USA), when President Lyndon Johnson introduced his *Great Society Programmes* (Thornhill, 2015). Public participation was seen as a way of creating avenues for community views and opinions in matters of governance (Madlala, 2015).

At the centre of a 'people-centred development' approach is the notion of public participation (Kotze, 2017). This requires that local authority has in place, a mechanism to communicate all its plans to the beneficiary communities. Having a communication system is not sufficient as there is need for the public servants' attitude to be in line so that they involve beneficiaries as much as possible. When appropriately undertaken, Davids (2015) supports the view that people at local level should be involved as this is the right step in promoting democracy. Public participation will therefore, encompass the whole service delivery process to include implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Local people will benefit more from sharing the proceeds of good governance as these may outweigh the tangible outputs.

Public participation is the mechanism which allows the local authorities to involve the citizens in resolving their needs in a manner that values their input. It requires a two way communication process whereby the public authority does not dictate but lends an ear to the concerns, with the express objective of improving overall decisions that impact the community (Meyer & Theron, 2010; Creighton, 2015). However public

participation is fraught with definition challenges, and Creighton (2015) summarises these issues. Most definitions include the following elements:

- 'Public Participation is restricted to the decisions made at administrative level;
- Public participation is a platform set up mere interaction but is an important component of democratic governance;
- The process for involving the public is systematic or organised to ensure that all relevant concerns are addressed;
- Participants are directly involved and hence are considered instrumental in the decision making process.

Creighton (2015) notes that in trying to understand the concept of 'public participation', several meanings come up and hence the best way is to derive the meaning as a continuum capturing a number of possibilities as illustrated in Figure 2.1:

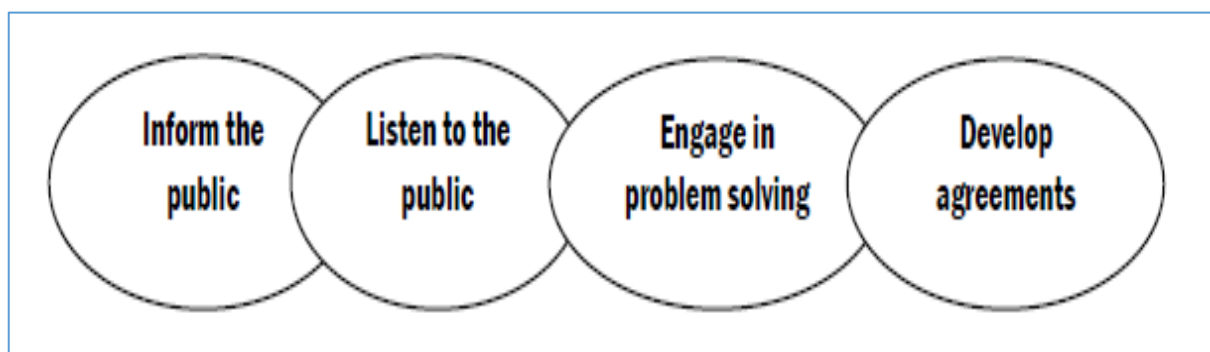


Figure 2.1: Continuum of participation

Source: Creighton (2015)

The term 'public participation' captures a two-way interchange of information between the communities and the government parties. In South Africa the participation of the people is encapsulated in the IDP to integrate many stakeholders to the development agenda of a locality. The following section gives a brief discussion of the IDP process in South Africa.

2.4.2 Public Participation in Integrated Development Planning

As a public participation platform, integrated planning offers a number of benefits. These benefits, highlighted in the White Paper on Local Government (1998), include opening up avenues for the local people to initiate and implement informed decisions. Public participation by citizens is highly regarded as it is a significant measure of the level of democracy in the country (DPLG, 2000; Gildenhuys, Fox & Wissink, 2012). The following paragraphs discuss aspects involving how the IDP process guarantees the local people are made part of the governing process.

The public participation is conducted through IDP process which is defined in Section 35 of the Municipal Systems Act (RSA, 2000) as the principal strategic planning instrument which guides and informs all planning and development, and all decisions with regard to planning, management and development in the municipality. The IDP process facilitates interaction between local government and citizens for a number of reasons cited in the IDP Guide Pack 1. Some of the reasons for public participation are noted as follows;

- It is a way to ensure that government responds to the needs and aspirations of the people;
- It facilitates the designing of appropriate and sustainable solutions that resolve the challenges in a community;
- It assists in bringing community buy-in and the use of local resources and initiatives; and
- It is a way to ensure there is transparency and accountability by all stakeholders especially those who control state resources.

The local government laws in South Africa expect the IDP to be reviewed every five years. All other sectoral plans are subject to the IDP in order to avoid possible conflict (DPLG, 2000). As such the IDP is seen as the master plan which brings all others into alignment.

Beierle (2013) identifies six social values are served by various forms of community participation. These include; community education; bringing community standards into

the process of policy making; enhancing the quality of community policy; elevating the level of trust by the community of the government parties; minimising or eliminating possible conflicts; and ensuring affordable policy making.

The element of trust between the community and the local municipalities is very important in service delivery issues. It is at the centre of good governance, as citizens are accorded the opportunity to be involved in local governance issues. Opportunities for practical involvement ensures that the local communities own the development process, rather than them regarding it as 'imposed'.

2.4.3 Challenges of Democratic Participatory Model

Not all pundits of the democratic model think that is the panacea to service delivery challenges. Among other issues, there are concerns that involving local people may lead to a variety of unwanted outcomes. Some of these unwanted outcomes as identified by Callahan (2012) include; a possible increase in the workload, need for extra but unavailable resources. It may also result in unnecessary and excessive public oversight both from the public and the media. There is a possibility of driving a wedge between members of the public and the government. The IDP process which encapsulates the participatory model, has been criticised because of the unintended outcomes arising from 'uneven distribution of capacity' (Ngwenya, 2012). In terms of this view, members of the public become alienated in the processes of local government. This arises because an IDP process is a crossroad where different social classes meet to deliberate on issues affecting their communities. In such meetings, the participants do not possess the same levels of skills, knowledge or information. When asked to participate in development issues to be included in the IDP, the disadvantaged groups tend to participate less as they are overwhelmed by the privileged groups (Mac Kay, 2014). People from disadvantaged communities tend to focus more on matters that are more basic of which the privileged people have already acquired (Mac Kay 2014). These social development issues, as Mac Kay (2014) suggests, are only a small proportion of what the IDPs should cover. Brinkerhoff and Crosby (2012) conclude participation levels will affect the nature of contributions obtained from the different groups.

Similar conclusions have been drawn by a number of other scholars such as Taylor (2013) who suggests that public participation has a way of reinforcing the power inequalities that are found in a local communities. Other scholars have established that IDP processes can reduce the input that may be obtained from members of the privileged group (Houston et al. 2011; Marais, Everatt & Dube 2017). Influential members of society are seen to have other mechanisms of airing their views directly to officials. Observations have been made regarding the fact that members from privileged sections of society find such meetings unproductive, and at the same time these privileged members have other mechanisms to directly access the municipal officials (Marais *et al.*, 2017). Calling officials on their personal telephones is deemed a patronage luxury that can only be made by a privileged few. This excludes the majority of the citizens who have to wait for that only occasion when they are called to an IDP meeting.

Another challenge often cited as bedevilling the participatory governance model is that it may lead to political power struggles. To illustrate this, Buccus et al. (2017) cited some turf battles between Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) and African National Congress (ANC) members in an IFP stronghold in Sisonke Municipality. Due to political differences, some members of the IFP disregarded the ANC-led meetings as they felt that the ANC undermined them. Due to this sentiment, some civil society organisations in KwaZulu-Natal did not value the IDP process as a whole (Buccus et al., 2017). With references to a multiparty system in the country, both the IFP and ANC had no option but to bury the hatchet and work with each other to improve service delivery. In addition, other parties became watchdogs, thus, this created an oversight position for the warring IFP and ANC parties. Trotter (2015) agrees that the political landscape features a lot of these power games, and this means that certain voices are not heard. Other less optimistic views against this model suggest that the participation by political parties in the IDP processes has led to serious undermining of public participation in the IDP process. There is need for the emerging democracy to mature first before participatory model can be effective, otherwise political parties will continue to fight over whose policies should prevail. By way of addressing the possible weaknesses of the democratic participatory model, some others have gone further and suggested the developmental local government model which is discussed in the following section.

2.5 Developmental Local Government in South Africa

The developmental local government model arose from the need to deal with the challenges facing development nations soon after the realisation of political independence. Most of these nations were faced with a barrage of challenges for the millions who were previously disadvantaged. Using the local administrative capacity of local municipalities, the state took steps to uplift the majority of the citizens through some concerted effort.

Van der Waladt (2015) defines a developmental state as one which primarily pursues the economic development objective. To achieve this objective, the government designs policies and institutions with a clear commitment to a national development agenda. Among other things the state aims at include increasing capacity, growing the economy, reducing poverty and general provision of public services (Gasela, 2017). A developmental state will use its muscle in deploying administrative and political resources for economic development. To do this the state controls and directs identified territories and also possess core capability to design and deliver its policy objectives (Burger, 2015).

Another perspective of the developmental local government is provided by the White Paper on Local Government of 1998. This view idealises the working together of the state at local government with its citizens and groups within the community. The objective as identified in the initial definition by Van der Wadt (2015) is to find sustainable ways to enhance people's lives. Subban and Theron (2011) suggest that developmental local government facilitates the deepening the local democratic cultures, bringing development and participation concepts to the fore.

The Least-Developed Countries Report (2015) identifies three major objectives of developmental local governance; solving national development challenges; creating new development opportunities and; achieving common national development goals. These objectives are best attained through the involvement of local stakeholders in a democratic way (Van der Waladt, 2015). Other views of developmental local governance are that it should foster a better future for communities as they are involved in the socio-economic development of their space. Developmental local

government thrives on robust institutions. These institutions must be backed up by viable systems, sustainable strategies, workable policies, processes, and procedures in the development of the local community (De Visser & Powell, 2014).

The White Paper on Local Government of 1998 notes the following characteristics as those of a developmental local government:

- Elevating communities through social development;
- Improving the livelihoods of people through economic growth;
- Involvement of the local needs and wants through integrated and coordinated implementation programmes;
- Inculcating democracy through development; and
- Instrumental in creating social capital in the communities in order to obtain relevant local development solutions.

The developmental local government model assumes that the sole purpose of a municipality is to bring about development. For South Africa, local municipalities are the primary units that drive the economic well-being of its citizens. As with other nations, South African municipalities are prescribed a mandate by law to deliver the developmental agenda. However, setting the agenda, is only the first challenge. There is a strong realisation that local government has to undergo serious metamorphisms in order to achieve the development agenda. This leads to the notion of developmental local government. Powell (2014) categorises the role of local government follows:

- Allocative: this entails the responsibility of the state in resource maximisation, efficiency, and service delivery;
- Distributive: this deals with issues of resource spread in terms of equity, fairness, social security, and service;
- Regulatory: this deals with law enforcement, protective and distributive justice; and
- Stabilisation: involves maintenance of balance on matters of fiscal, monetary and economic policies, as the government pursue objectives of inflation control, lowering unemployment among other issues.

As a model, developmental local government presupposes the use of other mechanisms for developing given communities. One of these mechanism is collaborative local government, which is discussed in the next section.

2.6 Collaborative Governance

Collaborative governance presents a paradigm shift in service delivery thinking. Among developmental models, collaboration is touted by its pundits as the panacea to efficient service delivery. The prominence of this models arises from the fact that it is a recognition of the need to include multiple stakeholders in service delivery. In most cases the model is implemented in the form of Local Economic Development (LED) programmes. In South Africa, the local authorities have within their structures an LED department whose purpose is to coordinate all LED related activities from multiple stakeholders. LED however, is so broad that a number of approaches are often used. The common approaches include devolution (where powers to administer are removed from the centre to the lower levels), delegation (where powers are seconded to other offices permanently or temporarily) and decentralisation (where powers are permanently placed at the lower levels in order to reduce congestion at the centre). The approaches taken leaves LED as a concept that can be modelled according to the specific situation, rather than a one size fits all solution (Rodriguez-Pose, 2018).

Key issues in LED include the mobilisation of the economic potential of the local space and its inhabitants. The key objectives include promoting innovation in order to grow the economy. Major growth dimensions usually encompass key infrastructure issues such as roads, bulk water and sanitation. There is also emphasis on development of local small and medium enterprises and their skills as these are seen as the major players in LED-oriented growth. At another level there is emphasis on attracting foreign direct investment including local investors, increasing the competitiveness of the local area, and strengthening the structures responsible for local economic development institutions. LED utilises the inclusivity approach to achieve service delivery objectives". This involves bringing together diverse civic stakeholders that are part of the local area. A proper fit has to be established for LED to work, by capitalizing on locally available assets (Rogerson, 2011). For this purpose the LED approach, being multi-dimensional in nature, is often seen as an appropriate instrument that has

been used together with the Sustainable Livelihoods Frameworks which will be discussed later.

Emerson, Nabatchi and Balogh (2012) argue “that the perceived outcomes in LED initiatives are achievable when the various key stakeholders perform their part. Service delivery is not addressed by unilateral action of the local municipality or any other government party. This realisation drove the South African government to institutionalise collaboration through the Intergovernmental Relations Act of 2005. The express aim of this Act is primarily to promote collaboration between and among the three tiers of government.

Through the local mobilisation of resources and communities LED projects build consensus among diverse interests. Hindosn (2013) suggests that the LED programmes work best if the local competitive advantages are taken into account, as this helps the beneficiary communities to feel empowered. LED involves partnerships that enable management of existing resources in creating sustainable livelihoods through job creation in the local area. It allows local people to be involved and be in charge of the development process. This is necessary because the process entails harnessing local resources, which at best must benefit the local people first. Helmsing (2013) suggests that LED is useful in mobilising organisations, actors, resources the development of new institutions and local systems. Dialogue is used effectively to bring about the collaborative efforts and implementation of strategies. Bennett (2012) states that LED promotes economic growth and employment, at sub-national level assisting the government to attain equitable distribution of resources.

The government policy of creating a conducive environment finds credence in the activities of the local municipality LED programmes. Some municipalities even extend seed funding for small businesses, in which case the intervention by government helps to alleviate the negative impact of pure market forces. LED is often justified as it is used to correct challenges brought about by using a pure market economic system. Some of the market failures identified by Bennett (2012) include the failure by the market to provide affordable transport, water or housing. This then calls for government intervention through established LED programmes. Another perspective

provided by Bovaird (2014) is that interventions through LED are necessary in order to facilitate redistribution of benefits among unequal areas and also to enable redistribution of benefits within the same areas.

2.6.1 Challenges with the LED approach

Despite the professed successes of the LED model, a number of challenges stem from its usage. Some authors question why some municipalities are very successful than others when using LED. Kaiser (2014) and Fedorowicz et al. (2017) argue that even though LED has the potential to transform communities, the conditions in which this can materialise are so tough that not many local authorities can successfully achieve the best outcomes. Huxham and Hilbert (2018) support this perspective commenting that making the LED partnership to work is an extremely difficult process, with a success rates as low as 20 per cent. The challenges of making LED to work stem from the fact that no concrete outcomes are drawn in the setting up of the partnership (Huxham & Hilbert, 2018). The author suggests that for LED to work, there is need for an ideal form of governance, which is not available in most cases.

Some of the observed weaknesses of developmental local government, also relates to the LED approach. A major weakness of this model is that it does not take into account the peculiar circumstances of the locality. The assumption is that resources can be mobilised from the locality puts some municipalities at a disadvantage especially when considering the reality of 'resource flight'. Some municipalities are set at a disadvantage in terms of human resources, physical resources, natural resources or economic resources. Such resources need huge external support because their potential to partners in the development process is minimal. Rural based – municipalities are particularly predisposed to be in such a category. This would equally apply to the case study of Nkomazi Local Municipality which is located deep in rural areas.

Another challenge is that LED assumes allocative, distributive and regulatory efficiency of resources. This lends the model to serious shortfall as the reality on the ground is that resources are mainly restricted and in short supply. As discussed in the literature review, one of the main pleas from service delivery agents is that the

budgetary resources are far from adequate, and human skills in the poor municipalities are difficult to retain. The developmental agenda which is the main objective, cannot be achieved as it is heavily weighed against by the perennial shortages of critical resources.

Another weakness identified by Rogerson (2010) arises from the conflicting outcomes for LED. On one hand, LED projects with a welfare focus tend to be less successful and seem to be undermined by many local authorities. On the other hand, the economic type programmes find more support. The problem stems from the national level. In South Africa, national policies, as pursued by the Department of Provincial and Local Government (DPLG) and the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), are based on conflicting paradigms which seem to be pulling in opposing directions. The DPLG seems to pursue the pro-poor agenda in which case the department seeks to influence the allocative process aimed at placating the needs of the poor. The DPLG does this by investing in infrastructure and businesses for the benefit of the poor. The DTI primary objective however, seems to be on enhancing return on capital invested, yet at LED level, this may not be feasible. Patterson (2018) suggests that most policy papers portray the tensions between these two paradigms and they try to bridge these tensions in various ways. While these two approaches are complementary, municipalities struggle in trying to achieve a balance in how to allocate resources between them (Lambhead, 2017).

According to Hofisi, Mbeba, Maredza and Choga (2013) the conceptualisation of LED presents a number of challenges, which overlap when it comes to issues of implementation. Some of the authors have argued that in South Africa, LED failure can be attributed to resource and capacity constraints rather than issues of boundary definitions of what is LED or not (Rogerson, 2010; Nel, 2011; Hindson, 2013). The challenges are compounded by the fact that most local authorities in developing economies have very little experience in using LED to promote development. This is typical of South Africa, which, according to Rogerson (2010) manifests as lack of skills capacity at local level; lack of funding for most of the LED initiatives; ineffectual planning implementation and coordination mechanisms for LED methodologies.

These views find support from Maserumele (2018), whose contemporary studies conclude that most municipalities in South Africa have failed to implement or sustain meaningful LED programmes. The limited perceived success of LED in South Africa has meant that officials have no clearly laid out career paths. Municipalities underperform because they dedicate low staff levels to the LED department, and coupled with high staff turnover, the poor rural municipalities become training ground for the LED officials who then migrate to the metropolitan.

2.6.2 Collaborative governance for LED

The importance of collaborative relations within the LED context is emphasised by Clarke and Moir (2014) and supported by Meyer (2015) who suggest that local partners are responsible for driving the LED process. These partners include public institutions, private sector companies and other institutional sector organisations. However, the complex nature of development in the 21st century is such that multiple stakeholders are needed to work together in the quest for knowledge and solutions to local problems (Agranoff & Mcquire, 2013). Collaborative governance aims at building collective capacity (Agranoff, 2016) among the various levels of stakeholders (Innes & Booher, 2010; Fishkin, 2012). It also results in establishment of a higher order of coordination whereby not one party to the collaboration can overrule the others (Fisher, Ury & Patton, 2011). It requires the implementation and management of programs that cover multiple departments and jurisdictions and the ability to concede to others in the matters for implementation (Emerson, Nabatchi & Balogh, 2012). There is also an undertone for the need to promote common good for the greatest number of people (Edigheji, 2010; Zurba, 2014; Agbodzakey, 2015).

Issues of collaborative governance for localised economy have not been fully explored beyond experimentation in South Africa. Cloete (2015) posits that there has been a marked level of animosity between government organisations and the private sector in South Africa. The author suggests that the private sector tends to view government with increased disillusionment, suspicion and sometimes even disdain. Despite these challenges, collaboration is regarded as the most assured way to achieve the desired LED outcomes. As a result, in the past decade a number of alternative theoretical

frameworks for collaboration have been proposed by different scholars and these are identified as follows;

- Design and Implementation of Cross-Sector Collaborations (Bryson, Crosby & Stone, 2016);
- Collaboration Processes (Thomson & Perry, 2016);
- Collaborative Governance (Ansell & Gash, 2018);
- Managing within Networks (Agranoff, 2017);
- Collaborating to Manage (Agranoff, 2012),
- Modes of Network Governance (Provan & Kenis, 2018);
- Integrative framework for collaborative governance (Emerson, Nabatchi & Balogh, 2012) and
- Communicative Framework of Value in Cross-Sector Partnerships (Koschmann, Kuhn & Pfarre, 2012).

Collectively, these frameworks show a common thread running through different governance systems designed to deal with service delivery within the LED context. The use of these models and many other collaborative systems have led to three other evolving models, namely the state- centric model and the society-centric model and the hybrid centred model (Clarke, 2016).

2.6.3 State centric-model of collaborative governance

State-centric models place emphasis the need for each of the concerned parties to play its role to their best ability. The models place a certain level of responsibility on state officials more than any other party, but this does not mean that the state is the centre and doer of all. The role of the state becomes that of sponsor, in which case the officials have to ensure the processes of initiating, planning, negotiating and funding are their prerogative. State officials are vested with formal power and authority which they utilise to bring issues to the agenda, discuss and come up with a common position. After a common position is set, the state has to ensure that the process continues by implementation. In between promotion and implementation, the state finds itself playing the role of referee or judge by arbitrating in conflicts, setting rules, and to committing resources. For state-centric model to work, critical questions have

to addressed; to what extent do state activities and processes promote democratic accountability; how do the processes improve capacity and participation among the citizenship; how do the processes shape citizen perceptions about legitimacy of the government and its policy. A number of authors agree that the state centric models are best measured in terms of their inclusivity given that government does not exist for itself (Fung & Wright, 2011; Torres, 2013; Williamson, 2014; Bingham, Leary & Nabatchi, 2014). According to Coglianese, Kilmartin and Mendelson (2015) state authorities rarely seek or utilise the input from the public, but tend to use a 'note-and-comment', which is an informal rulemaking process far removed from democratic deliberation.

In addition, observations show that under state-centric configuration, the government faces several challenges. These challenges tend to be ethical (Yamak & Suer, 2015), and arise from the government's many conflicting roles. The government role is undermined as a stakeholder in the collective endeavour. Among the challenges highlighted, are issues that the state-led collaboratives face as many difficulties as privileges. The most common challenges identified include capacity constraints, divergent policies and priorities and fiscal volatility. Clarke (2016) is of the view that public officials tend to operate in a context of overlapping jurisdictions in which case power is shared in the context of fragmented authority constrains by weak fiscal policy. Given these challenges the collaborative problem solving becomes constrained, the result of which impinges any involvement of the local community members. The model therefore, falls short of collaborative governance, in which case a better model is required to address all these challenges. The prospect of these questions being answered lies in possibly the use of the emerging hybrid-centric model of governance.

2.6.4 Society-centric model of collaborative governance

The emergence of the society centred approach presents an alternative to the traditional and rigid top-down state-led collaborative approach. The society centric model assumes the involvement of collaboratives between government, private business and civil society. The model elevates the civics who are expected to be the major controlling actors in the problem solving aspects (Ovens & Kitchin, 2016). The society-centred approach, promotes the idea that collaborative governance as driven

by civil society, will require certain levels of mobilisation, and structure which should be maintained with the state. Clarke (2016) points out that in this approach, the presence of funding institutions such as government agencies and some businesses does not give them the mandate to lead the process. Instead, the primary actors will be the communities. The main distinguishing feature of this approach is that there is an involvement of multiple and cross-sectoral actors. These actors serve the purpose of promoting broad civic purposes or a common agenda, mobilising for coordination of effort, and actually coordinating the implementation of project-specific activities that cannot be undertaken by a single organisation.

However the civic-centric model are often criticised because they lack formal structures (Desse, 2012). They have a tendency of being loose informal arrangements and they cannot be relied on to tackle the more demanding service delivery requirements. Despite this weakness, the civic-centric model is regarded as an approach that allows the society to address social issues that may not make the grade when evaluated under normal economic models.

Another major drawback that has been levelled against this model could be seen regarding its supposed lack of transparency and accountability. Desse (2012) suggests that the civic-centric model based structures are not very transparent and accountable, more so on matters regarding handling of finances and general internal administration. The author highlights that transparency and accountability are key requirements in building mutual trust in any collaborative endeavour, and are instrumental in attaining levels of efficiency and effectiveness.

Selmeczi (2015) claims that the political concerns of the civic organisations sometimes militate against them, leaving them unable to successfully undertake community development. This is compounded by the fact that when dealing with poor communities, many issues may become politicised and without the political savvy to deal with these issues, the ability of the civic centred bodies becomes questionable. Cross (2014) argued that despite the civic bodies being able to provide services as development intermediaries, they have no capacity to mobilise in order to instil a common sense of nationality among citizens. This assertion seems to question the

ability and capacity of the civic organisations to assume a statutory role that can be properly done by the state. The civic organisations are relegated to the bench and their role in supporting poverty reduction programmes as well as helping citizen by pressurizing government and state institutions for social accountability and responsiveness, is seen as less effective. Banulescu-Bogdan (2011) summarises three major problems encountered by the civic-centric model as lack of coordination, lack of political integration and poor institutionalisation. Out of the perceived failures of the state-centric and civic-centric models, a third model has been proposed, in the form of a hybrid between the two, the hybrid centred approach.

2.6.5 Hybrid-centred approach of collaborative governance

The hybrid-centred approach of collaborative is considered a new paradigm shift which departs from the traditional and rigid government-led or civic-society led development agenda, to one that elevates an all-encompassing governance. This approach consolidates the efforts from the civil society and the private sector. The model promotes symbiotic relationship between the three major actors. All the three major stakeholders are expected to perform as efficiently and to do their part in maintaining and sustaining a balanced localised economic development programme (Essia, 2015). In this model, the state still maintains a degree of its orthodox role as in the state centric model. However, the state assumes the primary role of creating a conducive environment for the effective delivery by the other players (Dohan, Doh & Raelin, 2014). Private sector actors are given the other major responsibility of generating sustainable employment, and income and the civil society promotes service delivery through the mobilisation of people and groups to participate effectively in matters of development. Another role performed by civil society includes supporting poverty reduction programmes. These programmes are at the centre of empowering citizens to actively engage in improving their livelihoods, and also play an instrumental role in pressurizing government and the private sector institutions to be accountable as well as to provide the necessary funding (Essia, 2015). In this model the government does not enjoy special status or privileges enabling it to force the other actors to conform to its expectations. Dahan, Doh & Raelin, (2014) consider this to be a point of strength , as all partners are at liberty to treat the government just as well as any other of its stakeholders. Despite the assumed equality of partners in the hybrid model, Friedman

and Miles (2012) argue that government can still play its advocating roles for other stakeholders.

From another perspective, Donahue and Zeckhauser (2013) point out that collaboration in this model implies that the government heavily relies on performance by its key private sector partners. The relationship is one in which the state will provide proper incentives but does not extend to control key partners in the development process. The lack of total control by government of the private actors is hailed as the liberating effect of the model, which allows the other partners to exert effort in their own way without the restrictive government hand. In one way, the role of the private sector on the host communities in the hybrid model can be associated with the corporate social responsibility (CSR) projects of corporates.

Proponents of hybrid powered governance (Galli & Fishers, 2016) promote new governance processes that emphasize collaboration among key development actors; government, private sector, civil society, and citizens (Aoyama & Parthasarathy, 2016). This type of collaboration is expected to promote and institutionalise democratic decision making. This in turn, leads to increase in decisional legitimacy, consensus among decision makers, more robust citizen engagement.

Views expressed by Selsky and Parker (2015) suggest that the hybrid approach possesses the ability to generate sustainable solutions through a process that requires continuous cooperation, shared responsibility and dedicated monitoring and review of the agreed plans. This is seen as an improvement to the traditional state-centred and society centred approach that are seen as exclusive enclaves of the government party, of which the other partners are only incorporated so as to beef up numbers or to mask the dictatorial tendencies of the system. Collaboration in the hybrid model, is required to advance the promotion of accountability so that collective decisions in effect portray acceptable levels of democratic inclusivity. Bingham, Nabatchi and Leary (2014) are of the view that in order to promote political equality and the education of its own citizens, a better environment that sustains hybrid approach should be fostered. This model is seen as a major contributor to citizens' moral development, realigning their needs from atomized citizenry toward the more collective action.

Another important feature of a hybrid approach noted by Akintoye et al., (2013) is the process of negotiation. Despite the possibility of adversarialism in stakeholders' relationships, the hybrid approach is noted to be prominent in enhancing trade-off in values and objectives for mutual benefits. Stakeholders are generally expected to have differing points of view because of their different interest, but through negotiation in the hybrid approach, parties develop the awareness that that they need each other and cannot entirely impose their will onto the other (Dahan, Doh & Raelin, 2014). Cross-sector collaborations are needed in issues as diverse as possible, ranging from agenda setting, decision making all the way to taking action (Eggers & Macmillian, 2013). Ensuing discussions among collaborators lead to shared knowledge and shared learning experiences (Bingham, Nabatchi & Leary, 2014). Brillantes and Fernandez (2011) suggest that each of the partners has to collaborate in order to provide checks and balances, promote accountability and improve transparency. The model assumes that actors are interdependent and accountable to each other. For this reason, some of the traditional functions and responsibilities that are usually the preserve of the state in promoting accountability may be devolved to the non-governmental sector partners (Freeman, 2011). The hybrid approach has also led to other models promoting new private sector-related type of developments in the conduct of service delivery. One of these is the use of agencies or Agencification theory which is explored in the next section.

2.7 Agencification Model

The hybrid-centred approach of collaborative governance has been instrumental in the development of the Agencification model. This model elevates the private and sometimes non-governmental actors in the collaborative hybrid-centred approach. The role of the service delivery is placed mainly as a responsibility of the local economic development agency (LEDA). Maliki, Metaiche, Tahir-Metaiche and Ziani (2014) show that LEDAs in most cases are established mechanisms with a clear structure at local level with the express objective of encouraging local growth of the economy. This is done through various arms responsible for employment and income generation. Several goals are usually pursued by the LEDAs given the nature of the development needs of the locality. Their prime objective is to harmonise local development initiatives by pooling together resources in one organisation given the

mandate to advance the economic objectives of the locality. To this end the LEDAs usually promote a single economic development vision for the area. One of the target areas for the LEDAs tends to be the small and medium sized businesses, with which they either create entrepreneurial culture or promote to reach certain levels of sustainability. LEDAs are expected to give special attention to the most susceptible social groups in society (Canzanelli & Dichter, 2015).

2.7.1 LEDAs worldwide

The origins of LEDAs can be traced back to the 1950s in Europe where there was an undertaking to address various economic challenges experienced by businesses. The concept was adopted by a number of developing nations through the LED arm of local authorities as a way of harnessing local resources to change the economic and social status of the area. In subsequent years, the LEDAs have been used with varying levels of success to resolve problems as diverse as poverty and unemployment, reconstruction of shattered economies, the economic development of marginalised areas, resolving economic stagnancy. In the majority of cases, the LEDAs have taken the role of SME champion, promoting such businesses amidst the vagaries of the market economy (Fay & Yepes, 2013; Swinburn, 2014; Preorius & Blaauw, 2015). LEDAs have been proposed as development agencies that can benefit communities economically and serve the population by helping them put efforts together is more beneficial than working from a self-interested motive.

As highlighted earlier, LEDAs are particularly equipped to help and support small and intermediate local businesses if they lack capability, expertise and influence. In some Eastern European nations, LEDAs have been used successfully to fight the challenge of converting from command economies to a market economy (Cloete, 2015). This involves dealing with issues as varied as local armed conflicts and civil wars, alternatives to relying on foreign money, identifying local investment opportunities and formation of new small local business". Models of LEDAs are found in Croatia, Albania and Serbia, and in Africa including South Africa, Angola and Mozambique (Maliki, Metaiche, Tahir-Metaiche & Ziani, 2014). "LEDAs are designed in such a way to facilitate local involvement of actors in the economy. There is no limit or exclusivity

clause in what they deal with, as long as the objective is to promote socio-economic development.

2.7.2 Using the LED agencies to achieve the economic growth goals

LEDAs have been hailed as a positive step in harnessing local effort towards development (Kline & Moretti, 2014). LED agencies main objectives are contextual, given that each LEDA may have a different thrust on how to develop the local economy. The following list gives an outline of a typical LEDA objectives:

- Promoting economic development of the local area through mechanisms that tap into the potential presented by the territory;
- Maximising on local resources by ensuring that those who are most disadvantaged are assisted and obtain the most benefits;
- Promoting communication mechanisms in order to project singularity of purpose;
- Promoting local, SMEs through a sustained programme advancing entrepreneurship;
- Promoting the type of planning that coordinates both private and public sector initiatives; and
- Identifying vulnerable social groups and initiating special programmes that address their needs (Maliki, Metaiche, Tahir-Metaiche & Ziani, 2014).

As alluded to earlier, the LEDAs scope of work exposes them to a wide variety of activities, given that their objectives tend to be widely defined. In attempting to deal with their mandate, the LEDAs tend to use the business models as a weapon. LEDAs also thrive on developing mutually benefiting collaborations between parties and across sectors (Amin, 2017; Damborg, Danson & Halkier, 2017).

In order to be effective carriers of development, LEDAs need to have certain characteristics which among others include the following: being highly organised structures in order to deal with the complexity of development issues; being territorial in nature which means they can be effective tools for targeted development in certain areas of society; providing a forum for social dialogue, and hence they should encompass democratic qualities; ability to coordinate local economic development planning and implementation by gathering various actors. In these different roles the

LEDAs are used as weapons against poverty, sometimes availing credit to small businesses as they help finance business or strategic plans and sometimes providing a variety of social benefits (Welford, 2016; Evans, 2018).

Among a host of programs that LED agencies implement all or some of the following activities:

- Initiating plans for major area developments;
- Conducting detailed studies and surveys in order to promote certain developments;
- Providing specialized technical assistance as part of the development of highly sophisticated local interventions;
- Managing the multiple stakeholders that are part of the local development efforts;
- Taking aboard foreign, international or other regional structures into the local development programs;
- Providing business support through various initiatives in raising funds,;
- Initiating and supporting marketing campaigns;
- Providing strategic information on available resources, potential for development, restrictive laws and regulations, and patterns of consumption among the local people;
- Promoting the creation of value addition services, such as financial and commercial services; and
- Promoting research into areas for development (Koma, 2012; Blakely, 2014; Bagchi, 2015; Blair & Carroll, 2015)

2.7.3 Weaknesses of LEDAs

“One of the most noted weaknesses of LEDAs is their tendency to let corruption thrive (Banfield, 2015). In terms of the other alternative service delivery arrangements, there is great potential to improve service, when they are properly implemented. Critics of LEDAs cite their susceptibility to public sector corruption as a factor that downplays their role. Agencies are said to be unable to fight corruption for two major reasons;

- LEDAs tend to be loaded with too many and diverse objectives, some of which are so vague that they are subjectively interpreted;

- LEDAs are often to deliver goods and services on behalf of government, which goods are often not based on market values but government regulated prices. Whenever there are government price controls, the possibility of breaking the law is so great (Banfield, 2015).

In order to address these weaknesses, Clark and Wojcik (2018) suggest that local municipalities have to find a way of enforcing appropriate punitive legislation, so that agencies may comply with requirements. Compliance assists in ensuring there is transparency and hence will eliminate chances of creating an environment conducive for corrupt activity.

Another major challenge facing agencies as alternative service delivery arrangements is that they tend to be reactive rather than proactive. Rogerson (2018) traces this to the reasons for creating LED agencies in South Africa which tend to be a response to failure by local municipalities or some other previously existing agencies. The agency is brought in as a way to douse the service delivery fires, and this is rather reactive. Rogerson (2018) suggests that a more proactive approach would require a complete shift from outsourcing when the challenges emanate, instead the local authorities need to undertake an initial and exhaustive audit to identify where and when there is need for such agencies. One area often cited, concerns the need to address the municipal billing system. Most municipalities, despite the level of resources they have, experience serious problems in collecting revenues from members of the public (Kanyane & Koma, 2016). However, despite these challenges, very few municipalities want to let go of the billing function to private and possibly more efficient collectors, and in the end municipal consumer debt tends to worsen. The challenge of debt collection by municipalities is so great that a number of these municipalities have been cut off from the electricity grid as they failed to pay their own bills to Eskom, the power utility. In such instances, the use of an agency arrangement can be beneficial to the local municipality.

The various models discussed above all have their own weaknesses, and not one of them can be said to resolve the challenges of service delivery in their entirety. However one model stands out; the sustainable livelihoods approach, and has been tried by

development organisations across the globe. The last and final section of this chapter presents and discusses this model and how it can be used in the case of the Nkomazi Local municipality.

2.8 Sustainable Livelihoods Approach

The final model presented in this chapter is the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach (SLA). This framework allows development institutions to assess the manner in which a local community can be assisted to improve the livelihoods by carrying out interventions that use locally available resources. As an approach, the model has been used in different settings and by some international organisations in order to resolve development challenges. Its import resides on its ability to harness different stakeholders, their assets, and tailor them in order to address service delivery issues even in the most deprived of areas. It tries to encompass all pertinent issues that remain elusive in the other models, by incorporating some measure of democracy, using agencies to assist in development efforts, taking account of specific stakeholders circumstances, being developmental, involving the state wherever possible and still ensuring that the final beneficiaries are in charge of the process. The Sustainable Livelihoods Approach was the main theoretical framework that informed this study. Its applicability to NLM was validated and explained in chapter seven of the study.

2.8.1 Sustainable Livelihoods Approach – Contextual analysis

The UK Department for International Development defines the Sustainable Livelihood Approach (SLA) as an approach that considers the circumstances of marginalized or disadvantaged communities, developing sustainable strategies as way to improve the socio-economic status of those communities (DfID, 2016). The basis of the SLA approach is to plan for development activities that are said to give communities sustaining livelihoods. The SLA has been suggested by various authors as a tool that can be used in various locations to proffer solution to sustainable local development (Biggs, Boruff, Bruce, Duncan, Duce, Haworth, Horsley, Curnow, Neef, McNeill, Pauli, Van Ogtrop & Imanari, 2014). Serrat (2017) identifies the SLA as a development mechanism that can be applied in most of the developing countries contexts. In cases where it has been used, the tool allows for analysis and description of the dominant

variables limiting the livelihood of the poor. In most of the circumstances, the SLA places people at the centre of the whole debate around issues of development. In other words, development is regarded as a people-problem and once this is resolved, then the transformation of an area is assured (Briguglio, 2014). In resolving the development issues, the SLA seeks to eradicate poverty and instead replace it with sustainable employment programmes.

Given the nature of the challenges identified in Nkomazi, the approach seemed appropriate to deal with the triple evils of poverty, employment inequality at the centre of service delivery challenges (Biggs, Bruce, Boruff, Duncan, Horsley, Pauli, McNeill, Neef, Van Ogtrop, Curnow, & Haworth, 2015). The ensuing discussions in chapters three and four reveals that service delivery protests are only symptomatic of the cause of the problems in the Nkomazi Local Municipality. Beyond service delivery protests, the communities need jobs and income to sustain basic lifestyles. While the various Nkomazi municipality reports show that the challenges seem to be overwhelming (Nkomazi IDP, 2016-2018), the SLA could provide a way in which these challenges can be resolved (De Silva, Johnston & Sellamuttu, 2014). Through an active assessment of the local economic development programme this study hoped to identify the level of intervention by the NLM and whether it is effective or not. The use of the SLA, an established tool worldwide, was regarded as a positive step in enlisting a tried mechanism to assist the local municipality.

The SLA has been used in various countries and some researchers such as Malemela and Yingyi (2016) have recommended its use in some South African rural municipalities. Several other researchers have used the SLA in different capacities; Ndeilanga (2013) used it to assess a resettlement project for the San community in Kavango-west region of Namibia. Biggs, Boruff, Bruce, Duncan, Duce, Haworth, Horsley, Curnow, Neef, McNeill, Pauli, Van Ogtrop and Imanari (2014) used it in South East Asia; while Tittonell (2014) used the SLA to suggest solutions for the African continent especially sub-Saharan Africa; the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), (2014) has also used the *framework* for poverty alleviation assessments in a number of African countries. Several other development agencies have used the SLA in various capacities. In this study the original model by DfID (2016) will be modified

appropriately after assessing some of the SMEs that are operating in the Nkomazi Local Municipality.

The SLA is a topical issue in rural development debates, as most of the pundits are advocates of economic development (Tittonell, 2014). In rural development issues, the framework is often used to breakdown the components of the locality, as the development agencies try to understand the basic composition of the area. The guiding principles of SLA include people-centred framework, responsiveness and participatory promotion of partnerships, dynamic frameworks, and sustainability (Davies, Béné, Arnall, Tanner, Newsham & Coirolo, 2013). The framework elevates rural development issues to more than just a simple agriculture economy as there are many resources that could be harnessed in any given locality (Tittonell, 2014). In essence, the approach identifies all assets, and all required human activities as well as the interactions between them. The Department for International Development (DfID, 2016) over the years has developed and standardized a framework for sustainable livelihoods as shown in Figure 2.2. The various components of the diagram are explained below.

The key concept illustrated in the SLA is that household strategies for eking livelihoods are complicated and involve the combination of several assets. However, the combination of assets leaves them mostly vulnerable to uncertainties that may expose their lack of organisation or poor coordination. The ability of the households to make sustainable livelihoods is limited by the nature of the existing 'policies, institutions and processes' of the governing body. It is only through a combination of activities that the assets can be expected to lead to improved living conditions. As explained above, the original sustainable approach illustrated in Figure 2.2 has been adapted by several authors and used to suggest solutions on matters of sustainable livelihoods (Levine, 2014)".

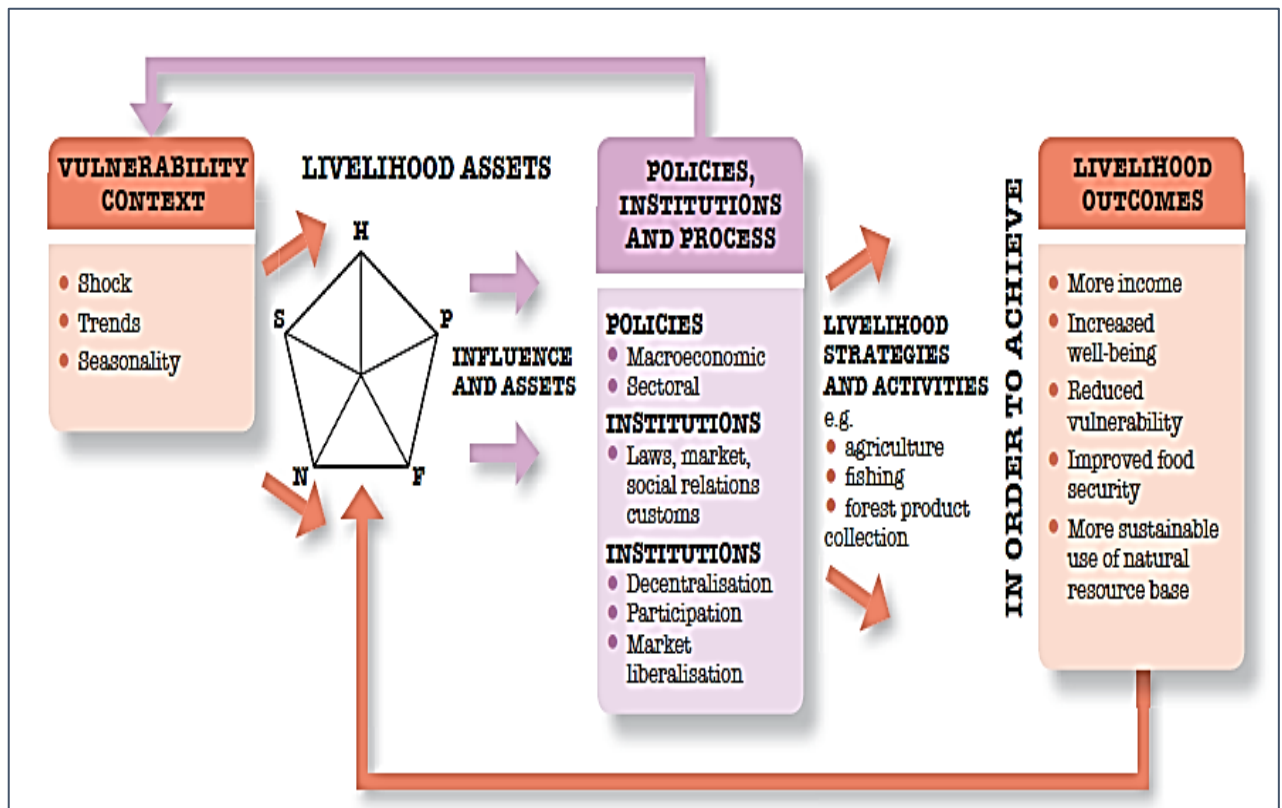


Figure 2.2: The Sustainable Livelihoods Framework

Source: DfID (1999)

KEY: *H: Human; P: Physical; F: Financial; N: Natural; S: Social*

The basic unit considered in the SLA is the household. As a social group, the household is assumed to share a number of common things and hence should be developed a unit. “Households are also expected to make coordinated decisions in terms of issues where assets are jointly owned or controlled (Brown, 2015). Decisions are made for the benefit of many instead of a few. Generally, households’ livelihoods are centred around certain identified assets which may be privately owned or communal. The SLA takes the range of factors that has a bearing on the ability of a person or household to sustain a livelihood. These socio-economic variables are labeled as assets and include: the human, physical, social, financial and natural assets (Wu & Pearce, 2014). These are explained as follows:

Human asset refers to the skills, knowledge, ability to labour and good health and physical capability important for the successful pursuit of different livelihood strategies (Munanura, Backman, Hallo & Powell, 2016). Specific human assets identified during

the study included – *being able to acquire new skills and knowledge due to intervention of the Nkomazi local Municipality*. The more complex the business is, the higher the level of mental skills required in order to run it. Higher levels of education are not always correlating with business success but are required in order to resolve complex business challenges.

Physical assets are basic infrastructure (transport, shelter, water, energy and communication), the production equipment and means that enable people to pursue livelihoods (Ferrol-Schulte, Gorris, Baitoningsih, Adhuri & Ferse, 2015). From the surveys done, “the business owners identified that they had access to the following assets: electricity, telephone communication, water points, running water, production equipment, transport a, fences and houses. Most of the physical assets available to the SMMEs surveyed were facilitated by the municipality. In the SLA, the physical assets are a key component, as they form the core infrastructure used to establish flourishing businesses.

The social asset refers to the social resources, (networks, social claims, social relations, affiliations, associations) upon which people draw when pursuing different livelihood strategies (Oberlack, Tejada, Messerli, Rist & Giger, 2016). Social assets are often linked to business networking. In the context of livelihoods framework, the existence of a support group such as a *Stokvel*, allows members an extension from which they can access facilities that would normally be unavailable from conventional systems. For instance, some members acknowledged that they were able to save modest sums through the *Stokvel* mechanism and hence they can take care of their families in times of need. The *Stokvel* provides an alternate subsidized banking mechanism, which is convenient to the members.

Financial asset, is the capital base (cash, credit/debt, savings, and other economic assets, including basic infrastructure and production equipment and technologies) which are essential for the pursuit of any livelihood strategy. Most of the income were said, to *arise at the end of the month and especially in the winter seasons, when most people get paid, between the months of January and March, then September to October*. These times propel business, but the seasonality negatively affects viability.

Natural asset includes several physical things such as soil, water, air, genetic resources, etc. and environmental services such as the hydrological cycle from which resource flows and services useful for livelihoods are derived (Bennett & Franzel, 2013). On the other hand, these assets relate to the environmental conditions such as the hydrological cycle, which governs some of the useful livelihoods' activities. Some of the natural assets that were identified as being available among the businesses surveyed include water, land, livestock grazing land. The natural assets are a prerequisite for establishing most businesses especially in a rural set-up such as Nkomazi. The NLM has been instrumental through the LED programme (among other programmes) in availing these assets. As a rural community Nkomazi has abundant land which can be used by entrepreneurs for a number of enterprises. Among these enterprises are such ventures that include retail shops, small scale and subsistence livestock farming (cattle and goats), tourism services and manufacturing

Horsley, Prout, Tonts and Ali (2015) argue that all the assets mentioned above are interconnected in such a way that one asset cannot function well or cannot function at all without the other assets. This interconnectedness brings about a need to coordinate a range of activities and stakeholders for any given community. This study utilised a more explicitly operationalized model illustrated in Figure 2.3, to focus on the small to medium enterprise issues based on Hidayat, Glasbergenb and Offermans (2015) and Springate-Baginski and Blaikie (2017).

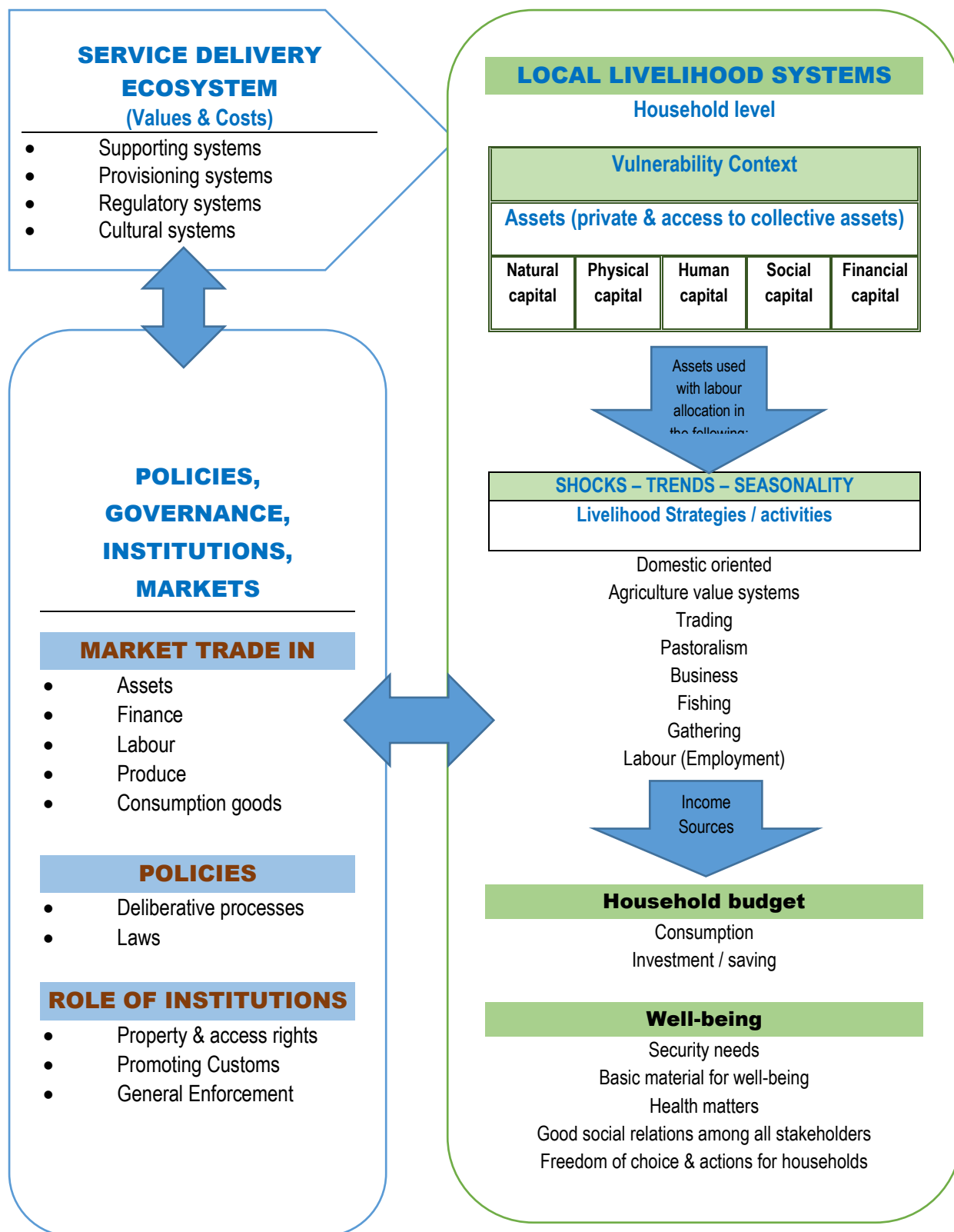


Figure 2.3: Service delivery for Sustainable Livelihoods

Source: Hidayat et al. (2015) and Springate-Baginski and Blaikie (2017)

In order to “determine the applicability of the SLA, the researcher had to assess the availability of all the five assets identified from a sample of ten SMEs to ensure sustainability of the businesses supported by the Nkomazi Local Municipality. Nkomazi Local Municipality undertakes LED programmes as a way of delivering service to its communities. The success of these programmes as measured using the SLA should assist in determining whether the municipality can adopt the sustainable livelihoods approach to resolve a number of the service delivery challenges.

In order to proffer solutions for poor communities, the SLA adopts a number of assumptions; that people are the centre around which the livelihoods revolve; that there should be an inclusive approach whereby all concerned people should be involved, through consultation; that programmes to resolve the challenges in poor communities should be sustainable (Davies, Béné, Arnall, Tanner, Newsham & Coirolo, 2013). The SLA is a direct attack on the inability to deliver on service delivery using tested development mechanisms such as the IDP, triple P’s partnerships with the private sector, and LED programmes implemented by various local authorities including Nkomazi Local Municipality. As a point of departure, the SLA suggest that most of these other development interventions usually err by focusing on resources instead of people (Boraine, 2014). As a model the SLA, starts with the affected people's practical lives. It then draws local and customised development interventions so that the people can recognise their struggles for survival (Mazibuko, 2012). Sustainable livelihoods are all about careful and calculated assessment of community assets, in this case within the LED programme rolled out by the NLM. An assessment of the assets in the locality of Nkomazi should assist in designing the most relevant interventions that are required from the LED programme. In its use, therefore, the SLA draws heavily from collaborative models, and the hybrid model. The model involves actors at all levels; state, private organisation, civic organisations, the general public and development agents. State actors are instrumental in providing key infrastructural assets, such as roads water, electricity. They also drive the policy process, and create a conducive environment for markets and institutions to thrive.

2.9 Gaps identified in theoretical works

Having discussed and applied various theoretical works to the current study, the following are the weaknesses of each theoretical framework: The major weakness of the Efficient Services Model is that it de-emphasises the need for inclusivity or democratic participation by beneficiaries as long as the services are being provided effectively and efficiently. However it does not give specific ways of measuring *efficiency or effectiveness* as these are subjective terms.

Not all pundits of the democratic model think that is the panacea to service delivery challenges. Among other issues, there are concerns that involving local people may lead to a variety of unwanted outcomes. The model results in a possible increase in the workload, need for extra but unavailable resources.

Despite the professed successes of the LED model, a number of challenges stem from its usage. Some authors question why some municipalities are very successful than others when using LED. The challenges of making LED to work stem from the fact that no concrete outcomes are drawn in the setting up of the partnership (Huxham & Hilbert, 2018).

The civic-centric model are often criticised because they lack formal structures (Desse, 2012). They have a tendency of being loose informal arrangements and they cannot be relied on to tackle the more demanding service delivery requirements. Another major drawback that has been levelled against this model could be seen regarding its supposed lack of transparency and accountability.

One of the most noted weaknesses of LEDAs is their tendency to let corruption thrive (Banfield, 2015). In terms of the other alternative service delivery arrangements, there is great potential to improve service, when they are properly implemented. Critics of LEDAs cite their susceptibility to public sector corruption as a factor that downplays their role.

The Sustainable livelihoods model involves actors at all levels; state, private organisation, civic organisations, the general public and development agents. State

actors are instrumental in providing key infrastructural assets, such as roads water, electricity. The drawback of the model is its focus on community assets foregoing other factors that drive service delivery.

With reference to the above weaknesses, there was motivation to develop a conceptual framework that might guide local municipalities to monitor, audit and improve service delivery. Key constructs that arise from the gaps include: exclusivity/democratic participation; cannot measure efficiency; workload which depletes available resources; lack of concrete outcomes; lack of formal structures; lack of transparency and accountability; failure to curb corruption; skilled human capital and misalignment of IPD goals with municipal objectives. These key constructs were used to develop the proposed conceptual framework for service delivery as discussed in chapter seven of the study.

2.10 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the theoretical frameworks on issues of service delivery. A number of models were discussed, including the democratic participatory model, the efficient services model, the developmental local government model, Agencification and the role of local economic development agencies, service delivery through collaborative governance approaches. Collaborative governance was discussed under three models; the state centric model, the society-centric model and the hybrid approach of collaborative governance. Finally, the chapter discussed the sustainable livelihoods approach, which will be further explored and discussed in chapter seven of this study. All models presented show that issues of economic development are central to service delivery and each model has a number of weaknesses which render it inadequate to deal with all the possible challenges encountered". The following chapter explores the core service delivery issues and concepts. The service delivery context in South Africa is explored and this builds up the literature that show the nature of challenges that the Nkomazi Local Municipality has to grapple with.

CHAPTER THREE: SERVICE DELIVERY IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents literature in the context of service delivery in South Africa's local government sphere. The sections covered by the chapter include the meaning attached to services delivery; service delivery policy framework and structures in South Africa; public service delivery as compared to private service delivery in the developed world and other contexts; service delivery models applicable in developing and developed nations; relationship between service delivery and local government; private service delivery models as a possible substitute for public service delivery models; interrelationships between public service delivery and private service delivery in the context of public private partnerships (PPPs). The chapter also focuses on some theoretical perspectives in service delivery systems, changing models of service delivery systems, service delivery processes including needs assessment and service delivery planning, service delivery implementation and funding frameworks. Finally, the issues of beneficiation are discussed as these are at the centre of services delivery.

3.2 Overview of service delivery

Service delivery "has over the years become the yard stick utilised to assess the responsiveness of government at local level to the needs of its citizenry. Leigh and Blakely (2016) argue that the term 'service delivery' in itself is not unbiased. This is because the term contains a host of assumptions (Mdlongwa, 2014), policies, (Pieterse, 2014) attitudes and promises. Service delivery is part of a technocratic description of the relationship between citizens and government (Rogerson, 2018). As a result, the sections that follow explore the meaning of the terms 'service delivery' and 'local government'. The public service delivery concept covers many issues that are of common interest to modern communities. On one hand, the concept is used to illuminate all attempts by the state to cater for its citizens in multiple ways (Edwards and McGee, 2014). It is also a reflection of state decisions and actions carried out by public officials (Rogerson, 2018; Buchanan, 2018). The state intentions provide a number of goods and services at the municipality level. Clark and Wojcik (2018) define service delivery as a process involving the combination of resources, materials and

skills through a process that transforms the standard of living of the targeted communities. The most common services include amenities and utilities such as water, electricity, gas, sanitation, roads, houses, municipal parks and recreation facilities (Clark & Wojcik, 2018). The process in which these various amenities reach the targeted population is the subject which concerns service delivery (Marin, 2014; Rogerson, 2018). The next sections unravel how different state actors carry out the service delivery mandate.

3.2.1 Service delivery

Both intangible and tangible activities are at the core of what the state agencies undertake to deliver to the locality through various mechanisms. Stauss (2015) suggests that once performed the services should produce certain value perceptions among the beneficiaries. In most circumstances, there is an anticipated exchange of economic value as citizens are not expected to be passive recipients but are taxpayers who, for the benefit of their payments, are rewarded by certain service privileges by the state actors (Kline & Moretti, 2014). Arku and Oosterbaan (2015) provide an added dimension of the network society where the consumption of goods is as intangible as the goods themselves. The provision of the public goods and services is the subject of controversy in so much as the quantity, quality, timing and a host of other variables. In the context of this study which is located within the Nkomazi local municipality, the researcher argues that it is service delivery that facilitates the relationship between government and the citizenry (Stauss, 2015). This relationship can either be positive or characterised by conflicts observed in service delivery protests experienced in most municipalities in South Africa.

While the above addresses a dichotomous relationship between public goods and services, other authors emphasise the differences in terms of who provides the services (Marin, 2014; Evans, 2018). On the other hand, others distinguish between public service delivery and private service delivery (Humphreys, 2014; Amin, 2017). It is beyond the scope of this study to discuss the difference between public and private services delivered to communities. However, it is necessary to provide a brief comparison of the concepts in order to set clear parameters for this study located in a public service environment. Consequently, the sections below explore the concepts of

public service delivery; private service delivery, public private service delivery, service delivery structures, service delivery systems, service delivery processes, beneficiation, and the conceptualisation of the study.

The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development – OECD (OECD, 2010), describes service delivery as all services provided by government. Other definitions identify service delivery to be such services where the government happens to have a significant influence (Schumpeter, 2017). In addition, the state can be the direct source of all services or can use the private sector to perform that role through some form of partnerships (Rakodi, 2014). The indirect method involves the government playing a certain defined role in the provision either through regulation or a financial contribution to private sector that provide the services on its behalf. On the other hand, some services such as policing, defence and health fall under the direct responsibility of some organs of the government. Humphreys' (2014) definition of service delivery, concurs with the OECD definition, in that service delivery relates to those services given to citizens which are wholly, partially or mainly funded by public taxes. Public services can also be provided in various ways by private firms (Marin, 2014). This could involve activities such as refuse removal and disposal. At the same time the public services could be offered by voluntary organisations, as in the case of community volunteers of a fire brigade, or neighbourhood watch committee (Damborg, Danson & Halkier, 2017). It is pertinent to note that all types of public services are eventually sponsored by the state (COGTA, 2009). At the same time the state often puts in place various regulations to govern any services provided by the private sector or where such activities are carried out in some form of partnership with government. The nature of controls depends on the activities carried out whether prison canteen services, or cleaning (Cleave, Arku & Chatwin, 2017).

Public services are unique in that they are generally not profit oriented. The basic charges levied for public services tend to cover only the basic costs and may result in a modest return above break-even (Wild, Booth, Cummings, Foresti & Wales, 2015). At the same time, public services do not operate under cut-throat competition which is associated with most private goods. To this end, Humphreys (2014) proposes that public services are generally monopolistic or oligopolistic. This view by Humphreys

(2014) resonates with the prevailing South African situation, there are monopolistic or oligopolistic tendencies and are prevalent, given that most of the public services would not be commercially viable. This is especially so given the typical rural community such as Nkomazi, which is the subject of this study.

Mpofu and Hlatywayo (2015) define service delivery as the actual production of a service such as garbage collection, disposing of refuse or provision of street lighting. This perspective draws parallels with the OECD definition above and is also supported by Carlson, Johnston and Dawson (2018) who suggest that public services tend to seek to transform the livelihoods of the beneficiaries more than the provider of the service. To this end the beneficiary communities are usually the prime motive and often drive the process through various deliberate engagements with the service provider. A similar argument put forward by Hansen and Wethal (2014) is that the beneficiary is at the centre of the transformation that occurs during service delivery. The author considers that a beneficiary is not a passive recipient of the service but actively engages the service provider and hence ultimately compels service quality. In the same context, the role of the service provider is to use his or her skills and conduct activities to facilitate the process. Arguments by Phillips and Pittman (2014) support the view that changes brought about by service delivery are more beneficial if the citizens are engaged fully. Citizen buy-in makes for a wider acceptance of the efforts by the service provider and hence it ensures the overall success of the process.

In this regard, it is pertinent that the public institutions assess and deliver what the beneficiary communities want in order to meet them at their point of need. This way society may be uplifted in ways that they appreciate and not in ways that they deem to be an imposition from above. For government institutions to achieve this, a qualified civil service backed up with sufficient resources must be in place. In the public service environment, there is interaction between a number of stakeholders. These Stakeholders include the legislators, administrators, service providers and the beneficiary public. The relationships between these must be scrutinised and a delicate balance maintained (Brooks, 2014; Jayne, 2017). For instance, it might be prudent to investigate and keep a close check on the motivations of the legislators for promoting certain things (Belletti, Marescotti & Touzard, 2017). Similarly, the service providers

do not always serve in the best interests of the beneficiaries or the state. Various authors such as Warner and Sullivan (2017); Feldman, Hadjimichael, Lanahan and Kemeny, (2016) emphasise the need to enforce rules and regulations governing all the parties in the service delivery process. This is the only safeguard in so far as it is possible to ensure that the needs of the beneficiaries are met. A comparison made by Mporu and Hlatywayo, (2015) and McDonagh (2017), shows that the private sector tends to enforce rules and regulations of service delivery more than in the public sector.

An analysis of public service delivery shows that it is premised on four key issues:

- i. Public services are provided with set goals and objectives of which profit maximisation is not one (Saad-Filho, 2016).
- ii. In the public services accountability is a key governing principle in the political, as well as bureaucratic issues. Accountability is extended to service delivery and hence there are punishments and rewards applied for following rules and regulations (Conto, Conte, Fiore & Djelveh, 2015).
- iii. In the public sector there is growing awareness of market forces which can bring about competition and hence this forces the state sometimes to change its tactics in order to appeal to the beneficiaries (Takahashi, 2017).
- iv. There is need to maximise the use of resources on the evaluation of policies no room is left for weak public service systems to pursue misaligned objectives (Lovan, Murray & Shaffer, 2017).

Public services need to be driven by customer needs rather than what the service providers are prepared to give (Cameron, 2014). This calls for public servants to act with a sense of transparency and accountability. The author also believes that, the presence of a non-responsive service delivery system powered by powerful civil servants, makes service delivery in the local municipalities all the more problematic. While this is the case, the residents often contrast the services offered by the state with those from the private sector. Such comparisons often cause them to draw their own conclusions regarding whether they are getting value for money for something that they pay taxes for. News reports show that citizens often require government

officials to be transparent when delivering services as they pay a lot of taxes (News24, 2011).

Governments have a mandate to provide most of the basic support services required in their community. However, what is basic service depends on the context of the economic setup and the level of economic development. In any case members of the public expect that once they pay their taxes, the government should consistently reciprocate by providing the needed service delivery. When there is a lack thereof, citizens vent their frustrations and in the case of municipalities, by way of the violent service delivery protests as evidenced on the hand-over of low-cost housing units by the Department of Human Settlements in Mbombela (News24, 2016). The situation in South Africa, however, is not unique, and as the following sections will discuss, most of the service delivery challenges are analogous. What may differ are the reactions of the local stakeholders.

3.3 Service delivery policy framework

Service delivery is governed by a number of policies and laws (CoGTA, 2016). The policy framework in South Africa aims to ensure that service delivery is achieved so that all citizens have access to what are considered to be basic services within their constitutional rights. In most cases, people's representatives at national level (Ministers) or at provincial level (Members of the Executive Council [MECs]) or local municipal level (Councilors) are given the mandate establish policy guidelines which are used in the implementation of service delivery programmes. The policy framework governs issues that seek to synchronize service delivery issues across the entire network of communities. In the context of South Africa, a number of documents are used to regulate service delivery, the most important of them being LED policy and IDP. Service delivery is carried out at the local level in which case it appears as a local municipality issue, yet the local municipality is only an arm of government closest to the people.

3.3.1 Service delivery structures in South Africa

South Africa has a unitary structure with a federal outlook in terms of its government structure. This is the view expressed by the African Peer Review Mechanism (2007).

The tiers or spheres which operate in South Africa, at national, provincial and local have been interpreted to mean that the three structures are distinctive, interdependent and yet interrelated. All the service delivery takes place within the local space and is visible at the grassroots. In terms of section 104(1) and section 125(5) of the Constitution, the legislative authority of a province and the implementation of provincial legislation is assigned to the provincial legislature. The provincial legislature is designated as an exclusive provincial executive power (Republic of South Africa, 1996). In local government, of which the Nkomazi Local Municipality, the basis of this study is part, executive and legislative authority is vested in the municipal council, as stated in section 151(1) (Republic of South Africa, 1996). Between 1998 and 2003, the South African government enacted legislation that entirely transformed systems, institutions and processes of local government. Key among these was the Local Government: Municipal Structures Act of 1998, the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act of 2000, the Local Government: Municipal Electoral Act of 2000 and the Local Government: Municipal Finance Management Act of 2003 (African Peer Review Mechanism, 2007). The above-mentioned laws and policies are considered necessary by government for accountability, cooperative governance and maximal community participation (African Peer Review Mechanism, 2007).

At local levels in the community, the South African government introduced some structures in order to enable citizen participation at service delivery. These structures include Ward Committees, the IDP, Community development workers (CDWs); Imbizo 'citizen forums' and leadership at all levels of government. Besides the above formal local institutions, and systems the local initiatives that form part of local governance include various meetings with the municipality in council meetings and other similar forums.

At global level the service delivery systems almost mirror the situation in South Africa. The following sections looks at some of the status of service delivery in different parts of the world.

3.4 Public service delivery – A global perspective

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2010; 2011; 2014) noted in its annual reports that throughout the world, most cities face the most acute challenges of service delivery. This has been attributed partly to the fast-growing urbanised populations. Vivian (2014) also remarked that many developing countries are overwhelmed by demands for efficient service delivery. This is more so in the developing economies where the standards of service tend to be low, while at the same time the general population makes many demands of which the state must deliver (Edwards, 2017). Findings by (Oi, 2015) indicate that even in more developed nations such as Malaysia, the demand for service delivery remains a challenge. This could be attributed to the increased level of education of the population in such places, who tend to demand even higher levels of services which may not be the same as those required in poor and developing nations. Another factor fuelling citizens' public services demands arises from increasing urbanisation levels all over the world, which forces local authorities to keep up chasing the service delivery demands (Abrahams, 2018).

A study by Tamrakar (2016) in Nepal, shows that service delivery is still a major challenge even with concerted efforts by government to change the living standards of the people. Many of the service delivery challenges identified in Nepal are similar to those in the rest of the developing world. Similarly findings by Snyman (2017) in South Africa show that most of the local municipalities are beset by service delivery challenges that need a holistic and determined effort to deal with in the long term. Some of the challenges noted have been in existence 25 years after the democratic elections of 1994. The fact that service delivery faces serious challenges is shared by a number of authors (Odalonu, 2015; Md Shahriar, 2015). The author argues throughout this study that these noted shortcomings to service delivery imply that there is generally a need for strategies to improve service delivery. The fact that it has been reported on in many developing countries implies that service delivery has been and will remain elusive for some time and as long as no appropriate solutions are instituted.

In Africa (Mcloughlin, 2015), and the rest of the developing world (Mabogunje, 2015; Fusini & Kemp, 2015), the problem of service delivery is prevalent. Mcloughlin (2015)

makes a connection between the level of service delivery and the standard of living of people in a community. The author argues that inadequate service delivery militates against other more beneficial economic issues, and will often be noticed in high levels of unemployment, and general restlessness among residents. These challenges affecting businesses and individual community members have been noticed all over the developing world as highlighted by Carley and Christie (2017).

While the world is reeling under poor service delivery challenges, it is a surprise that few studies have been made focusing on investigating the factors militating against disadvantaged communities. There also seems to be little focus on generation of workable strategies to resolve service delivery challenges in local communities. However, in South Africa, despite a number of studies having been conducted on service delivery (Beauegard, 2014), there seems to be little to no impact on the actual service delivery challenges as the number of strikes continue to increase. A report by DEDEA (2016) shows that most of the developing countries sponsor the bulk of their budgets from the service sector. Malemela and Yingi (2016) show that members of the public hold government to account in public service delivery and hence see that the interaction they have be beneficial. The following section discusses service delivery in developed economies as a way of establishing a possible benchmark over issues that seem to rouble less developed nations.

3.5 Service delivery in developed economies

A number of changes have been noted in how government deals with service deliver in recent years. Pape, Fairbrother and Snell (2016) for example, note that in developed councils such as Australia, the local authorities have moved beyond the traditional narrow emphasis on basic infrastructure such as roads, to other broader objectives. These other issues are meant to advance local communities holistically. At the same time the expectations of the community in terms of service delivery in these countries have increased (Booth, 2018) while other levels of government have devolved various functions, and yet other new demands have also evolved (Ohemeng & Grant, 2015). This is to a certain degree different from the developing countries such as South Africa where the 'roads, rates and rubbish' are still of primary concern (Brikerhoff & Brinkerhoff, 2015). Beauegard (2014) demonstrates that service delivery in some

developed nations has evolved to higher order requests for non-essential services such as sports facilities or cultural facilities. In such economies, the local communities are demanding that their municipalities meet the higher standards expected by their citizens, showing that service delivery requirements are pervasive in all communities and remain a challenge.

Despite the evolving nature of the demands, the conclusion the researcher drew from the positions discussed by various authors is that service delivery challenges remain a core issue especially given restricted budgets in many municipalities in the developing world. To circumvent the budgetary constraints, some countries embark on service delivery reviews with the express intention of prioritising on the most essential service delivery issues. It can be observed that 'value for money' for the ratepayers is the common objective in local government (Beauegard, 2014). As a result, the periodic service reviews help to identify the appropriate mix of services and funding measures that best meet the community's needs. Service reviews are undertaken systematically throughout an organisation in accordance with identified priorities. This is possible because local governments in developed economies have established the primary infrastructure for service delivery (Ramachandraiah, 2014; Brikerhoff & Brinkerhoff, 2015) which is often missing in the developing countries local space. Primary infrastructure includes the roads, housing, water and sanitation, refuse collection and among others. As the researcher argues in this study, the infrastructure challenges in Nkomazi present one major stumbling block for service delivery, that is, the municipality does not have adequate resources to develop its infrastructure.

A report by COGTA (2014) reflects on services delivery in some of the developed economies, that local government in amongst developed countries such as New Zealand no longer focuses on the provision of social services. But this situation is not pervasive as Ohemeng and Grant (2015) show that the United Kingdom is significantly involved in such issues as social housing, education, social services, and the administration of welfare benefits. Hailu, Gankhuyag and Kipgen (2014) state that the Australian local government still engages in childcare and care of the aged. Developed nations find budgets to put for such issues as building controls, dog control, health

regulation and much more similar regulation enforcement, which may not be priority issues in the developing world.

However, the focus of local government in developed countries is not the same as developing countries which still have to grapple with basic infrastructural issues (Levy, 2014). South Africa is in a unique position in that it has what has been labelled a dual economy, reflected in portions that are highly developed and yet others that are extremely poorly developed and still deep rural. For instance, the focus of this study; Nkomazi Local Municipality is considered one of the poorest municipalities still grappling with the basic infrastructural backlog, yet within the same municipality can be found pockets that are at par with developed economies. The following section will explore the nature of service delivery in South Africa, focusing on the nature of the goods and services delivered as well as how they are delivered, whether through private sector mechanisms, or a partnership with the government authorities.

3.6 Service delivery and local government

Generally, the nature of public services varies and may also be numerous including issues of security, police patrols, provision of public utilities, general economic development projects, and the enforcement of the law and order. Levy (2015) considers that local government councils throughout the world are required to serve the local people in areas as diverse as the construction of roads, provision of public markets, clinics or hospitals, processing waste, provision of public transport, maintaining recreational areas and building primary schools.

Further exploration of this local government mandate is provided by Levy (2015b). The author argues that local authorities act as agents of the state and hence they periodically utilise financial help from government. These funds are often inadequate hence they supplement the resources using their own funds from local levies. Key developmental projects often conducted as part of the local municipality mandate include access roads, drainage, provision of water and rural electricity, among other amenities. Smoke (2015) argues that another important role played by local government includes acting as a democratic space to gauge the needs of the local electorate. To this end, the democratic ideals are realised through the involvement of

local people in deciding on issues of national development (South African Cities Network, 2014).

As observed from the various positions put forward by various authors (Warner & Sullivan, 2017; Cleave, Arku & Chatwin, 2017) the provision of public services at local level tends to be circumstantial, with the state of economic development being a fundamental determinant of what the local government authority will provide. The researcher's observations illustrate that the state of development of an economy dictates the nature of the services that can be offered at the local level besides the nature of demands made by the citizens. In different discourses, scholars make a distinction between developed economies and developing economies in terms of the nature of the service delivery systems. However, three major models of service delivery are observed: private service delivery, pure public service delivery and mixed form of cooperation between the public sector and the private sector.

3.7 Service delivery processes

Services delivery cover a range of issues and hence the processes involved cover a number of steps. This section presents these processes from the needs assessment and planning stage, implementation stage, funding framework and beneficiation.

3.7.1 Needs assessment and service delivery planning

Arguments by Auriacombe and Ackron (2016b) reveal that the South African Constitution, the Development Facilitation Act (1993), the White Paper on Local Government (1998), and the Municipal Systems Act (2000) all support public participation in policy making and program implementation. What is missing however, is the nature of a clear specification on how to involve the public. One of the mechanisms used most often is the IDP (DDP, 2014; DPME, 2014). At inception, the IDP was introduced as a concept that would assist in prioritising the local people's input in the municipal planning system. Through multiple stakeholder consultations, the IDP is expected to identify needs, and service delivery in targeted communities. With the priorities in place, the IDP process culminates in an appropriate budget and other resource allocation, which triggers the rest of the service delivery process.

The IDP is considered a tool for policymakers (Atlee, 2012) to elicit citizen preferences and feedback and participatory budgeting and development (Auriacombe & Ackron, 2015). Community stakeholders view IDP consultations as an opportunity to make the public servants accountable. However, the IDP process has been criticised for a number of reasons:

First, IPDs are considered to be only mechanisms that cannot influence the annual budgeting, being used only as a vision for the municipality. Second, the number of participants in the actual IDP process tends to be limited, this is despite the fact that in terms of the regulations, it is mandatory to consult the community stakeholders (UNDP, 2012). Studies done in some municipalities' show that very few people have heard of the IDPs, which makes the planners less accountable to the electorate. At the same time, even if local people hear about the IDP, their participation levels at meetings remains low, hence the process of bringing accountability remains underdeveloped.

It has been noted that IDP is solely driven by the municipal officials with minimal involvement of the local populace. This is in contrast to the intended purpose of the IDP process, whereby the process should be citizen driven. According to du Plooy (2017) what is often observed is that participation of councillors and ordinary citizens becomes simply an item to check on the technocratic checklist for meeting the municipal budget cycle. At best, councillors are only informed about activities without consultation or involving them in decision making processes (Auriacombe & Ackron, 2015). Pieterse et al. (2014) note that the IDP process is fraught with weaknesses, as it tends to be just an input gathering process. The participants have little room to contribute and sway the process into something they can use to control the resolve their demands.

Marais, Everatt, and Dube (2014) conducted a review of IDP participation in Gauteng Province and concluded that public knowledge of IDPs is low. This phenomenon was noticeable even in the Integrated Sustainable Rural Development Programme and Urban Renewal Programme. Public knowledge was noted to be as low as ten percent. Similarly, in Alexandra Township in Gauteng, only seven percent of residents were

noted to have heard of the IDP. Thus, lack of IDP participation may to a greater extent be attributed to a lack of public knowledge not to a lack of public interest.

Another observation made was that differences exist in the way that public officials and the members of the public interpret the purpose of the IDP (UNDP, 2012). From the viewpoint of the government officials, the IDP is only a strategic document which is supposed to be approved by the public but not necessarily designed through their consultation (Dickovick, 2015). Research shows instances where communities have been asked to endorse an IDP which had been cobbled by administrators without citizen participation (Friedman, 2016). At the same time, members of the public are not knowledgeable in the ways of the IDP, hence mostly see it as a platform where they can raise demands and complaints about service delivery.

A third observation made about the IDP process is that it often suffers from major challenges in information flow (UNDP, 2012). For instance, information materials outlining the IDP and setting the stage for public participation are rarely understandable in local languages. What further worsens matters is that the IDP documents are written in technical English which at best is inaccessible and too high-flowing. Malemela and Yingi, (2016) identify this as a problem inherent in the developing world and specifically when development programs are 'imported'. The major challenges often revolve around poorly organised meetings, which do not take into account the peculiar language, times or facilitation for IDP meetings. Once the community stakeholders are called for input meetings the follow-up report-back meetings hardly come by.

A fourth challenge with the IDP process is that citizens participate as individuals, and the civil society organizations are noticeably absent from the IDP process (Auriacombe & Van der Waladt, 2016). A final challenge noted is that IDP participation remains only consultative. It remains divorced from the budget resource allocation and does not make use of joint budgeting between departments (City of Cape Town, 2011; COGTA, 2014). Bernhardt (2016) confirms this point, noting that some meetings can be regarded as ceremonial exercises not meant to establish the opinion of the stakeholders at all. Such meetings are what Mdlongwa (2014) labels compliance-

driven approach to IDP which render it a futile exercise. Similarly, Burger (2014) agrees that the consultation seems to be superficial with all the noted recommended meetings being held, yet the outcome of the process does not meet the basic tenets of a purely consultative process.

Given these kinds of challenges besetting the planning process of service delivery, it is argued in this study that the challenges of service delivery in local municipalities will remain unresolved. Public participation which should form the bedrock of service delivery is undermined and hence the powerful civil servants conduct service delivery without the stakeholders input. Once the needs assessment and the planning stage are set on a false start, the results of the implementation of service delivery plans can be predicted; and their outcome is not commendable. The implementation phase is crippled with a number of problems, chief among them the funding framework.

3.7.2 Service delivery implementation stage

Generally, municipalities have been facing serious implementation challenges in service delivery. These challenges are mainly to do with perceived inadequate capacity on the part of the officials tasked with the service delivery mandate. To curb this problem, the South African government implemented *project consolidate*, which was an initiative meant to provide hands-on technical support to about 130 municipalities across South Africa. While *project consolidate* is considered appropriate and necessary, Burger (2014) suggests that it needs to be complemented by other mechanisms. Poor human resource capacity has often been associated with the prevalent weak financial management systems (Du Plessis, 2014; Grant, 2015). *Project consolidate* was used by the government of South Africa to facilitate various service delivery interventions at municipal level. The programme enabled the Department of Local Government and Housing to coordinate the efforts of various other stakeholders both private and state actors, in order to improve municipal performance.

In order for the *Project Consolidate* to be effective, there is need for qualified manpower to conduct the planning processes, thus, the ability of municipalities to retain skilled staff is brought into question (Meyer, 2014; Tomlinson & Branston, 2016).

Pleas on poor service delivery have been associated with the inability of staff to cope with the demands of local communities, but at the same time poor management has often been blamed. This has been seen through widespread protests against perceived corruption and poor financial reports from the Auditor general (IDASA, 2010). Municipalities in the main have been receiving qualified and sometimes disclaimers as a show of non-compliance with basic Municipal Finance Management Act regulations.

Another major service delivery implementation challenge identified by Maphunye (2010) pertains to the different bureaucratic levels in South Africa. Burger (2014) on the other hand, states that there is an increasing challenge of protests over service delivery in that past few years. All protests seem to portray angry residents who have a bone of contention with government over perceived poor service delivery. The common thread running through all protests is that there is apparent lack of efficient service delivery, of which the government must take urgent steps to address deteriorating services. A number of stakeholders among them opposition parties have placed the blame squarely on the ANC policy of deployment. Under deployment, the ANC seconds its party-loyal members to take senior positions in government departments, even though there may be better candidates who are not necessarily party supporters. Besides this problem, the state salary bill seems to have ballooned, with the negative effect that funds are diverted from the productive things to sponsoring recurrent expenditure (Du Plessis, 2014).

3.7.3 Funding framework

A perennial problem affecting most of the municipalities even the metros relates to funding challenges (City of Johannesburg, 2011; City of Cape Town, 2011). Cameron (2014) notes that service delivery should obtain funding from the local community in terms of the constitutional mandate. This implies that local authorities are empowered to collect revenue from the beneficiary public within their sphere of control. In particular, the Constitution of South Africa gives local government the right to impose taxes on property and surcharges on fees for services provided. Local taxes form the bulk of the revenue base of local municipalities. Many municipalities also recover money from the resale of electricity and, to a lesser extent, from water. The argument

is that local governments are supposed to be largely self-financing (RSA, 2009), but there are a couple of caveats, and Cameron (2014) notes a number of limiting conditions. First, the level of funding available to local authorities out of their own collections does not match the amount of expenditure they are supposed to foot. Second, local authorities do not have the same capacity relating to raising funds from the local community by way of taxes and surcharges. This is because municipalities are not equally endowed in resources. This problem normally affects the smaller rural communities which have a very small revenue base. Auriacombe and Ackron (2016) identifies these as some of the unintended consequences of decentralisation. NLM happens to fall within the latter; the poor small rural municipalities and the effect on service delivery is telling.

3.7.4 Beneficiation

The wide-ranging service delivery processes are part of the government objective of improving the local space. This is made possible through a number of community driven projects. The World Bank (2014) acknowledges that community-driven development can be used in decentralised systems to promote many community driven projects. The logic for pursuing community-driven projects often is to ensure that communities retain control of decision-making and resources. Involvement of communities must be from the planning stage all the way to implementation. Given the limited resources at the local space, communities often need help from government and other facilitators such as the non-profit making organisations. Several studies throughout the developing world show that community-driven development can exhibit certain levels of success when implemented by countries, in association with the World Bank or other donor programs (DANIDA, 2010; Grant, 2015). Some of the most prominent projects of this nature involve the building of schools and classrooms, community halls and a whole lot of amenities. Communities function in a complex institutional environment and hence coordinating community based projects require special skills.

For effective local and community-driven development, focus on the following five processes of change will drive the community towards envisioned economic development phases. These processes include; empowering communities (Greyling,

2014), empowering local authorities (Imenda, 2014), realigning the centre to support local and community-driven development (Nicolson, 2015), promoting accountability and building capacity (Imenda, 2014).

Case studies of South African community driven development since 1994 by Nicolson, (2015) suggest that the ideal legal, fiscal, and policy environment exists but that it is considerably underused. While local municipalities possess the potential for service delivery implementation, the structures have been heavily underutilised. It is suggested in this study that a fresh look be made on the factors that impact on service delivery and accurate measurement of these will assist in nipping the service delivery challenges in South Africa.

3.8 Privatisation of services

South African Cities Network (2014) defines full privatisation in terms of how much government is less involved except as overseer of the service delivery. In a privatisation arrangement, the private owner takes full responsibility yet government remains accountable to the electorate. The private company also recovers its costs and profits from the service costs. Full privatisation entails that the government's involvement is theoretically limited to setting up regulatory agencies (World Bank, 2015). The government agencies act as watchdogs and the service provider is held accountable for its conduct. Ohemeng and Grant (2014) show that in most countries, this model has been effectively used. Some of the most common utilities using the model include energy (electricity), telecommunication (Yanguas & Hulme, 2015) water provision (South African Cities Network, 2014) and transport services (Beauegard, 2014). A report by the World Bank (2015) highlights that due to the scale of infrastructure involved, companies operating under the privatisation model often trade on the world capital markets.

The privatisation programme has its supporters as well as many opponents. Among the proponents are Levy (2015) and Smoke (2015) whose studies show that in the last several years many nations have done some privatisation of some kind in the public utility companies particularly telecommunication, gas, electricity distribution and water. Such proponents argue that privatisation works premised on the arguments that the

privatised operations are more satisfactory to citizens who tend to demand value for money (Marvel & Marvel, 2015; du Plooy, 2017). These benefits are said to accrue in both developing and developed nations.

Though similar conclusions about privatisation are made about the developing world, Davies (2016) suggests that the outlook is rather mixed. The author identifies productivity gains in most developing countries and the analysis made shows far more positive benefits than negative effects for consumers, governments and investors in general. Kamara (2017) established clear benefits from having private operators in Africa. On the other hand, Bryson, Cosby and Stone (2015) found no clear differences between public and privatised services provision in Asia. The general observation made from the discourse on privatisation is that the service delivery alone does not deliver great benefits unless it is accompanied by liberalisation. Liberalisation in this case, implies increased competition or independent regulation. In order to benefit fully from privatisation, Clark and Moir (2014) argue that the economy must be liberalised. This finds support from a study from developing countries by done by Clarke (2016) who suggests that privatisation must be tied with a level of regulation of the private players. Cloete (2015) opines that privatisation alone cannot result in all the identified benefits but requires some level of ownership changes.

In South Africa, a few privatised sectors have had impressive stories of success as well as challenges. Prominent examples beset with headline grabbing challenges include South Africa Airways [SAA] (News 24, 2014) and the railways (Sowetan, 2015), as well as the postal system (Sunday Times, 2015). It seems the benefits of full privatisation have not really materialised for these organisations. As a result, one crucial question posed on privatisation is the extent to which the privatisation model can be applied in the delivery of public services. The concern as raised by Grout and Zalewska (2016), is that when companies fail to recover all their costs then the model may be over-regulated making it less beneficial than if it was publicly controlled. Over regulation may arise from corrupt officials especially in developing nations where public servants may thrive on graft (Omotoso, 2014). Where this prevails the public administrators often seek to dictate the behaviour of privatised companies' (Cloete, 2015), hence causing them to make inefficient business decisions. While full

privatisation represents the other extreme on public service delivery several authors note that milder forms of privatisation are used in different economies. These include various forms of outsourcing and are discussed briefly below.

3.8.1 Contracting out/ outsourcing

Contracting out entails taking out certain business activities that used to be done by internal staff to an external party, who is expected to do it more efficiently (Ohemeng & Grant, 2015). The arrangement involves two organisations entering into a contractual agreement for the provision of a service. Essia, (2015) defines outsourcing as the procurement of a private service provider to offer a function for and on behalf of government. Thus, while the government hands over the production or service provision to private individuals or companies it retains the responsibility (Raelin, 2015). Outsourcing is often defined in terms of specific time frames, with contracts running until they lapse. The contract is reviewed depending on satisfactory performance, and this process ensures that government remains accountable to the electorate.

The Economic Development Partnership (2016) observes that a successful outsourcing relationship has to be transparent. The stakeholders involved must also trust each other and work together in order to reap mutual benefits. When done properly, Essia (2015) argues that outsourcing will result in increased productivity, efficient use of resources, and better control of business processes. Through outsourcing the government utilises the bidding process to choose the winning bidder (Joeffe, 2015). In South Africa, outsourcing often takes the following forms: service contracts, management contracts, asset leases, and concessions.

3.8.1.1 *Service contracts*

A service contract is made between the state and a private company which acts as a service provider, and is usually for a limited duration. The contracts are usually very brief ranging from a few weeks or days to a few years. With most service contracts the source of the funding is the state, and the private company provides the expertise (Meyer, 2014). Examples of such service contracts could involve such diverse areas as maintenance and repair of government's cars and other specialised equipment,

prison catering and cleaning services, landscaping and gardening services for state complexes and laundry services for hospitals.

3.8.1.2 Management contracts

As with the service contract, the government sponsors the agreement, while the private management company provides labour and specialists. For example, IT, finance and accounting specialists. These services could be of a technical nature not commonly found in the public service. This type of agreement usually lasts longer, between three and five years (Meyer, 2014). While the government commits its physical and capital resources, the role of the service provider is to just manage the operations.

3.8.1.3 Asset leases

These types of contracts arise when the government allows a private company to use often public resources to provide a service to members of the public. In leasing the asset such as a road, the government remains the owner but allows the company to facilitate the service by doing substitute work for government (Bel & Costas, 2016). The duration of the lease depends on the nature of the asset and maybe ten or fifteen years even up to one hundred years with some farm leases. Leased assets include plant and equipment used in road construction projects. By way of operation, the service provider levies charges to consumers of the service, and in turn pays rent to government over the duration of the lease. In most instances the asset is returned to the state after the lease ends, or a new lease term may be opened. The toll gate system by the South African National Road Agency (SANRAL) and the Bus Rapid Transport (BRT) system are some of the lease arrangements that the government has with a service provider (SANRAL, 2014).

3.8.1.4 Concessions

These are a variation of the asset lease described above and are sometimes labelled as Design, Build, Finance and Operate (Pape, Fairbrother & Snell, 2016). As a way of avoiding financial outlay, the government allows the private players to gather resources, build, own and operate the asset for a time and then hand over to

government. Within the period of the concession, the private player should recover its funds (Pape et al., 2016). Concessions can run up to 15 years.

3.8. 2 Public-private service delivery

As observed from the discussion above, private service delivery entails various mixes of the government and private sector involvement. As a result, the models of delivery of public goods and services can vary in nature and scope and can be plotted on a continuum showing one extreme to another. On one hand, there is the direct provision by governments and on the other, there is full privatisation of service delivery. In between are various doses of public private service delivery. A number of authors portray service delivery as a continuum (Cloete, 2015; Clarke, 2016). The argument is that governments opting for some type of partnership with the private sector can be attributed to growing financial pressure on public accounts. The result is that Governments now rely heavily on the private sector for either inputs or for direct provision of goods and services”. It can be argued that this move has ideological reasons and also provides better value for money.

Public-private partnership (PPP) “is a well-developed concept in South Africa. As the name denotes, the government enters into a type of partnership with a private company. In most cases the role of the private partner is to build or operate or maintain the asset or do all three (Capuno, 2014). PPPs can cover any area or sector and a number of countries use them effectively for service delivery.

3.8.2.1. Public Private Partnerships: Definition and types

The definition of PPPs goes beyond the aspect of government simply procuring private goods and equipment from private companies in arms-length transactions (Tomlinson & Branston, 2016). To qualify as PPPs, deliberate effort is required as in a marriage of two consensual partners that the work of one partner be subject to the scrutiny by the other partner. To qualify as PPPs a number of criteria have to be met. The guiding criteria are identified in the definitions offered on PPPs in the following paragraphs. The current literature does not provide a clear definition of what constitutes a public-private partnership. As a result, several definitions which capture various aspects of the PPPs are proffered below.

The OECD (2008) identifies two major parties in such contracts; the government and the private partner. There may be one or more private partners and more often, one government is involved. The government sets the objectives which are driven by the private partners with the express permission of government. In such projects, the level of risk is shared between the two parties. The private party promises to deliver, short of which there may be penalties or the contract may be terminated with consequences for the private partner. The International Monetary Fund (2016), on the other hand identifies PPPs as those arrangements where the government allows private sector players to perform duties on its behalf. The private players come in as providers of identified public services (Essia, 2015), of which they contribute a sizeable investment (Marvel & Marvel, 2015). In addition, in the PPP, it is recognized that there is a level of risk borne by the private partner. Generally, PPPs cover a diverse range of issues, which transcends the whole spectrum covered by local government.

The European Commission [EC] (2014) defines public-private partnership as a reference to a wider form of cooperation between public institutions and private institutions. Warner (2013a) suggests that areas of cooperation can be as broad as the government defines them, with no limit in terms of how these relationships can go. Central to PPPs is the need to set parameters in the contract. These parameters include duration of the partnership, funding mechanisms, roles of different parties or stakeholders, and methodology or operational guidelines (Phillips, 2014). More often, the public partner takes the controlling role, defining the parameters as well the contract form. Issues covered include the objectives of the PPP, matter of public interest, quality, pricing issues, monitoring and compliance issues (Joeffe, 2015). Risk in a PPP is shared and the distribution of this risk is also a matter which determines the contract price, length and cost.

For the European Investment Bank (EIB, 2014), public-private partnership is a convenient way of harnessing private sector capacity to deliver public goods. From the definitions above, it is apparent that PPPs can be used to describe a wide range of business relationships that bring together government and private sectors in joint effort to achieve a stated objective (Ramachandraiah, 2014; Verma & Priyadarshee, 2015). A common feature of these PPP arrangements is that the government deliberately

partners the private sector in order to take advantage of the expertise and accountability for the service delivery.

3.8.2.2 Rationale for PPPs

PPPs are expected to bring about improvement in service delivery by creating value for money so that stakeholders in service delivery communities get contented with the level of service. Sibanda (2014) contends that quality service delivery has at the forefront, the consumer. The concept of quality service delivery means that the customer must get value for money, the goods provided must be delivered on time and must be what the customer ordered. This implies that service standards have to be scrutinised and the service provider must always be accountable to the electorate or community.

Zurba (2014) supports this view by noting that issues of quality require that the local authority or service provider must be searching for continuous improvement. This is because the requirements of the communities change with circumstances. The local authority needs to continually identify the customer base and their needs. In the public sector, the definition of customer is considered to be problematic as it carries different meaning that its daily usage in the private sector (Matshazi, 2017). Observations in this study show that in municipalities that have used one form of PPPs or the other do not necessarily reap positive benefits. This is because there are a number of variables at play that make PPPs to work. While efficiencies may improve, the involvement of a private sector organisation is not the only panacea to improved productivity. Risk levels differ and the risk distribution balance may determine if the PPP produces the desired benefits or not. Where no tangible benefits are realisable, members of the public tend to lose out. This would bring no tangible benefits, thereby defeating the whole point of establishing PPPs. As argued above, as far as government is concerned, value for money is often taken to mean that an overall increase in utility is observed among the public consumers for the duration of the project and beyond.

3.8.2.3 PPPs challenges and questions

The development of PPPs also raises a series of political and economic questions (Essia, 2015). The first issue concerns the questions raised regarding the involvement

of the private sector on matters which are the preserve of government. The involvement of the private sector partner has both economic and political implications. Politically the electorate has to accept that there are certain ways of delivering public services, economically the resultant efficiencies or lack thereof, will determine whether people are getting value for money from the PPP arrangement (Matshazi, 2017). These issues generally determine the acceptability of PPPs. Economic reasons for engaging in a PPP should be justifiable in terms of maximising value for money (Williams, 2014). Politically, the government should be able to manage the PPP and hence appropriate laws must be in place, setting the tone for the regulatory frameworks that play the oversight role over the PPP.

While PPPs hold benefits, certain segments are skeptical that they may be detrimental to cost increases arising from the profit motive of the private partners (Pérez-López, Prior & Zafra-Gómez, 2015). Where 'profit' is viewed suspiciously, the relationship between the public sector body and the private partner may be tense and may be a subject of many misunderstandings, divisions and mistrust especially with the beneficiary stakeholder. Another challenge that could be the source of more tense exchanges arises from the partner actually failing to deliver the goods or services timeously (Bajari, Houghton & Tadelis, 2014). On the other hand, the government partner may delay payments which then cripples the ability of the other partner to deliver on time. A delicate balance is therefore, crucial in the PPP, so that both partners are sensitive to the demands of the relationship. Without such an understanding among the partners, the losing public will get the worse part of the deal.

The arguments put forward in this discourse are that a rural municipality such as Nkomazi would experience the full impact of these kinds of challenges. Being predominantly rural with a very low GDP per capita, attempts to do cost recovery would most likely fail unless the bulk of the cost burden is shifted to government and not the community. In South Africa, botched PPPs have made headline news in the provision of RDPs in Limpopo and elsewhere (Citizen, 2015; Sunday Times 2015) as stakeholders complained of shoddy workmanship and high levels of corruption. While the PPPs can deliver great service, the management of such partnerships is paramount as this often dictates the quality of the service.

Accordingly, the PPP model requires the setting down of coherent policies, objectives and principles (Kroukamp, 2015), identifying clear projects, from which targets are set. The next step often involves winning stakeholder support as the project gets underway (Bel, Fageda & Mur, 2014). However, as observed in many countries, despite the presence of these policies, the major challenge is that of poor implementation. This could be coupled by poor choice of partners made by government. Assessing the project objectives is an important step in the conduct of the partnership. It also helps link the partners so that they can map out their roles in the whole project. Many partnerships are plagued by divergent stakeholder interests, hence the possibility of effective and efficient service delivery remains elusive.

Resnick (2014) argues that the cost saving rationale for setting up PPPs is not valid most of the time considering that so much money is spent in administration and transaction costs. If the headline cases highlighted by massive service delivery protests in South Africa are giving a cue on the nature of cost savings, then the protesting communities seem to have concluded that the bulk of the money on service delivery is not benefitting them. Often, service delivery issues have highlighted issues of maladministration, nepotism, corruption and a host of other issues (Cameron 2014; Bajari et al., 2014). As a result, the observation that can be drawn here is that the prevalence of the PPPs still has a long way to go before tangible benefits are realised. Setting up strong, accountable and transparent guidelines can help establish the PPP as a viable platform for service delivery.

The next section focuses on some of the service delivery structures through which service delivery is carried out. These structures give the basic service delivery models a platform in which to be executed thereby fulfilling the mandate of the various local government bodies.

3.9 Reconfiguration of service delivery systems

Over the years there is evidence in a study done by Mutahaba (2016), that government bodies have reorganised the way they fulfil the service delivery mandate. This is in line with the changing demands from local communities. For instance, the 1980s decade experienced the most dramatic changes driven by public sector reforms carried out in

many countries (Pieterse, 2014). These reforms were located in both developed and developing countries, and subsequent years have seen major public sector transformation. Related to these changes, Ackron and Auriacombe (2016a) indicate that government has been under great pressure to adopt private sector orientation in terms of service delivery. This occurs so that they can maximise performance and accelerate public service delivery where it is needed. During the 1980s and 1990s, most countries went through IMF and World Bank sponsored structural adjustment programmes. One of the main objectives of these programmes was to streamline service delivery, making it effective and fast. This wave of global public transformation also had an impact on South Africa (Pieterse, 2014). The main objective for the transformation, as in the other countries, was to ensure greater access to and improved delivery of public services.

Globally, many countries have recently decentralised their service delivery mandate to the local authorities (Auriacombe & Ackron, 2016b). The effect of such a move has been the shifting of the level of responsibility from central to the lowest levels that are the zone-controlled by councils or local municipalities. The contention by Auriacombe and Ackron (2016b) is that national government embarks on a gradual transfer of decision-making power and resources to municipalities as a way of opening up government for local people to take part. It is also a way of speeding up decision making. This is in agreement with the strategy documents developed by CoGTA (CoGTA, 2009; 2014). Studies on world trends show that the devolution of power and responsibility elevates the democratisation participation of locals. This is considered an important feature of democracy. However, the expected promotion of democracy may not be uniform as examples show that in Latin America, there has been no meaningful improvement in service delivery nor reduced the costs of providing of such services.

Studies in several European countries show that there is an increase in the delivery of services using a mixed public-private approach (Auriacombe & Ackron, 2015; Odolanu, 2015; Auriacombe & Ackron, 2016b). The mixed public-private approach involves government and the private sector working together to deliver services to the people. According to Auriacombe and Ackron (2016b), the responsibility and

ownership is divided proportionately between government and the private sector, operating exclusively under commercial law. In Spain, the use of large private companies to provide public services is common (Wild, Booth, Cummings, Foresti & Wales, 2015). This is because the firms have an established reputation for delivery of particular local services. Under such circumstances, the government retains a level of control in the service delivery process, despite the entire activity being conducted by the private partner. Similarly, in Italy, studies show that 14% of local public utilities are mixed public-private firms. This trend, according to Odalanu (2015) seems to be practised by many European countries. Despite the use of the private firms to deliver service, in some of the European countries, government still retains the decisive powers of the nature of objectives to be pursued by private firms. Such kinds of service delivery do exist in South Africa to a greater extent in the form of public Private Partnerships (PPPs), and as the discussion in section 2.2.3 shows, these are partnerships are used with varying effect in different municipalities.

3.10 Chapter summary

This chapter introduced the concept of public services, service delivery, and local government. It explored viewpoints on the nature of service delivery by various authors and in different economic setups. Service delivery was identified as a mechanism utilised by different governments globally to reach to grassroots. In some cases, as in South Africa, the concept of developmental local government was used to emphasise the purpose of service delivery at the local level. It acknowledged that the manner in which service delivery is carried out differs in specifics depending on whether it is in developed countries or a developing economy. However, in either case, public service delivery continues to face a number of challenges. The service delivery in some sub-Saharan African countries was discussed as it mirrors to some extent the South African situation. Some of the issues confronting service delivery include inadequate finances, poor planning and poor implementation, bureaucracy, and corruption. These problems are aggravated by the absence of basic service delivery infrastructure. Similar or related service delivery challenges in South Africa were also briefly discussed.

Service delivery occurs within the domain of local government and hence decentralisation forms a critical base for service delivery. Levels of decentralisation in terms of political and administrative power are crucial as this determines the ability of the local authority to implement service delivery tasks. In South Africa, the 1996 Constitution defines the framework in which decentralised authorities are to operate. The Constitution, together with a number of other supporting legislation shape the local government structures and the service delivery system. Through the use of the various tools such as the IDP and the MFMA Act, service delivery in South Africa finds home in the local municipal space. Here, the challenges of service delivery vary depending on the nature of the economy of the local municipality. Poor rural municipalities such as Nkomazi – which is the subject of this study, face mounting challenges in terms of service delivery”. The question then to be asked is to what extent will such a municipality be able to perform on the service delivery mandate?

The next chapter focuses on establishing a contextual understanding of the Nkomazi Local municipality. An attempt will be made to isolate specific service delivery challenges in South Africa in general and in Nkomazi in particular. The chapter will also discuss the best practices framework and service delivery models in detail. These will be applied to the Nkomazi situation. An analytical framework will be developed as a handle for understanding the service delivery issues in Nkomazi.

CHAPTER FOUR: SERVICE DELIVERY IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES

4.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter an analysis of the general meaning of service delivery was made. A number of concepts were defined in terms of the local space within which service delivery takes place. These included the local government structures and powers as they pertain to South Africa, the nature of service delivery partnerships, and the systems or mechanisms that are used in service delivery. In this chapter an attempt is made to analyse three major issues. First, there will be focus on highlighting some of the major service delivery challenges in general. Second, the study will discuss the context of the Nkomazi local municipality which is under study. Finally, this study will chart the way forward by discussing the possible solutions and best practice model frameworks for service delivery.

4.2 State of service delivery

According to the Public Service Commission (2015), “the African continent lags behind on almost all measures of infrastructure and service delivery coverage, in comparison to the rest of the developing world. This gap exists in all major infrastructure areas including communication by road and telephone, as well as electricity provision. This implies that the gap between developed and developing nations is widening unless drastic actions are taken to redress the situation. The Public Service Commission (2015) notes that shortages are rampant in most of the areas identified above. Similarly, a report by the UNDP in 2010 confirms similar major challenges in terms of water provision in most developing countries (UNDP; 2012). These challenges seem to be unending and for the years between 1990 and 2012, in sub-Saharan Africa there was hardly any noticeable progress concerning in provision of basic utilities.

In 2000, the member states of the United Nations set up eight millennium development with the express aim of eradicating poverty by 2015. These millennium goals have not been met and at the time in 2000, Stein (2014), anticipated that these Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) especially regarding water provision and waste, could take more than half a decade to accomplish. It seems that there is a wide misconception that service delivery is better in the urban areas, but cross-country

studies by Ukwandu (2015) that this is not the case. Water and sanitation remains a major challenge in most areas and cases of water-borne diseases remain prevalent in most cities of the developing world (UNDP, 2012).

Service delivery in Nigeira for example, the most populous country with the second biggest economy in Africa, does not measure up to the expected standards (Omotoso, 2014). Poor service delivery in Nigeria even received the attention of the presidency in that country. The failure of local governments in service delivery was acknowledged at presidential level when ex-president Obasanjo in 2003 lamented that there was a gross realisation that efforts to improve local service delivery had failed dismally. The presidency expressed dismay at the notion that all that remained was a perception among officials that the hope for rapid and sustained development has been a mirage (Obasanjo, 2003).

Commenting on the Nigerian situation, Olusola (2011) states that poor service delivery in Nigeria is pervasive, encompassing all basic infrastructure provision from schools, market facilities and even health centres. Ukwandu (2015) makes similar comments highlighting the state of poor service delivery in the road, education, health and generally all public utilities. At this juncture, it is therefore crucial that relevant questions be posed as to what the factors could be that are responsible for the failure of local governments in service delivery at the grassroots. The following section explores some possible answers to this question.

Studies on local government performance show that there are a number of factors that can be linked to the spectre of poor service delivery (Bel, Fageda & Mur, 2014). These factors include: poor funding due to poor revenue bases, administrative shortcomings, lack of management, political interference, lack of qualified personnel especially in certain key technical areas, unresponsive civil service, systemic corruption, lack of integration of local government structures. The other issues revolve around lack of leadership, lack of autonomy in decision making, poor work culture (Ibok, 2014; Bolatito & Ibrahim, 2014; Chukwuemeka et al., 2014). Detailed discussions of these factors are presented in the following sections.

4.3 Service delivery challenges

Service delivery challenges are prevalent in many countries as highlighted by a number of authors. In most cases, demand for services outstrips supply with local authorities seemingly overwhelmed by the number of service delivery calls. This study has adopted an early classification by Leigh and Blakely (2016), who suggested that the service delivery challenges can be classified as physical (or infrastructural), economic, social, political and cultural. These categories were further elucidated by Rogerson (2018) who states that they are at the core of service delivery challenges not only in South Africa but the rest of the developing world. In addition to these classifications, these challenges will be discussed in terms of administrative dimension which deals with the capacity, implementation and planning challenges faced by local municipalities.

Service delivery is also affected by some politically related challenges, one of which is exclusion of the local people from the process. Without public participation, the democratic processes necessary in setting development programmes are short-circuited. This in turn leads to community anger as they accuse local authorities of side-lining them in development issues concerning their area (Cameron, 2014). In South Africa, service delivery inherited historical imbalances from the apartheid era, and this has been key in the swelling numbers of the unemployed, homeless and under skilled (Welford, 2016). Besides the political challenges, administrative challenges also seem overwhelming ranging from lack of capacity among staff. Poor capacity is linked to skewed recruitment policies and inadequate planning. Moreover, the municipalities seem less capable of planning complex scenarios, leaving them facing unmanageable service delivery demands (Idasa, 2010).

4.3.1 Infrastructure challenges

The biggest for poor service delivery in terms of lack of basic infrastructure has been laid on the government (Amin, 2017). Lack of basic infrastructure for water for instance affects sanitation and most municipalities have failed in this sector. The author argues that part of the blame emanates from the monopoly situation with regards to water provision and this seems to cover most of the developing nations in sub-Saharan

Africa. Governments in sub-Saharan Africa take time to respond to the increasing pressure on amenities and hence fail dismally when it comes to infrastructure provision. Odalanu (2015) notes that a common service delivery challenge in most Nigerian urban centres is the sight of open refuse dumps in every corner with the local municipalities often turning a blind eye. While this could be attributed in part to the lack of sufficient refuse collection equipment, Amin (2017) suggests that the situation is also aggravated by a lack of concern over industrial waste. However more detailed analysis shows that the challenges in sub-Saharan Africa are much more complex as shown by earlier studies by Ndegwa (2002), Davis (2006) and Stren (2014).

An analysis by the researcher shows this is a dichotomy in public demands between the people in the developed nations and those in the developing nations. While in the developed nations such a sore sight would not be tolerated, in the developing countries the authorities would not even raise an eyebrow. The situation in South Africa mirrors what is happening in the other third world countries. This is true with respect to some of the poor local municipalities such as Nkomazi which is under study whereby the provision of certain basic infrastructure is lacking, and has been attributed to be the main drivers of service delivery protests in a number of other municipalities in South Africa.

The absence of infrastructure at times can be traced to what the World Bank (2012) says is a 'low cost-recovery rate'. According to this argument, the provision of services at below cost prices is the prime contributory factor towards the lack of capital and low levels of investment in infrastructure that is so prevalent in most of the developing countries. While this may be true, the researcher does not believe that charging the full cost would provide the solution as most of the beneficiaries are poor and would not afford the services. However as will be seen in the analysis on Nkomazi Local Municipality, the challenge of low revenue collection for utilities remains a significant factor in the low revenue base at the local level and is also attributed as the reason why the municipality continues to fail on critical service delivery. What is needed therefore, is to strike a balance in cost recovery and being able to invest in infrastructure development. Indeed one of the reasons often quoted for inadequate water supplies is the fact that most municipalities have not been able to upgrade the

water infrastructure for many years. Some governments are accused of running down even the infrastructure that was inherited at the dawn of the independence or democracy (World Bank, 2012). It is for this reason that some have proposed that some of the services are better off being privatised with some elements of government oversight. The infrastructure challenges however seem to point to a basic economic problem and as such the nature of the service delivery challenges become more complex.

The problems that face service delivery in South Africa are similar to most of those faced in the rest of the developing world. Key challenges identified by the Auditor General in the 2011/12 Report point out similar issues identified above. These include lack of capacity and failure to fill vacancies on time (RSA, 2012). In a similar argument the National Development Plan (NDP) singled out a need to make the civil service more professional so that it could attract the most skilled people (NDP, 2014). Several other reports on local government point to an overlap of issues, with one problem leading to another. In South Africa topical issues affecting service delivery pertain to politically related appointments, staff lacking capacity to deliver and total absence of mechanisms to make people accountable.

4.3.2 Economic challenges

At the base of the economic challenges are the issues of low revenue collection. While the previous section discussed the impact on infrastructure, the low revenue collection has been considered as one of the constant and perennial challenge for most of the countries in the service delivery sector (Evans, 2018). The challenges arising from inadequate revenue collection expose the local municipality and leaves them at the mercy of aid funders. The socio-economic status of people residing in the NLM is a fundamental factor that contributes to low revenue. Under these circumstances, planning becomes haphazard and restricted as aid funders give their own directives and conditions which may not be in line with municipal or community priorities.

Another challenge associated with low revenue collection involves the low prices charged for services which are commensurate with the municipality's national rankings. The communities are poor, therefore, appropriate rates and taxes should be

charged accordingly. The argument is that even though these state enterprises charge service prices that are below breakeven, the challenge is that low income earners cannot afford them at whatever price level (Warner & Sullivan, 2017). The World Bank has noted cases where there is huge disjuncture between collected revenue and the cost of collecting those revenues (World Bank, 2014). When considered at the national level, such losses are material and have been calculated to be absorbing a substantial portion of the GDP of the Sub-Saharan African countries (Arku & Oosterbaan, 2015). Indeed, South African municipalities battle to recover money for amenities such as electricity (Sunday Times, 2015). A number of municipalities have been threatened with disconnection until the central government intervened (Madonsela, 2013; DPME, 2014).

While poor communities on one hand are being touted to pay for the full service, other arguments are that it is the subsidies that are often given to large industrial customers that create a service challenge. Schumpeter (2017) notes that a major feature in sub-Saharan Africa is that local communities are poor, hence they do not pay sufficient rates to local authorities. At the same time the local authorities tend to subsidise the large industrial users. The argument by Rakodi (2014) is that these subsidies tend to hurt the poor people more than they benefit them because a larger percentage of the income of the people ends up paying for rates to the local authority. Under these circumstances it becomes unrealistic to expect consistent payment of rates. The non-payment of rates has been noted in Uganda (Cleave, Arku & Chatwin, 2017) and in Nairobi and Accra (Fuseini & Kemp, 2015; Damborg, Danson & Halkier, 2017). Some analysis done shows that poor people end up paying up to eight times the rates paid by poor people generally. These problems are observed in many other sub Saharan countries (Hansen & Wethal, 2014; Carlson, Johnston & Dawson, 2018).

Pertaining to the South African situation, it is the researcher's contention that the most of the rural local municipalities are impoverished and do not possess the capacity to raise adequate funds to deliver services at the level required to pacify communities. Poor rural communities have to do much more considering that their constituents are mostly dependent on the government, and are categorised among the indigents or people living below or just above the poverty datum line. Raising fees or taxes from

such communities does not yield any positive results. Part of the challenge emanates from the expectations created by national government among the electorate that government can take care of all things, and this leaves the burden on the local municipality which has to deliver the government promises (The State of Local Government in South Africa Report, 2009).

Although municipalities receive grants, there is a general acknowledgement that these grants are not enough or are received in drips leaving service projects way behind schedule (Nkomazi IDP, 2012; 2013; 2014). Under these circumstances, municipalities find it impossible to meet most of their service delivery targets. The State of Local Government in South Africa Report (2013) identifies another challenge associated with the distribution of state grants, in that they tend to be favourable towards the large municipalities which coincidentally have the capacity to raise funds from their own constituents. What is required is a mechanism that recognises the different and weak status of poor rural communities so that deliberate steps may be taken to deliberately increase the funding levels.

South African local government is constitutionally mandated to be developmental and re-distributive (COGTA, 2014). What remains in question is whether local government institutions have sufficient resources to effectively carry out this mandate. The major challenge in the country's local government arises from the fact that since the 1994 democratic elections, wide discrepancies exist between former White areas and the previously disadvantaged areas. Local municipalities depend on charges for electricity, rates refuse removal and water, yet these have been proven to be inadequate over the years (80/20 Report, 2014). However, another main challenge in municipalities is that not all communities pay rates, hence, municipalities tend to use rates from paying areas to subsidise the non-paying areas.

The subsidisation of non-paying areas has led to deterioration of service delivery in the paying areas. Some studies conducted in metros such as Johannesburg show that this type of redistribution is unsustainable (Carlson, Johnston & Dawson, 2018). At times, cities have seen exodus of people from certain areas because of deterioration in services. This leads to further deterioration on the revenue collection side and

creates a cycle of service delivery problems for municipalities. In order to make up for poor revenue, municipalities, therefore, end up relying on central government through various forms of grants. It is estimated that in South Africa, municipalities receive up to 20% of their revenues from the state (StatsSA, 2014).

Non-payments problems are not unique to poor communities alone, but some culprits include established businesses, and even government departments. Financial challenges are often cited as the number reason for non-payment (The Presidency, 2014). The problems are compounded by issues of rapid urbanisation and increasing unemployment, promises of better life for all and a general culture of entitlement (Hansen & Wethal, 2014). In addition political party slogans that tout a 'better life for all' have been considered to be reckless as they are used as an excuse for non-payment. For instance, the ANC is accused of making too many promises that are perceived to be unrealistic and this has incited a number of local communities to protest as a follow up to those promises (Phillips & Pittman, 2014; Cameron; 2014).

Other major economic problems with local municipalities concern high levels of irregular expenditure. As early as 2012, there were several reports of large amounts flagged as irregular expenditure leading observers to accuse local government of lacking accountability (80-20 Report, 2014). At the same time more than half of the municipalities received qualified audits in 2013. Only a few of these municipalities have been able to follow through the financial regulations. Treasury recommendations are disregarded or ignored whether regarding rates increases or on fruitless expenditure (Madonsela, 2013; Nombembe, 2013). For instance, treasury instructions not to increase rates were ignored by the Johannesburg metro (City of Johannesburg, 2011), the Tshwane metro as well as Cape Town (City of Cape Town, 2011). By increasing rates, municipalities try to raise sufficient revenues for service delivery in all areas. However, it has been noted that these rates increase do not tally with the level of service and they are a burden on the poorer members of the community (80-20 Report, 2014).

It is therefore, one of the major arguments in this study that there is need to increase funding for the service delivery mandate for most poor and rural local municipalities.

While money availability is not to be taken as the one and only solution, inadequate funds have stalled many projects and can be isolated as one of the major issues that is stalling progress at local level. As discussed in other sections of this study, literature shows that most of the issues revolve around local authorities not having the funding resource to implement critical projects. Availability of funds is, however, not the remedy as there are a number of other social challenges confronting effective service delivery.

4.3.3 Social challenges

These issues cover a whole range of matters in particular issues of perceived corruption at local level, lack of accountability, inadequate democratic inclusion of the local people.

4.3.3.1 Corruption

A number of challenges can be identified under the social dimension of service delivery, chief of which is corruption (Bolatito & Ibrahim, 2014). Reports have established a strong connection between poor service delivery and the high levels of corruption among local government officials. Perceptions of wholesale abuse of funds by public officials makes a mockery of the service delivery mandate to the grassroots, as officials are perceived to be enriching themselves at the expense of the deserving members of the public (Jayne, 2017; Schumpeter, 2017). The effect of this unethical conduct according to Belletti, Marescotti and Touzard (2017) is that local municipalities have been rendered financially impotent, and this leaves them without the capacity to meet their service delivery mandate.

Chukwuemeka et al. (2014) trace the inability to perform by local municipalities to perceived high levels of graft. Corruption has been discussed in many local government studies, and some of the findings allege that development projects are stalled not only because of resource challenges but mainly because of endemic corruption (Bolatito & Ibrahim, 2014; Chukwuemeka et al., 2014). In different ways, corruption is said to result in inflated prices for projects, contracts may be abandoned or delayed while in some cases books are cooked up to cover up for losses by local authorities. In most cases the outcome is that government pays far beyond the service

rendered and this has not benefitted service delivery in a positive way (Bolatito & Ibrahim, 2014).

The researcher, therefore, contends that financial constraints constitute the largest obstacle to service delivery, yet other serious challenges include the perceived high levels of corruption. The full social cost of corruption cannot be measured objectively but the effects are glaring in the level of discontent displayed by disgruntled communities in the South African local government situation. Often corruption goes unpunished, hence lack of accountability by public servants cements the malaise making it impossible to render the service delivery mandate (Hansen & Wethal, 2014)). Recent comments on the performance of the ANC in local municipal elections, give credence to the notion that the local communities are indeed tired of reckless waste of public funds, while ignoring the basic service delivery requests (Sunday Times; 2016).

The Municipal Finance Management Act No.56 of 2003 demands efficiency in the use of public resources, and yet there are many local authorities that have been penalised for fruitless expenditure. Some of the municipalities have been caught on the wrong side for several years in a row with no sign of change for the better. In the meantime service delivery pays. Clean audits are a rarity and are now a cause to be celebrated among the local municipalities as the majority of them obtain qualified or worse reports from the Auditor General. As a result of this poor performance the delivery of social services becomes compromised.

4.3.3.2 Lack of accountability

In South Africa, the lack of accountability has been cited at national level as the major contributor to poor service delivery. The Auditor General identified lack of punishment for poor performance as a reason for continued poor performance (80/20 Report: 2014). These sentiments were echoed by the public protector, Thuli Madonsela (City Press, 23 October 2013) and were supported by views from the office of the presidency that the system of local government seems to have stopped working well (City Press, 3 October 2013). The extent of these problems according to Cronje, Alexander, Kene-Berman, Holborn and Moloi (2014), are so pervasive such that in

order for them to be fixed, there is a need to deal with the three tiers: local, provincial and national levels.

South Africa in particular, other social challenges often identified pertain to the apartheid legacy. As Feldman, Hadjimichael, Lanahan and Kemeny (2016) claim, the post-apartheid era presents a number of challenges for local municipal leaders including social and historical contexts. Social contexts show municipal leaders facing real racially stratified local communities, local economic inequalities and apartheid-legacy created problems. Some of these service delivery challenges include; poor housing, water problems, poor or no sanitation, poor rural roads, lack of electricity/energy, social unrest, high crime rate and high levels of illiteracy. Warner and Sullivan (2017) in their study show that from a historical context the leaders in the post-apartheid era have to grapple with transformation to leadership which is no longer racial or one sided to an all-inclusive mandate. This transformation has not been easy as there are many challenges of local economic inequalities to contend with.

4.3.3.3 Crisis of democracy

The nascent democratic state also presents peculiar kinds of service delivery challenges. Studies on local government show that there have been a spate of service delivery protest since 2004 (McDonagh, 2017). Comments from protesters show that they use protest action as a way of attracting government attention. Protesters allege that without drastic action their calls are always ignored, hence they burn schools, libraries and will do anything to draw the much needed attention (Saad-Filho, 2016). The level of protest action shows that levels of trust between government and people is at its lowest. This has been substantiated by studies conducted by the Human Sciences Research Council's Social Attitude Survey for 2003 which established that less than half of South Africans still have faith in the ability of local government. Therefore, much needs to be done if the roles of local authorities as envisaged by government are to be realised. Reports from protest areas show that residents are worried by the non-responsiveness of government to service delivery issues raised. Besides this, local communities accuse local officials of all kinds of ills, incompetency, corruption and outright arrogance as a way to ensure that they are empowered to carry out their mandate. The general feeling in the hotspots of service delivery protests is

that political leadership lack responsiveness to issues raised by communities. To communities both political leadership and administrative leadership are the same.

Poor communication with communities can also be attributed to the non-functionality of ward communities, resulting in poor democratic engagements with locals. The government of South Africa as well as civil society has placed an enormous amount of faith in ward committees (COGTA, 2009; DDP, 2014). To this end, there has been a huge effort in strengthening these structures in an attempt to ensure that they have the needed resources and capacity for them to fulfil their mandate as the voices of communities (Nkomazi IDP, 2014). However, a number of critics argue that the role of such institutions is limited given the circumstances in which they operate. The argument is that an unequal power sharing relationship exists between the community and the municipality and hence expecting them to work is expecting too much. In partial answer to these concerns, Friedman (2016) notes that mentioning of ward committees often provokes conflicting and negative viewpoints. To a greater extent, communities have raised concerns over the ability of ward committees, the argument held being is that ward committees never fulfil their mandate. They will either be highly partisan structures aligned to certain party political agendas or have a life of their which is far removed from the community to be served. It is no wonder these local structures are not able to contain protests when they occur, as they embroil themselves more in power issues than with the development agenda.

To a large extent, the service delivery protests only reflect the crisis of democracy in the local space. In the context of participatory democracy, the contention is therefore that the nature of local democracy needs transformation. The mantra of 'government for the people and by the people' implies that in a true democracy, government listens to the electorate, and goes out of its way to deliver on promises. This calls for cooperation and is a step that builds democratic participation (Friedman, 2016).

The marginalised sections of communities often feel that the decisions taken by office bearers in the local municipalities in South Africa are out of sync with the situation on the ground. This stems from the fact that the priority list of the locals does not tally with what officials decide to do on the ground (COGTA, 2014). This is reflected in the

planning process as well as budgets and IDPs that, at most, do not sufficiently reflect the needs of the communities. It would be prudent to conclude that the IDP process has flaws such that the stakeholder involvement process does not yield expected results (DDP, 2014). For this reason, most protesters vow to continue protesting until they see tangible results (Sunday Times, 2015). Such a top-down approach to local development tends to undermine public participation which forms a fundamental aspect of democratic governance. According to (Saad-Filho, 2016) it is estimated that a paltry number of locals (less than 3%) has actually participated as part of the IDP process.

4.3.4 Political and cultural challenges

Throughout the world, local government is the closet that people will get to interact with the state. However, as Conto, Conte, Fiore and Djelveh (2015) observe, the local government arena has posed so many challenges due to poor service delivery that it has tarnished the image of the state and local government in particular. The institutional damage done is such that people no longer trust local municipalities to deliver quality service. In South Africa, Abrahams (2018) observes that poor service delivery has been attributed to administrative interference by councillors, lack of involvement of the local people, poor mismatch between national goals and those of the municipality. These issues are besides those concerning poor infrastructure, and skills shortages and lack of finance.

4.3.4.1 Undue political interference in local affairs

Malemela and Yingyi (2016) state that a contributory factor to the poor performance by local authorities in service delivery can be traced to excessive interference by central authorities. This view finds credence from research done by Fuseini and Kemp (2015) in Nigeria where they observed high levels of influence from the Federal government. Interference at local levels is believed to cause paralysis in decision making and at times tends to result in the exclusion of local people in decision making (Fuseini & Kemp, 2015). Decisions are at the top, are seen as imposed and hence have little or no buy-in from the local people. Under such a situation local government is only seen as rubber-stamping decisions of national government (Snyman, 2017). At times, this

phenomenon has caused local authorities to become lethargic, waiting only for the next directive from national government (Adeyemi, 2013).

The significance of arguments above results in different interpretations of what is the best way of intervention. The challenge is to ensure that the level of interventions does not become confused to be some kind of interference. The NDP admits that relations between the upper tiers of government and the local municipality have not been cordial, and this has resulted in undermining the morale of public servants and citizens' confidence in the state (du Plooy, 2017). While the post 1994 state system has been more democratic, there are concerns that it is more centralised (du Plooy, 2017). An example of centralisation is seen in the appointment of senior personnel at the local municipality, such as the mayors and municipal managers. The ruling ANC party uses the deployment policy to fill positions with people who tow the party line.

Besides criticism of this policy by opposition parties in South Africa, the weaknesses of the system have been exposed through some high profile administrative bungling in many local municipalities. The debacle in local government elections of 2016 in the Tshwane metro and the subsequent loss of that municipality to the opposition Democratic Party (DA) is proof of the effect of democratic centralism or deployment policy. Under these circumstances the appointees are accountable upwards to the ANC at head office at Luthuli House, which is responsible for senior deployments. The major weakness of the deployment policy is that some 'cadres' are not competent to run the offices they are put in. The result is poor service delivery and a spate of incessant service delivery protests (Business Day, 2011).

Kamara (2017) observes that when appointments are made on the basis of party affiliation rather than merit, the inability of the local authority to deliver is sealed. The deployment policy is a success in terms of assisting the ANC party to control the provinces, and branches but is a total failure when it comes to service delivery. Besides this, the ANC also actively promotes the policy of 'affirmative action' or 'employment equity'. With this policy, the objective is to ensure a racial balance in the positions of power. As a result, the ANC has given itself the mandate to level the past inequalities by deliberately promoting previously disadvantaged groups especially

Blacks and Coloureds. However, pushing forward racial balance at the workplace without the related skills upliftment has been cited as one of the reasons why most local municipalities cannot perform when it comes to service delivery (Sunday Times, 2015). When positions are filled on the basis of 'quotas' and not skills based, the service delivery issues suffer.

4.3.5 Administrative challenges

Administrative constraints are a broad range of challenges that pervade the local municipal space. These administrative challenges have serious implications especially in poor rural municipalities such as Nkomazi. The extent of the administrative challenges includes capacity constraints, poor planning, lack of coordination and lack of human skills for the required activities. At the local level one of the major challenges pertaining to water and sanitation provision relates to capacity constraints emanating from poor planning, ineffective management and inability to implement (Edwards, 2017). Without a deliberate attempt to rejuvenate service structures as well as monitor them, service delivery challenges are expected to remain unabated.

Local authorities generally face manpower and other resource challenges. Resources generally refer to all kinds of support and these also encompass managerial capacity to handle challenges at local level (Abrahams, 2018). Butler and Rogerson (2016) also corroborate these claims in their findings in south-east Asia where they ascertained a general lack of coordination among sectors and departments that provide service to communities. This ends up with sheer waste of time and critical resources, and the beneficiary public loses out. Disregard of basic coordinated planning principles makes a mockery of service delivery as it is well understood that for effective service delivery to be implemented, a high level of coordination is required over diverse range of needs. Other challenges noted by Snyman (2017) in most of sub-Saharan Africa include absence of formal rules and regulations, non-existent checks and balances, officials are not held accountable, there lack of transparency, local involvement especially of women is very limited. Revenues tend to be inadequate or insecure, with central government controlling most of the budget activities. Studies elsewhere by Ohemeng and Grant (2015) highlight a plethora of challenges and these are discussed in the following paragraphs.

Lack of strategic awareness: At implementation level, staff members both managerial and technical are often unaware of the strategic significance and impact of the issues raised within their own departments as well as the impact this should have on their day-to-day operations (Ohemeng & Grant, 2015).

Lack of capacity: Staff capacity relates to both administrative as well as technical ability to deliver basic services. While the basic reasons for such a situation can be traced to poor or inadequate training, the implication on service delivery is negative and often result in communities losing faith in the ability of the local authority to perform. Most municipalities struggle to train staff to meet service delivery requirements due to other problems such as poor budgets (Ohemeng & Grant, 2015).

Poor performance monitoring: Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms are needed in order to check the deliverables against service delivery targets. These effective checks tend to be lacking, the spectre of service delivery protests with the accompanying challenges seems unending (Ohemeng & Grant, 2015).

Poor coordination processes: Ohemeng & Grant (2015) observe that without the different tiers of government working together, service delivery remains disjointed. Formal mechanisms for coordination exist but it seems they are rarely utilised due to the several other administrative hiccups. Service quality is noted to be stalled due to planning in silos. This transcends to sector departments which should be cooperating but rather work on individual sector plans.

High staff turnover: Where there is a large number of staff joining and leaving the organisation, continuity is severely affected (Ohemeng & Grant, 2015).

4.3.5.1 Lack of capacity

Capacity challenges that affect municipalities seem to go beyond qualifications and mere possession of skills. However, to a greater extent, most rural municipalities have been affected by the inability to attract the right skills. Reports by the Auditor General show that most municipalities fail in their mandate to deliver on service delivery as they are sitting on vacancies that they cannot fill (Auditor-general, 2013). Sometimes

the vacancies are not filled because of budgetary constraints yet in most instances the key positions are manned by people with the most basic skills. There are arguments that local government employs semi-skilled personnel because of poor salaries and working conditions. Many highly skilled people opt for the private sector where salaries and other perks are competitive. Thus, lack of skilled personnel contributes significantly to decision making and service delivery. Studies show that most qualified staff prefer to operate in the large metros and hence leave the smaller municipalities with no experienced personnel. Some of the key positions that have affected the municipalities include the roles of chief financial officer, engineers, spatial planners and chartered accountants (SABC News, 1 August 2012). The effect of such skills shortages take their toll on the issues of basic service delivery and these manifest as sporadic protests.

4.3.5.2 Size of municipalities

While most of the poor local government performance in South Africa is blamed on corruption, cadre deployment, skills shortages, and poor administration (Butler & Rogerson, 2016; Snyman, 2017), South Africa faces the peculiar challenge that most municipalities are quite large in terms of area of coverage. Rural municipalities in this case tend to be the most affected as they cover vast areas of farmlands which nevertheless require extensive service delivery infrastructure of one kind or the other. As a result, the contention is that some municipalities are overwhelmed by service delivery due to their extremely large sizes which does not match with the revenues collected.

Two key principles underlie the present system of local government which is described as the 'wall-to-wall' coverage. With the wall-to-wall concept local municipalities of South Africa among them share all the rural areas and those that used to be under the purview of the provincial government. Most municipalities embrace more than one city or town, and multiple villages some of which are more than an hour's drive apart from each other (COGTA, 2009). The infrastructural demands for such municipalities take a toll on budgets of rural-based local authorities.

4.3.5.3 Implementation challenges

Local municipalities face massive implementation and enforcement challenges. One of the most problematic areas pertain to illegal electricity connections, where local residents have a tendency of stealing electricity and the practice is known as (*izinyoka nyoka*) meaning snakes. The *izinyoka nyoka* challenge involving illegal electricity connections points to the centrality of municipalities' inability to enforce their service delivery mandate. The illegal connections have left many municipalities with huge unpaid electricity bills, owing Eskom and being threatened with total disconnection. Arrears to the utility providers have run into billions of rand (80-20 Report, 2014).

Another problem prevalent in local municipalities pertains to the way priorities are set. Cronje et al, (2014) cite the City of Johannesburg, which was implementing service delivery programmes at odds with what local communities were demanding. Residents of the metro expected the City to deal with issues of potholes and drainage systems that were blocked, yet the City authorities seemed to have had other priorities. Through various channels residents aired their views and eventually started to fight off some of the projects that they thought were not a priority such as the BRT system.

Finally, the shortage of the required manpower with appropriate skills is one factor that has crippled a number of municipalities (State of Local Government in South Africa Report, 2009). Absence of critical skills within municipalities pose grave danger given that staff shortages are experienced at all levels and for the most critical service delivery skills such as accounting, engineering and technicians. Poor mismatch between college graduates and what municipalities require often increases the skills shortage issues and there seems to be no end in sight.

4.3.6 Other multiple challenges

The local government problems however are not as easy to resolve as local governments often face several challenges in attracting investments from the international financial sector. The World Bank (2014) notes that in Africa one of the current challenges is the low population density per square kilometre. This is also compounded by relatively rapid rates of urban growth (3.6% annually). This combination of factors has been traced to have negative implications for service

delivery especially for landlocked nations and relatively small economies. One direct challenge that can be noted is that such nations have not benefited from economies of scale in the provision of infrastructure services.

Mabogunje (2015) observes that due to the absence of economies of scale, the costs of providing a basic infrastructure package are much higher rendering such services unaffordable. In other cases, the exorbitant prices charged lies in the fact that high input costs are incurred, but in other circumstances higher costs are just because the service providers extract a very high premium for profits. Thus, a common feature in service delivery in sub-Saharan Africa is inadequate infrastructure, lack of maintenance and even non-existence of the service. As Pape, Fairbrother and Snell (2016) report on their findings in Australia, sub-Saharan Africa is still grappling with the 'primary and narrow' service delivery issues'. This is somewhat different from the nature of service delivery in most developed economies.

The nature of the service delivery problems evolves sometimes due to other extraneous factors such as population growth and the increasing rate of rural urban migration. The migration challenge has been cited by a number of authors and in different countries; Saad-Filho (2016) in North Africa; Malemela and Yingyi (2016) who cover South Africa, Botswana, Mozambique and Tanzania; Ackron and Auriacombe (2016b) who cover South Africa and Rwanda; Beauégard (2014) who covers Ethiopia;. In some cases, in sub-Saharan Africa as analysed by Snyman (2017), the dominance of public enterprises has often resulted in a monopolistic market environment. This in turn has eliminated any form of competition such that the public service delivery has now become highly inefficient.

4.4 Service delivery interventions

Despite the numerous challenges cited in the above sections, a number of possible solutions have been suggested for numerous service delivery challenges particularly in South Africa. Some of the solutions on offer deal mainly with the social challenges and include the channeling of discontent, better communication, and management of protests. The municipalities need to adopt a shift in the way they make promises, should be able to note signs of discontent early, and apply high levels in dealing with

contracts or tenders. Above all, the issue of transparency and responsibility cannot be downplayed.

Despite having a plethora of possible solutions to service delivery challenges in South Africa, the fundamental issue faced by local municipalities pertains to inadequate funding (Financial & Fiscal Commission, 2013). A major issue that has been largely ignored among the rural communities is the poverty levels in most of these communities. Studies show that many communities do not have capacity to generate funding required for most of the infrastructure requirements even for their own communities alone. It is pertinent to note that this places a huge burden of local authorities to deliver yet they do not possess sufficient resources. Currently most of these challenges municipalities find themselves perpetuating the service delivery challenges by not reinvesting in basic infrastructure. Over time, the same challenges become unmanageable considering increases in population and other demographic changes. The researcher believes that in attempting to deal with the old backlog legacy at present the local municipalities are creating a new backlog legacy, because there is currently no investment in the future.

The Financial and Fiscal Commission (2013) reported that there is little financial support for the current municipal development planning. Taking into cognisance the centrality of finances in service delivery, it seems that the wall-to wall municipal system presents a serious challenge to most municipalities. It is part of the bigger service delivery challenge that should be addressed or revised if the service delivery protests are to be effectively managed.

Local government challenges also manifest in the other tiers of government. As a result, what is required to get local government on to a sound footing is a paradigm shift in the country's governance system. This requires a change of policy and sometimes a change of mind-set on the part of the administrators as well as the ruling party. High on this need for change would be the requirement for a professional, merit based civil service, an accountable administration that will not be easily influenced by corrupt characters. This will also require that they be accountable and be able to question issues of wastefulness in order to be the real custodians of the public purse.

Appropriate punishment for corruption must be implemented by a professional judiciary system, independent of party affiliation.

The funding of a growing service delivery system hinges on the rest of the economy also growing. With the South African economy expected to grow by about five percent between 2015 and 2030, this sets the proper basis for funding of service delivery programmes (SARB, 2015). As the economy grows, there are better prospects that employment creation can be realised, and more finances raised through taxes. The service delivery programme in South Africa is more of a redistributive programme and hence it has to be funded in one way or the other. To this end, the social component – health, education, housing and related amenities, and welfare payments all require massive subsidisation and hence the urgent need for the economy to grow. Government cannot rely on heavy borrowing as this tends to stifle investment by the private sector.

Service delivery in local municipalities is premised on the need for participation by beneficiary stakeholders through the implementation of the IDP process. This process falls in line with the developmental agenda and Brinkerhoff and Brinkerhoff (2015) argue that without citizen participation, the service delivery process lacks legitimacy, as it is rather an imposition from above. In many communities local government framework allows the inclusion of citizen groups including non-profit organisations, and other movements or groups. Participation of such diverse groups helps cement the democratic process in terms of the White Paper on Local Government (RSA, 2011). The policy according to COGTA (2014) is that citizens can participate as voters exercising their democratic rights, or they can be included as consumers or yet still as partners in the development objectives. According to Pretorius and Schurink (2007) the involvement of citizens should result in them obtaining more information of which they use it to make better developmental decisions. In addition, citizens will be able to make appropriate recommendations in the way the municipal direction must proceed through prioritisation of projects and voicing concerns over various developmental issues.

With regards to service delivery protests, the discussions made in previous sections show that the principal causes are diverse. The underlying issues appear very similar but under different contexts. Most of the protesters indicate that they want to be heard and emphasise that they have rights to all their demands because they are citizens who have been ignored for a very long time. However, as the discussion in previous sections illustrate, no single possible solution to resolve the current crises exist and hence in the following section the researcher presents some service delivery best practices models. These models could be used as hybrids or standalone, and the peculiar situation of each municipality determines the effectiveness of the model.

4.5 Service delivery - Best Practices Models

In the last few years, service delivery has shifted in many ways. Emphasis is now being placed on making it more efficient, which implies that municipalities must achieve more with less resources (COGTA, 2014). Several approaches to resolve service delivery issues can be used and these are variously labelled as alternative service delivery approaches. The basis of these models is the use of the private sector parties to deliver services through one form of out-sourcing or the other (Ackron & Auriacombe, 2016b). The emphasis is on using commercial methods of delivering service while keeping the costs down so that they remain affordable. The partnership with private parties is a way of sharing the public service demand and may involve partnership with community based organisations, the main objective being to ensure value for money is realized.

South Africa has identified two main alternative service delivery models: the public–private partnership (PPP) model, and the shared service delivery model (COGTA, 2010). The two models have proven to be effective, although both present challenges.

4.5.1 The public–private partnership model

In South Africa public-private partnerships (PPS) have been pursued as a matter of policy with the express aim of improving service delivery. The PFMA (1999 as amended) expressly in Regulation 16 identifies the need to use PPPs to implement service delivery. The PFMA (1999) sets three value tests for PPPs which include ensuring the availability of sufficient budgets, the need to establish net benefits from

the PPP relationship and the transfer of risk to the other partner in the PPP contract. PPPs have been used variously to improve and enhance service delivery. However, they also present opportunities for graft given that the private partners operate under a form of contract which is renewable. Given the competition in the marketplace, the PPP for the private partner is an opportunity to make profit and completion among bidders may lead to unhealthy tactics being employed to obtain the deal at any cost.

PPPs meant to improve service delivery in partnership with the community need to be implemented carefully, so that they resolve challenges rather than making them worse. For this reason, the nature of the PPP needs to be scrutinized so that the other partners are aware of the IDP framework within which the PPP should operate. As a public initiative, the PPP is subject to scrutiny and reviewed by other public bodies and especially the beneficiary members. PPPs could involve a set of stakeholders including Community Based Organisations (CBOs), Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and traditional leaders.

4.5.2 The shared service delivery model

The other main alternative service delivery model is the shared service delivery model (SSDM), which the US-based Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) defines as a type of collaborative strategy. It involves the coordination of different functional areas, and setting up standards which guide the operational model used to implement service delivery. A basic tenet of the shared service delivery model is that activities are not the sole responsibility of one entity but through a distribution mechanism, they are spread among various actors who remain accountable to the rest of the controlling body (GFOA, 2007). The shared service approach has been used in many parts of the world including in Scotland. In the Scottish model, the option is to use either a leading authority to direct the activities in partnership or use a separately created special purpose vehicle for such activity (APSE, 2007). Scotland's Association for Public Service Excellence goes on to explain that local authorities and public bodies require extensive innovation in order to deal with complicated forms of alternate service delivery (APSE, 2007).

One of the most tested service delivery models in South Africa is the alternative shared

service delivery model (ASSDM). Through a number of initiatives such as the multi-purpose community centres (MPCCs) or *Thusong Centres*, the government of South Africa has tried to provide services at a one stop place. Instead of rendering services from multiple offices littered all over town, the MPCCs allow people to come to one centre where they are served by various departments. MPCCs bring to the fore the concept of inter-departmental coordination bringing technical expertise to the public at local level in a more convenient way.

A lot of savings are realized from MPCCs from the point of view of community members as well as on the part of the government departments. Once these MPCCs are set up, it should be standard procedure that they are assessed in terms of them fulfilling the value for money mantra. Evaluation bodies such as the Public–Private Partnership and Supply Chain Management units have been used to check if the alternative service delivery process works indeed. This monitoring needs to be extended at national level to ensure that the alternative service delivery initiatives are being effective. Impact assessments are needed so that outcomes can be checked against set goals. Not much literature exists which explores this concept in most of the developing world.

4.5.3 International best practices models for services delivery

Discussions from the above sections generally point to the fact that service delivery in most municipalities is facing a myriad of challenges. Unless some drastic steps are taken, the future of service delivery remains in limbo. As discussed before, a number of demographic variables point to the fact that demand for service delivery is likely to increase rather than decrease. As a result, fundamental changes are needed in terms of the efficiency with which service delivery is done. One of the methods involves using alternative service delivery models as discussed in the previous section. These should be chosen with the express aim of improving efficiency, identifying and delivering savings and avoiding cutting services. The way of doing business in government departments need to be premised on the need to save resources and deliver the best with minimal consumption.

The researcher's analysis shows that most of these models have been tried and implemented to some extent in South Africa, at various levels, but what differs is the level of monitoring and evaluation. If a model has not brought results before, yet it is being applied with success elsewhere, the bottom line is to explore new ways of implementing it. In addition, these models have failed to address the challenges faced from a South African context. Hence the need to develop an indigenous conceptual framework that resonates with events happening in a natural setting.

The current service delivery models can be captured as a continuum with Nyamukachi (2014) referring to them variously as "contracts, concessions, leases, or privatisation processes. On the other hand, Ngowi (2015:37) referred to the same models as PPPs management systems, while Wilkins (2011) viewed them as a spectrum of options of alternative service delivery as demonstrated below. This perspective by Wilkins (2011) has been adopted in this research as it measures the full extent of service delivery in local authorities in South Africa" (See figure 4.1 below).

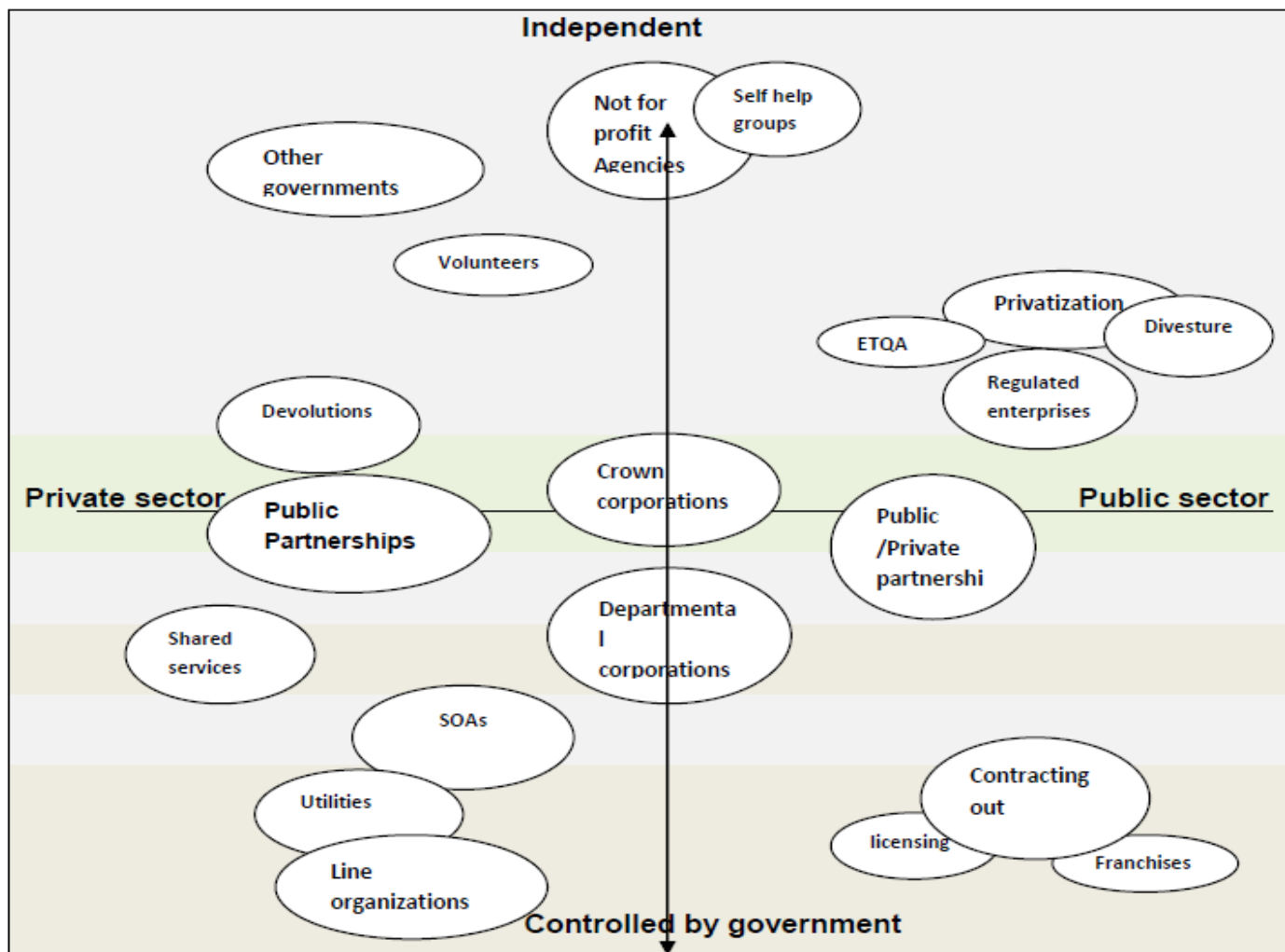


Figure 4.1: Alternative Service Delivery spectrum of options

Source: Wilkins (2011:175)

The researcher contends that the categories and differentiations above may be varied for purposes of establishing an effective service delivery model. Government has the onus of delivering goods and services without too much waste, this delivery must also be on time. Partnerships do benefit from a conglomeration of effort and hence should serve the purpose they are set to achieve. As such the importance of monitoring, accounting and evaluation for quality performance cannot be downplayed.

4.5.4 Challenges of monitoring and accounting for performance

According to Levy (2014), "the ultimate test of any model adopted is its impact on public welfare. As a result it is imperative that each party in the service delivery model

adopted be held accountable. Most of the time, accountability fails due to lack of information on part of the recipients or beneficiaries, which available from government stakeholders but otherwise remains unshared. Monitoring and evaluation for accountability requires that there be candidness in the service delivery information. However, this is not always easily available or shared due to a number of other challenges affecting different sector departments in the municipality or in the other tiers. In the end, the amount of inputs does not match the expected output, leading to discontent and sometimes violent protests.

Some challenges faced in operationalising service delivery partnerships as discussed by Capuno (2014) include the input into the process may not be perfectly observed. For instance it may not be easy to observe or measure a contractor's work ethics, effort, diligence, or dedication. In addition some service delivery outcomes are multidimensional, meaning that with one project there are a number of metrics that may need to be measured. The ability of the project to deliver on some of the metrics does not render it a failure and neither is it a total success. For instance, a project to deliver a school may successfully finish the building but leave the community disgruntled because it was built by people who do not come from the area, 'robbing' the locals of employment. At times, the partnership work may be complicated because there often are a number of principals each of who define different objectives and expectations on the same service delivery project. For instance, in a health project rarely are the needs the same for mothers, infants, working adults, elderly man and women, able-bodied people and sickly adults. At the same time the local municipality and national government may also come with different objectives for the same health project. A final challenge that may hamper success concerns natural, unforeseen factors that cannot be predicted or stopped. Such a phenomenon may reverse any previous gains and cause inputs to be lost. Crippling strikes, or heavy incessant rains may wash away all the joint effort on a service delivery programme.

Levy (2015b) and Smoke (2015) among others also mention that besides poor communication relating to information, there is also the challenge of identifying to whom to be accountable. Thus, for instance in matters involving public welfare, critical performance indicators should include impacts on a number of things such as, health

status, empowerment, economic or social participation, literacy, etcetera. As noted above, these indicators are not easily measured, and assessing the PPP's contribution in these issues is complicated by various external factors. Welfare impact also sometimes comes along loaded with the need to assess rate of use, satisfaction levels and client feedback. The challenge with these metrics is that they bring a lot of subjectivity into the success or lack thereof of a service delivery programme.

Establishing accountability under these circumstances may be a challenge resulting in a bias towards upward accountability only. This is where the project implementers are answerable to the municipal authority only disregarding the beneficiaries. With downward accountability the metrics measuring the success of service delivery are bias towards the local beneficiaries, yet there is need of a balance so that service delivery is properly assessed. The use of regulatory authorities to monitor may be critical but there is need for such regulators to take into account the demands of beneficiary groups. Service delivery projects require a great deal of sensitivity given many demands and sometimes several principals, hence ensuring their success is a matter that requires delicate balance.

It is therefore, the researcher's contention that application of service delivery models is not an easy one, considering the challenges besetting some of the more rural municipalities such as Nkomazi, which is the subject of this study. A more holistic approach is needed in adopting the models so that they can address the exact nature of the challenges. These discussions suggest that service delivery mandate in South Africa in general and the rest of the developing world, is a process that requires serious and concerted effort from municipal officials. A number of issues, policies and procedures may need to be revised. The Nkomazi local municipality is the focus of the next section and its particular challenges will be discussed.

4.6 Service delivery in Nkomazi Local Municipality

In this section, the researcher discusses service delivery in the context of NLM. First, the profile and geographic location of NLM are presented followed by a detailed discussion of service delivery.

4.6.1 Profile for Nkomazi Local Municipality

Nkomazi Local Municipality (NLM) is a municipality under Ehlanzeni District Municipality in Mpumalanga Province which is estimated at 3240.42 km² in extent. The municipality links South Africa to the north of Swaziland and the west of Mozambique. The municipality is linked with Swaziland via the R570 and R571 provincial roads and with Mozambique by the N4 national road or Maputo Corridor and a railway line. The municipality is bounded to the north by the Kruger National Park and has four main urban centres; Malalane, Hectorspruit, Marloth Park and Komatipoort (Nkomazi Local Municipality IDP, 2012;2013). The municipality has its seat in the small town of Malelane, situated along the N4 national road about 65 km east of Nelspruit (Mbombela), the capital city of Mpumalanga and about 70 km south of Komatipoort. NLM has eight tribal authorities and forty-three (43) villages where the vast majority of poor communities reside (NLM IDP, 2012;2013). The municipal area of NLM has been subjected to influx of neighbouring foreign nationals from the two neighbouring countries of Mozambique and Swaziland, through the two border gates. The Driekoppies dam visible in the map below forms the only major source of water in the whole municipal area". The map shows the Lebombo border gate into Mozambique to the east and the Mananga border gate into Swaziland to the south.

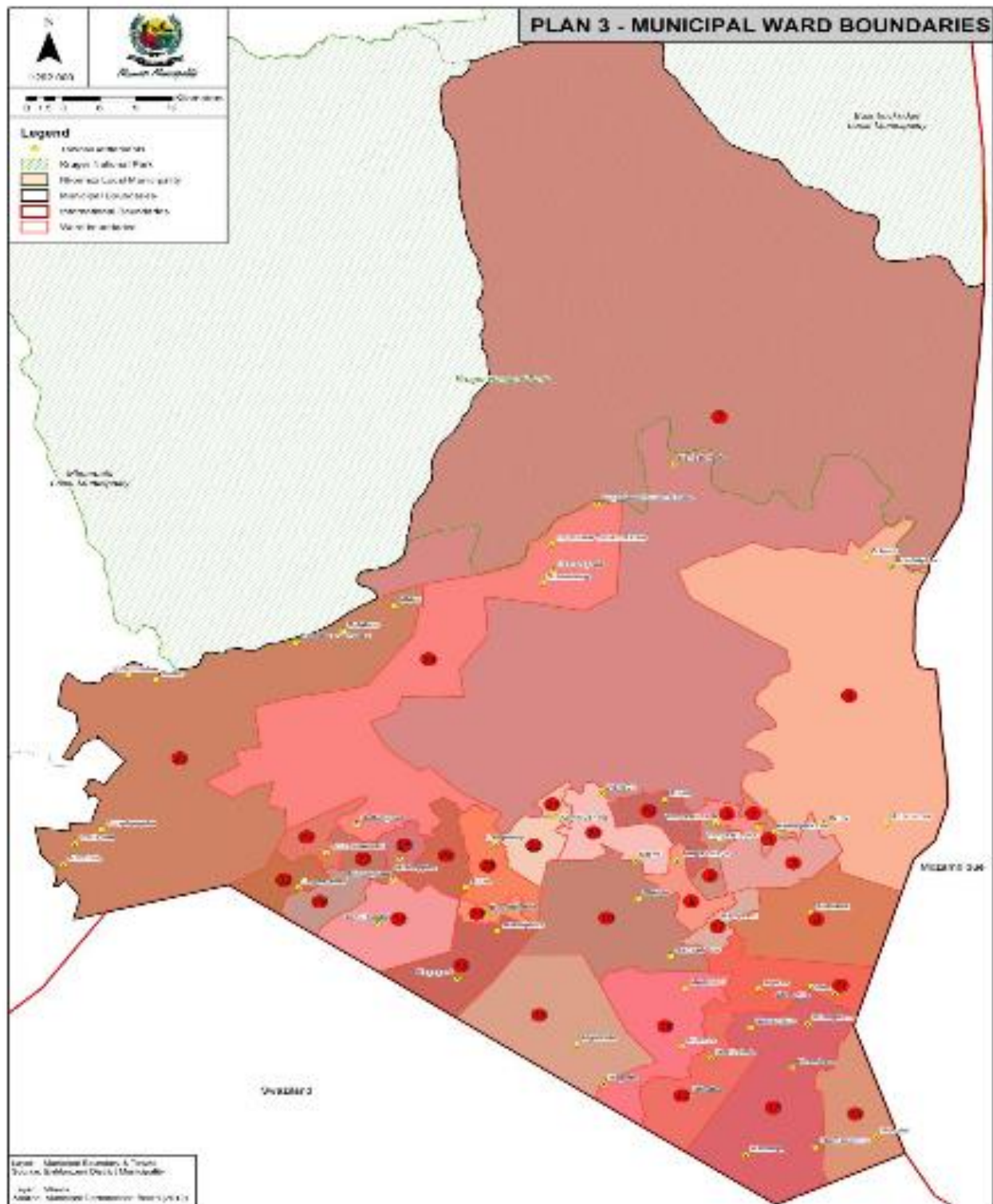


Figure 4.2: The Nkomazi Municipal Area

Source: Nkomazi Local Municipality IDP (2012-2013)

4.6.2 Current status of service delivery in Nkomazi

The Nkomazi Local Municipality “faces a wide range of challenges due to its rural character and a low income base. Such projects as the VIP toilets, water and sanitation are implemented on a yearly basis due to its expanding nature and haphazard settlement pattern. In the town areas, the municipality undertakes full provision of water on a door-to-door basis but this is not extended to all locations and rural communities. Most of the time the municipality receives assistance from the Department of Human Settlement in order to meet some backlogs (Nkomazi Local Municipality Final Annual Report 2013/2014: 82).

In addition, the Municipal Infrastructure Grant (MIG) programme is another source of funding and the funds obtained are used to deal with service delivery issues identified in the IDP. These issues mainly include water infrastructure provision. Despite the presence of such sources of funds, there is acknowledgement that progress in most areas has been slow. Sometimes the money has been underspent not because there are no priorities but due to other challenges faced by the municipality. It is therefore noted that backlogs particularly for water still persist in the municipality and a huge allocation of funds is required in order to clear this backlog (IDP 2013-14: 81). A similar comment is also made on the overall performance on sanitation, in which case the IDP (2014) noted that despite meeting some targets over planned things, the municipality was still grappling with massive backlogs in dealing with ‘waterborne sanitation’ (Mbombela IDP, 2014: 86).

The two tables below (Table 4.1 and Table 4.2) show a summary of the statistics on Nkomazi. These include the general demographics, education levels, employment levels, household sanitation access levels, social security recipients and the status on municipal finance”. A comparison is made with the other municipalities in the Ehlanzeni District Municipality, in order to show how the municipality is performing.

Table 4.1 : Mpumalanga demographics

Mpumalanga	Ehlanzeni District Municipality	Bushbuck-ridge	Mbombela	Nkomazi	Thaba Chweu	Umgindi
Demographics						
Size (km ²)	27 895	10 249	5 394	4 786	5 719	1 745
Share of country area (%)	2.3%	0.8%	0.4%	0.4%	0.5%	0.1%
Main Town	N/A	Bushbuckridge	Nelspruit	Malelane	Lydenburg	Barberton
Population	1 688 615	541 248	588 794	390 610	98 387	69 577
-African	94%	99.5%	89.4%	97.7%	81.6%	87.0%
-Coloured	0.6%	0.1%	0.9%	0.2%	2.6%	2.0%
-Indian	0.4%	0.1%	0.7%	0.3%	0.6%	1.0%
-White	4.7%	0.2%	8.7%	1.6%	14.5%	9.8%
Age structure						
0-14	33.1%	37.0%	29.8%	35.4%	25.2%	27.4%
15-64	62.4%	57.7%	66.0%	60.5	69.9%	68.4%
65+	4.6%	5.3%	4.2%	4.1%	4.9%	4.2%
Households						
Number of households	445 087	134 197	161 773	95 509	33 352	20 255
Average household size	3.5	4.0	3.5	4.0	2.7	3.1
Poverty rate	65.0%	79.8%	58.6%	65.7%	38.3%	43.5%
Settlement type						
Rural	N/A	100.0%	85.2%	63.3%	98.2%	98.2%
Urban	N/A	0.0%	14.8%	36.7%	1.8%	1.8%
Education						
<i>Highest education levels of over 21-year olds</i>						
-No schooling	16.7	18.7%	11.9%	25.7%	9.7%	10.0%
-Some primary schooling	11.1	12.0%	9.7%	11.8%	12.2%	12.4%
-Completed primary school	4.0	4.0%	3.6%	4.6%	4.5%	4.5%
-Some secondary schooling	29.6	32.2%	28.7%	25.6%	33.7%	32.2%
-Grade 12 / Std 10	29.1	25.7%	33.4%	25.8%	30.3%	31.7%
-Higher	9.5	7.4%	12.7%	6.5%	9.6%	9.1%
Employment						
Working age population	1 052 933	312 225	388 321	237 677	68 781	45 930
Participation rate (supply)	50.4%	40.8%	57.8%	46.5%	62.8%	62.2%
Absorption rate (demand)	32.9%	19.4%	41.4%	30.5%	46.6%	45.5%
Employed	346 437	60 459	160 823	72 588	34 112	20 894
Employment by industry						
Agriculture	8.9%	1.0%	3.7%	4.4%	4.5%	5.8%
Mining / quarrying	2.5%	0.2%	0.6%	0.6%	4.1%	5.0%
Manufacturing	14.5%	2.3%	6.2%	3.8%	15.1%	7.5%
Electricity / gas/water supply	0.8%	0.2%	0.4%	0.2%	0.4%	0.3%
Construction	6.0%	0.8%	3.8%	0.9%	2.4%	2.8%

Source: Cronje, Alexander and Kane-Berman, (2014:82). The 80/20 Report (2014): Local Government in 80 Indicators After 20 Years of Democracy, Institute of race Relations (IRR), Page 81.

Table 4.2 : Mpumalanga service delivery demographics

Mpumalanga	Ehlanzeni District Municipality	Bushbuck-ridge	Mbombela	Nkomazi	Thaba Chweu	Umgindi
Household access levels						
<i>Electricity</i>						
Lighting	88.9%	93.9%	90.2%	83.9%	84.3%	75.4%
Cooking	70.2%	57.8%	83.8%	64.9%	71.7%	66.8%
Heating	60.3%	51.6%	73.1%	51.0%	61.9%	57.1%
<i>Piped (tap) water</i>						
Inside yard/ dwelling	57.8%	41.4%	64.8%	58.1%	79.8%	72.2%
On communal stand	23.2%	37.6%	13.1%	23.7%	15.0%	19.0%
No access	19.0%	21.0%	22.1%	18.9%	5.2%	5.4%
<i>Refuse removal</i>						
Removed by local authority or private company	26.1%	8.1%	30.7%	21.6%	64.4%	67.2%
Communal / own refuse dump	63.7%	79.3%	61.3%	66.0%	29.4%	25.0%
No refuse disposal	9.2%	11.8%	7.2%	11.3%	5.3%	4.0%
<i>Sanitation</i>						
Flush / chemical toilet	26.2%	9.1%	33.8%	14.6%	68.8%	62.9%
Pit latrine	61.7%	77.1%	56.9%	67.7%	26.3%	27.2%
Bucket toilet	0.6%	0.5%	0.8%	0.5%	0.5%	0.6%
No toilet	10.2%	12.6%	7.2%	15.6%	2.9%	4.2%
<i>Social security recipients</i>						
Child support grant	21.2%	24.9%	18.6%	24.0%	12.7%	10.4%
Old age pension	4.8%	6.1%	3.9%	4.7%	4.3%	4.1%
<i>Municipal finance</i>						
Unauthorised expenditure (Rm)	0.0	216.2	6.3	100.9	5.7	N/A
Irregular expenditure (Rm)	0.0	5.5	1.3	11.4	44.4	0.9
Fruitless and wasteful expenditure (Rm)	N/A	N/A	4.4	0.7	3.7	0.2

Source: Cronje, Alexander and Kane-Berman, (2014:82). The 80/20 Report (2014): Local Government in 80 Indicators After 20 Years of Democracy, Institute of race Relations (IRR), Page 81.

4.6.3 Summary of status quo in Nkomazi Local Municipality

In the constitution of South Africa each “sphere of government has clearly set out responsibilities. At national level, the state is responsible for the strategic objectives and the local level is the one that has the mandate to deliver on the most basic services at the lowest levels. To this end, Nkomazi Local Municipality as an arm of local government is expected to deal with the following issues; building regulations, child care facilities, electricity and gas reticulation, firefighting services, local tourism, municipal health services, municipal public transport, storm water management, trading regulations, water and sanitation services limited to potable water supply

systems and domestic waste-water and sewage disposal systems, refuse removal, refuse dumps and solid waste disposal and street lighting. Most of these issues are at the forefront of service delivery protests. However, protests have included some of the things which are the responsibility of national departments, such as the housing issues.

In the provision of houses, communities also demand water, sanitation and electricity as these make up for a complete housing establishment. Citizens do not differentiate between national and local authority mandates, and they are right not to do so as the constitution expects the national mandate to devolve to local authorities. However, the nature of the protests targeted at the local municipality are because the national and provincial governments are considered to be too far to be in touch with the situation on the ground. As a representative of government at the grassroots the local authority has to provide all the answers for and on behalf of government. Devolution of functions to the local authority, however, is not synonymous with devolution of capacity to deliver the same functions. The capacity to take on extra functions is usually only found in metropolitan areas where the economic base is strong enough to support such levels of expenditure.

This cannot be practical in rural municipalities like Nkomazi where the municipality is highly grant-dependent. As can be seen in the Figure 4.2 and Figure 4.3 above, Nkomazi municipality residents receive a substantial amount of money through social security, and the level of unemployment is also quite high. This implies that the rates that could be the source of municipal revenues are quite low, hence the capacity to provide housing is very limited. However, poor residents do not have a clear distinction between obligations and responsibilities of their local municipality and that of the province or national government. In their frustration about service delivery residents vent their anger on the nearest arm of government which is their local municipality. As a result, those seeking accelerated provision of service from the state may technically be holding the wrong spheres of the state to account.

As alluded to in other sections earlier, one of the main reason for service delivery protests is poor and slow provision of services. This has been traced to a number of

basic service delivery backlogs and insufficient funding, incomplete infrastructure projects ranging from housing, roads, electricity, water and public facilities. Other factors include non-alignment of integrated development plans with sector plans, waste management not prioritised resulting in violation of collection standards and norms, illegal dumping sites and operations of unlicensed landfill sites. The researcher also notes that unplanned development occurring in local municipalities especially under traditional leadership (communal land) also increase basic services backlogs.

According to the Constitution of South Africa, the executive and legislative authority of a municipality is vested in its municipal council. It is therefore, imperative for the local council to ensure that services are delivered expeditiously to local communities. The modalities of how this is done are left to the municipality, and yet are so much a daunting challenge with regards to poor rural municipalities. It is notable that so much service delivery has been but the challenges of rural communities far outpace available resources, and sometimes the actual level of demand cannot be quantifiable as the challenges faced are mounting by the day.

The challenges currently faced by Nkomazi local municipality are not unique. As argued by Smoke (2015), most local municipalities face an enigma; a structural decline in revenues coexisting with an administrative environment that is complex, where service responsibility must be viewed as multi-jurisdictional, multi governmental, and multi sectorial. In this context, the issues faced by the local municipality go increasingly beyond the individual financial or service capacity. As such Nkomazi, Local Municipality currently faces multiple practical challenges when delivering services to communities. These challenges encompass problems with administrative structures powers and functions, limited finances, capacity and leadership, as well as implementation challenges (South African Cities Network, 2014; World Bank, 2015). Implementation challenges range from poor infrastructure to ineffective culture of collaboration among stakeholders and different role players for creative municipal service delivery. The extent of most of these challenges will be analysed in detail in chapter six on results and findings. However, the impact of these issues is glaring as the IDPs of the municipality over the years continue to show recurring challenges.

Underlying the perennial problems of the Nkomazi municipality are a number of the core issues: structural problems, poor infrastructure management, staff challenges, participatory government, collaborative issues.

4.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter discussed service delivery and general implementation challenges faced in developing economies and South Africa. The state of service delivery as seen in most developing countries is deplorable, lacking and inefficient. In South Africa, in particular, the increasing number of service delivery protests lay credence to the deteriorating state of service delivery in most of the municipalities. The discussion on service delivery challenges was broken down to show the economic nature of the problem, the social, political and cultural, administrative (implementation) and other general challenges.

The state of service delivery has not moved any closer towards the millennium goals set in 2000. Rather, it seems the situation in most developing economies is getting worse. Most of the challenges can be traced to competition for resources among the many demands placed on the local economy. Among the major challenges identified in the study include numerous basic infrastructure challenges, budgetary constraints, apartheid legacy-related challenges, corruption, low levels of accountability, inadequate democratic inclusion in service delivery processes, political interventions or interference, municipal capacity problems, unwieldy sizes of local municipalities. In addition, the chapter discussed the multiple challenges besetting local authorities.

Besides the challenges to the service delivery issues, a number of solutions were suggested and a number of alternative models analysed. These include the PPP model, SSDM and a number of other international best models. The emphasis was placed on an effective monitoring and evaluating mechanism in order to ensure that whatever model of service delivery that is adopted will produce the expected outcomes. This is because the model is only as good as the level of implementation.

The chapter also discussed the service delivery situation in Nkomazi local municipality. A number of challenges were highlighted which militate against efficient service

delivery". These are the subject of this study and are explored in chapter five (5). The next chapter focuses on the research methodology that was adopted for this study. The chapter also explains the development of the research questions and gives an outline of the guidelines of the whole research process.

CHAPTER FIVE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

5.1 Introduction

This chapter gives an outline of the research methodology used and then focuses on the research design, outlining the population of the study, sample, and research instruments used, methods of data collection, presentation and analysis. It further discusses ethical considerations and limitations of the study and how they were addressed. The next section discusses the research paradigm that was used in this study.

5.2 Research paradigm

The study is located within an interpretivist paradigm supported by the main research question and the sub-questions. These questions were instrumental in the choices that were made with respect to methods of data collection, presentation and analysis in line with views expressed by Creswell and Clark (2017). The research paradigm forms a core aspect of the data collection process as it shapes the framework which guides the researcher (Blair, Czaja & Blair, 2014). The research paradigm together is the way in which results are interpreted give a reflection of the aims of the research. In this context research rules or paradigms are vital in guiding the actions of the researcher. Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2016), argue that a paradigm is at the centre of the research and its systematic application allows the researcher to gather relevant scientific knowledge. In terms of the research paradigms, there are basically two categories, namely positivist and interpretivist. Positivism is often referred to as the quantitative and the phenomenological as qualitative or interpretivist (Blair et al., 2014)". Table 5.1 highlights the major characteristics of the research philosophy paradigms according to Saunders et al. (2016).

The key differences between these two paradigms as reflected in Table 5.1, is mainly the nature of data generated, type of data produced, sample sizes, the type of tests, precision of the data, location, reliability, validity and generalizability of the findings. "The positivist paradigm uses experimental design and survey strategies while the phenomenological philosophy uses case study, action research, ground theory and ethnography (Gupta & Gupta, 2011). In this research, an interpretivist research

philosophy was adopted as the research involved small samples, obtaining opinions and dealing with qualitative issues which were subjective.

Table 5.1: Business research philosophies

Positivist research	Interpretivist research
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produce quantitative data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produce qualitative data
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large samples are used 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small samples are used
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deals with hypothesis testing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerned with generating theories
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highly precise and specific data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rich and subjective data
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The location is artificial 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The location is natural
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reliability is high 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reliability is low
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Validity is low 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Validity is high
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generalizes from sample to population 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generalizes from one setting to another

Source: Saunders et al. (2016)

In the next section, the research describes the research design that put together different research components.

5.3 Research design

“Research designs involve organizing research activity over issues such as data collection in ways that will achieve the aim of the research (Blair et al., 2014). Some authors describe the research design as the blueprint for the collection, measurement and analysis of data (Bloomberg, 2014). Leedy and Omrod (2015) define research design as a problem solving approach on which the central research problem will be resolved. In addition, Henning and Smit (2014) define a research design as a framework giving structure to the research. Since, the research philosophy adopted was interpretivist, the exploratory research design was considered to be appropriate for data collection, considering the volume of data that was needed to be collected and analysed qualitatively. The research was guided by the objectives of the study

and used descriptive analysis (Wilson, 2014). Furthermore, the exploratory research design described the characteristics of an existing phenomenon as the study sought to find answers to questions relating to fundamental characteristics that define the research subject.

Furthermore, the research design provided a framework that guided the research in terms of what type of data to collect, and how it would be used to draw conclusive results. In line with the views expressed by Totawar and Prasad (2016), this research realised that the design would contribute to the choice of appropriate methods in order to resolve the challenges identified in this study. By using the exploratory research design, the researcher was interested to find the possible causes of the problem because there was little that was known about the problem (Wilson, 2014).

The study was not structured, was flexible allowing the researcher to investigate a problem which was not clearly defined. It was conducted to have a better understanding of the existing problem but not providing conclusive results. The qualitative research method is discussed in section 5.4 below.

5.4 Qualitative research method

A research method is a plan of action or processes utilised in the collection of evidence or data for analysis in order to uncover new information or create a better understanding of a topic (Creswell & Clarke, 2017). Various methods exist and these include quantitative which allows the researcher to collect, analyse and present evidence in mathematical format and qualitative research. Researchers can also collect data using both qualitative and quantitative methods in a single study. This is referred to as mixed method research (Creswell, 2017). This study used a mono-qualitative research method which relied on expressed viewpoints which were then used to draw conclusions for the research (Taylor, Bogdan & DeVault, 2015). Such an approach was considered vital in extracting perspectives from participants involved. Lewis (2015) posits that the use of local participants is favoured as it allows the research findings to be contextualised to a natural setting. The data process collection was exploratory in nature given that data was sought from stakeholders' daily and personal experiences in service delivery issues of the Nkomazi Local Municipality.

Daily experiences of the participants were incorporated through interviews and observations (Creswell & Clark, 2017).

The research on Nkomazi Local Municipality sought to interpret complexities of the socio-cultural world (Flick, 2015). This involved understanding the context of the municipality in a given time frame (2011-2016) and under certain contexts. This is in line with constructivist philosophical position in which the reality of the world is interpreted through the lens of people who experienced it (Silverman, 2016). In choosing the qualitative research approach, the researcher considered the fact that it should be possible to draw meanings and conclusion through the interpretation of data provided by residents of the Nkomazi municipal area. The experiences of the participants were deemed sufficient to discover and describe the status of service delivery in line with views expressed by Silverman (2016).

In line with the reasoning outlined above, Nkomazi Local Municipality was then considered as a case study in which its peculiar challenges would be identified and addressed with special focus on the context in which they were occurring. In the following section the rationale for this methodology is discussed.

5.4.1 Rationale for case study strategy

The reason for choosing a case study was also to ensure a holistic, in-depth investigation in line with views by Smith (2015). By conducting this research as a case study, the researcher was able to focus on one local municipality of choice extracting peculiar information resolving the challenges faced in service delivery (Humphries, 2017). A case study also ensures that solutions generated would assist the leadership to carry out their service delivery mandate (Yin, 2012; Choy, 2014).

Using a case study strategy meant that the researcher could avoid generalising service delivery issues that are occurring elsewhere in South Africa. A case study concentrates on a unit of analysis (Ledford & Gast, 2018). Part of this engagement involved asking the relevant questions which the researcher used to address pertinent issues. Answers to these 'what questions' were designed with the express objective of understanding the facts, and opinions regarding municipal service delivery

programmes. This case study strategy required that one be more attentive during data collection in order to have a credible analysis of data that would inform the results of the study. The research was conducted with the understanding that there would be developmental interventions (Yin, 2012) and some kind of practical and implementable solutions were required. The need for interventions for local service delivery challenges was identified early on in Chapters One, Two and Three.

The Nkomazi Local Municipality was chosen from four municipalities which constitute the Ehlanzeni District Municipality in the province of Mpumalanga. The municipality has a unique position of being located in a predominantly rural area, and hence faces special service delivery challenges. However, being close to Mbombela, the NLM is easily accessible and hence a study could be done without facing accessibility challenges.

The researcher considered NLM because of its rural nature and its accessibility for the research. In addition, there seems to be very little research done so far on service delivery on Nkomazi Local Municipality. The study was meant to understand the underlying challenges in service delivery in the municipality given the issues that have recently resulted in protest action that were covered in a number of news reports. However, it should be emphasized that the results obtained through studying this single local municipality could be generalizable to other local municipalities of the Ehlanzeni district or to the whole of the Republic of South Africa, a key tenet of the case study strategy (Yin, 2012). Literature states that the application of a case study in research enhances objectivity and replication of findings (Yin, 2012). This means that similar studies could be conducted elsewhere under similar conditions producing the same results. As pointed out in different sections of this study and supported by various discourses (Wiek & Lang, 2016), a case study design such as the one on Nkomazi local municipality does seek to generalize but focuses on the subject matter of service delivery. Focusing on service delivery in one local municipality was considered to be instrumental in understanding service delivery dynamics, and hence offers possible contributions towards the development of a coherent theory on service delivery. The researcher had to be careful in the selection of the sample and the choice of the data collection methods.

The case study allowed the author to engage in the research by understanding events through a thick description and analysis of these issues within a particular context (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2012). Saunders et al (2012) explain a case study research design as a working plan aiming to support critical and constructivist research methodology. This study directed the research from start to finish delivering creative answers to service delivery problems encountered in Nkomazi. In this study in line with views expressed by Abdulghani, Shaik, Khamis, Al-Drees, Irshad, Khalil, Alhaqwi and Isnani (2014), a case study was applied as a logical design with the objective of finding insights for better service delivery results. The case study approach allowed the researcher to use imaginative ideas in order to find out answers to complex and difficult problems concerning service delivery in the Nkomazi Local Municipality. Clark, Laing, Leat, Lofthouse, Thomas, Tiplady and Woolner (2017) suggest that a case study does assists a researcher to obtain in-context insights to help alleviate problems other research findings. During the research the researcher had to ask questions concerning service delivery in the Nkomazi Local Municipality and why problems emanating from service delivery challenges still persist. The study was able to find answers to the service delivery challenges by making a thorough assessment of the data. The researcher creatively subjected the data through a rigorous analysis process in order to achieve the following objectives:

- conduct an in-depth assessment of service delivery challenges affecting the Nkomazi local municipality;
- gain an understanding of new ideas, and clear explanations to complex problems within the municipality;
- use variable techniques such as the critical and constructivist approaches to provide possible solutions to problems, and;
- clarify measures where theoretical parameters are present to support a study.

The researcher was interested in gathering relevant data pertaining to service delivery challenges, therefore, it became apparent that a specific group of people possessed data and information for the study. The group of people became the target population for this study and it is explained in the next section.

5.5 Target population

Creswell (2012) defines population as a group of objects of people of interest where research data is gathered from. This group of objects should be homogenous in its characteristics enabling the researcher to collect uniform data-sets. Three sets of population were considered relevant for this study, the first population was the total employees at the Nkomazi Local Municipality from which the management was targeted as the participants in the study. "The population was defined to be all of the municipal and provincial stakeholders in leadership or key positions and these stakeholders had to be responsible for service delivery in the Nkomazi local municipality, whether in an official or representative capacity. The Nkomazi local municipality has 200 employees of which the targeted 50 are considered to be managerial level (Nkomazi IDP, 2016). In addition, a number of officials are also seconded from the province and the district to work with the municipality at any given time. The seconded officials come from the other spheres of government namely the Ehlanzeni district as well the Mpumalanga provincial government.

The leadership (management) in the local municipality was chosen because of the key role they play in service delivery. These are the custodians of service delivery, and are specifically expected to be the extension of national government as they deliver national aspirations at grassroots level. At the same time the Nkomazi Local Municipality works with key community leaders including members of the opposition, those of the ruling party and other members from key structures such as the Ward Development Committees. These in turn drive the wheels of service delivery by ensuring the implementation of policies and plans that govern service delivery are adhered to.

In terms of the leadership the sample used comprised only of people who were holding a position of seniority at the Nkomazi Local Municipality or the community in general. These levels of seniority included employees at managerial level according to the Nkomazi organisational hierarchy as well as those who headed community organised forums such as the Ward Development Committee. Selected respondents were chosen on the basis that they represent the community interests and were instrumental in facilitating the implementation of the IDP of the Nkomazi Local

Municipality. Most of these leaders had to be part of the IDP development agenda and be working in the promotion of community interests in one or more areas of the municipality.

The second population was the general Nkomazi population in the form of *households*, from whom community responses to the service delivery issues were derived. Households were targeted because a single participant was drawn from each household that was in the sample. The study included the community members because they are on the receiving end and make demands on the service delivery programme. The community members were included in the sample in order to add their voice given that they are not direct employees of the Local Municipality, but are recipients of services provided by the Municipality. Their main role in this study was to bring a possible independent opinion which could assist in understanding the service delivery challenges in the local municipality.

The community members in general were also considered to be instrumental in the research given that some are at the centre of the service delivery protests that have been reported in the municipality. Their voice was expected to expose the level of disgruntlement or satisfaction with service delivery among the beneficiaries. Community members act as the barometer for measuring satisfaction levels with service delivery programmes. The research considered their input to be very crucial as their opinion would be used to balance any of the statements from the officials of the municipality. The main research question of this study actually seeks to measure service delivery as it is implemented through the IDP for the community members of the municipality.

In terms of the community members, the researcher used purposive sampling to choose five areas; namely Mbuzini, Jeepes Reef, Naas, Steenbok and Bosfontein. From each of these areas a random choice of three community members was made. The five selected community areas from the municipality have been cited as most vocal or dissatisfied citizen in respect to service delivery in their areas (Lowvelder, 2015; Sunday Times, 2016, Sowetan, 2013). Because of their prominence in service delivery protest the researcher considered that the participants from these areas could

shed more light on some of the service delivery issues in the municipality, and hence reflect on the performance of the Nkomazi Local Municipality in its implementation of the IDP. However, in interviewing participants from troubled areas the researcher had to guard against obtaining only biased views from disgruntled people. This part was addressed in the nature of the questions that were designed to extract the information, as well as other data collection methods that were used.

As alluded to before, the inclusion of members of the opposition and the community in the sample was meant to provide a balance in the views provided by officials from the municipality. While the opposition members also operate as municipal leaders, their perspective was expected to counter or affirm some of the official views, considering that the 'opposition' tends to have a critical eye on service delivery. Similarly, community views were also included as these are the people who are affected by the IDP performance of the municipality. In this research the researcher expected the community members to provide an unbiased perspective on service delivery performance by the municipality. For this objective to be met the research used the same instrument for data collection, so that three broad categories of the sample could provide the research with data on the same issues. Using such an instrument required that the researcher apply a great degree of flexibility especially in the context of the community members. In order to deal with the research questions, the research required a great deal of information.

The third population was defined as the SMMEs in Nkomazi and from this, the business participants were drawn. SMMEs as alluded to earlier have been direct beneficiaries of dedicated LED programmes by the municipality and hence were considered appropriate in order to measure the effectiveness of the Municipal interventions so far. Subsection 5.5.1 discusses sampling strategies.

5.5.1 Sampling strategy

The concept of sampling means that only a portion of the population is selected and studied instead of using the entire population. It also means that the researcher has to identify key aspects of the population that have to be studied, so that the representative sample will have those characteristics, in order to qualify (Terre

Blanche, Durrheim & Painter, 2015: 49). The two main sampling strategies are probability or non-probability. Probability sampling entails a known and equal chance of inclusion in the study (Maree & Pietersen, 2017:170). Sample elements have a known and equal chance of inclusion when probability sampling techniques are used. With non-probability sampling techniques, the researcher needs to be cautious as there are no mathematical or scientific methods applied to select a sample (Terre Blanche, Durrheim & Painter , 2015: 139). Three major non-random sampling techniques used include convenience sampling, purposive sampling and snowball sampling. Convenience sampling means that sampling depends on availability and willingness to participate at the time of conducting the study (Bryman, 2016). Purposive sampling means that sampling depends not only on availability and willingness to participate, but cases that are typical of the population are selected in order to bring out the key characteristics of that population (Terre Blanche, Durrheim & Painter, 2015: 49). Snowball sampling refers to the process of gradually accumulating a sufficiently large sample through contacts and references (Friese, 2014) until a point of saturation, that is, the researcher stops recruiting more participants if there is no expectation of new data from sample elements.

Sampling provides an acceptable option to the use of the total population, especially when the population is too large to study in its entirety (Saunders et al, 2016). The use of sample is usually predicated by the need to economise on costs and time among other limiting factors (Cooper & Schindler, 2014). As a result a sampling strategy needs to be used to reduce the volume of data by considering data from a sub-group rather than all the cases and elements. However in choosing a sample the researcher has to ensure that that smaller number of participants taken must be representative enough of the characteristics of the whole population (Henning and Smit, 2014). Therefore the researcher had to exercise extreme caution during the selection of the most appropriate sample in line with suggestions by Smith (2015)". An improperly drawn sample may cause results of the research to be misleading, findings may be unreliable (Terre Blanche, Durrheim & Painter, 2014) and cannot be trusted to represent the wider population (Leedy & Ormrod, 2015).

The choice of the sampling method used to identify the sample participants was in line with reasoning given by Jaggar (2015), who identifies a number of sampling methods that can be used. These methods include non-probability sampling in which case the researcher takes into consideration an unknown population (Robson, 2016). The qualitative methods using non-probability techniques are favoured by researchers because they can draw meaningful conclusions from smaller samples. This research used this argument to settle on a sample of forty (40) participants which in statistics parlance is considered a small, but sufficient for a qualitative research design (Morse, 1994; Bertrax, 2006; Kumar, 2016). At the same time ten (10) SMMEs were also sampled separately in order to test the applicability of the SLA framework alluded to in Chapter Three.

5.5.1.1 Purposive sampling

Given the nature of the information required for the case study, the researcher chose purposive sampling as explained by Kumar (2016) and Robson (2016) to select the Nkomazi Local Municipality key role players in service delivery. The same approach was used with the SMMEs participants. The choice for purposive sampling was to ensure that the research would be able to obtain pertinent information from targeted and key stakeholders in the service delivery programme. In addition with the non-business participants, the research also used simple random sampling in order to pick the actual participants in the area that had been purposively selected. With the ten (10) business participants (SMMEs), the researcher used non-probability purposive and convenience sampling techniques.

According to Alvesson and Skoldberg (2017) purposive sampling allows the researcher to 'purposely' engage certain participants who in his or her judgement contribute to the understanding of a phenomena. At the same time, simple random sampling gives the participants each an equal chance of being selected. The sampling plan that was used therefore entailed interviewing a selected small group of at least twenty-five leaders in senior positions in the municipality, as well the Nkomazi Community and at least fifteen community members from some communities affected by service delivery protest action. With the business participants ten (10) were

purposely selected in order to measure the effectiveness of the LED programmes of the Nkomazi Municipality, using the SLA framework.

The choice of purposive sampling was considered feasible as it provided the opportunity to work with a small group of senior managers who are at the forefront of service delivery issues. These included the municipal manager, the council speaker and members of the mayoral committee. All these were identified to be based at the municipal offices and hence this would be a convenient place for the research. A few other leaders such as the opposition leaders were also easily located within the administrative town of Malalane.

5.5.1.2 Convenience sampling

The third source of data was obtained from the SMMEs in the Nkomazi Local Municipality and a slightly different approach was used as discussed below. For the SMMEs, the study used exploratory research to explore a relatively unknown research area concerning the small business sector and how they utilise the local assets to elevate their living standards in the community (DeJaeghere & Baxter, 2014). Data was collected from SMMEs in Mbuzini, Jeepes Reef, Naas, Steenbok and Bosfontein representing some of the most populous locations in Nkomazi. These are locations which are part of the 'rural community' of Nkomazi Local Municipality. The data collection was conducted between January and March 2019. For this study a non-probability sampling method was used, given that the targeted SMMEs sample had to be selected from the municipal database. Specifically, convenience sampling, was used because the participants were accessible and available when the study was conducted. The first sample of five (5) comprised of small businesses that had been assisted by the municipality in the past, and the second set of five (5) was made up of businesses that had not received any assistance (Levine, 2014). The second sample was used as a control group in order to measure any impacts of the LED interventions by the local municipality. The total sample size was therefore ten small businesses scattered among the five rural locations of Nkomazi.

5.5.2 Sample size

Given that a sample comes from the population (Dumay & Cai, 2015), three appropriate size sample sizes were chosen for the purposes of gathering data for this study. The chosen samples were considered large enough to enable the research to reach plausible conclusions regarding the research questions asked in this study. Jaggar (2015) suggested that a sample has no prescribed number but should be sufficient and justifiable enough to draw conclusions that results so obtained are representative of the wider population. Saturation is a widely accepted principle of qualitative research because it helps to indicate that on the basis of data that has been collected or analysed, further data collection and or analysis are unnecessary. This meant that the sample size chosen for the study possessed relevant data required to address the research problem, therefore, involving a large group of participants was unnecessarily costly and time-consuming because the same responses were going to be provided. The researcher was cognisant that no new evidence would emerge from people living in the same communities and exposed to the same service delivery issues. Table 5.2 below, gives a summary of sample participants that were targeted and the reason why they were considered in the sample”.

Table 5.2 Summary of sample size

	General Population	Municipal Employees in Management	Small Micro and Meium Enterprises (SMMEs)
Total Population	390 610	200	500
Target Population	134 197	50	500
Sample Size	15	25	10

Source: Researcher's own table

Note: *Population statistics obtained from StatsSA, Community Survey 2016. Statistics on SMMEs obtained from Nkomazi SMME municipal database. Targeted population is based on number of households in Nkomazi as per Community Survey 2016 Statistics.*

As shown in Table 5.2 above, a total of fifty (50) participants comprising twenty-five (25) municipal leaders in various capacities and fifteen (15) community members and ten (10) SMMEs were interviewed between September and November 2016. The sample size chosen is within the limits generally agreed by different writers such as Morse (1994), who suggested a size of 30 to 50 participants, Creswell (1994) who suggested a sample size of 20 to 30, Bertrax (2006) who suggested a size of fifteen (15) as the minimum. The sample was made up of the leadership of Nkomazi Local Municipality, which comprised of people in the employment of the municipality as general officials or managerial staff. In addition, some of the sample elements comprised leaders of the opposition. The chosen sample reflects the biased male domination in the leadership in top positions of the municipality. Out of the total sample, 65 percent were male respondents while the other 35 percent were female.

In section 5.6, the study discusses the information and sources of information need for this project.

5.6 Information needed to conduct the study

For this research to achieve the stated objectives in Chapter One, the researcher was guided by the research questions in establishing the nature of information needed. Document analysis formed a big part in understanding the challenges and issues that needed attention in relation to service delivery at the municipality. The researcher understood that part of the task of designing the questionnaire therefore involved asking the right questions that provided answers and shed light on the phenomenon of service delivery at the Municipality. In addition the researcher had to determine the source of that information and hence the process of designing the research instrument involved matching the information requirements and identifying credible sources of the information. Some of the information for the research was obtained from the published official documents of the municipality such as the Municipal LED Plans, the spatial plans, annual and quarterly reports. These official documents are usually endorsed by the executive mayor, and released by the Municipal Manager. These formed part of the mandated documents that the municipality must have in terms of the Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000.

The SMME participants in this case were considered to be part of a special group of community members. In addition the research used corroborative information from stories reported in the press, mainly news articles from the reported incidents involving service delivery in the municipal area. Service delivery issues are covered in detail in the Integrated Development Plans (IDP) of the municipalities as part of the requirements of the Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000.

The following list of official documents was targeted for use in the analysis for this research;

- NLM Integrated Development Plan 2011-2012;
- NLM Integrated Development Plan 2012-2013
- NLM Integrated Development Plan 2013-2014
- NLM Integrated Development Plan 2014-2015
- NLM Integrated Development Plan 2015-2016
- NLM Spatial Development Framework 2011-2012
- NLM Spatial Development Framework 2014-2015
- NLM- Annual Report 2011-2012
- NLM- Annual Report 2012-2013
- NLM- Annual Report 2013-2014
- NLM- Annual Report 2014-2015
- Ehlanzeni District: Integrated Report on Water Intervention plans for municipalities.
- Technical Premier's Coordination Forum Meeting 11 August 2015. Ehlanzeni District Municipal Policies Service Delivery Programmes.
- Presidential Hotline - Mpumalanga Report 2016-2018

"A five-year period was chosen beginning in the 2011 -2016 financial year so that a reasonable timeframe could be used as a basis for understanding the trends in service delivery in the Nkomazi Local Municipality (McCusker & Gunaydin, 2015). The trends that emerged in the official reports showed how the municipality was performing as reported by the officials themselves.

The next section discusses data collection techniques applied in this study.

5.7 Data collection methods

The perspective of Saunders et al. (2016) informed this phase of the research as the authors argued that the sole objective of data collection process is to extract relevant information from targeted participants. Data collection was one of the critical phases of this research endeavour as it allowed the researcher to assemble information from participants in a systematic process (Smith & Small, 2017). The data collection process had to assist the researcher in answering the pertinent research questions as highlighted in Chapter One. In order to ensure the credibility of the research, the study had to ensure that the data collected could be assessed, measured, evaluated and valued (Daniel, Kumar and Omar, 2018).

The researcher chose two data collection methods that that were considered more appropriate for the case of Nkomazi Local Municipality amongst diverse data collection techniques (Pearson, Albon & Hubball, 2015). In qualitative research studies some of the methods that could be used include direct observation, participant observation, surveys, focus groups and language-based methods. For this study the interview method was selected for collecting most of the data and this allowed this research to obtain answers by interrogating the participants. The interview method required that first the researcher to design a proper interview schedule for use in the data collection phase.

5.7.1 Interviews

This research utilised interview schedules to collect data from the selected forty non-business participants as well as the ten SMMEs from Nkomazi. The research instrument which is attached as Addendum 2 was made up of a mixture of structured and open-ended guiding questions. These were structured in such a way to bring out the usefulness of the LED programme within the sustainable livelihoods' framework (SLF or SLA) for the Nkomazi Municipality. The Sustainable Livelihoods Framework was discussed in Chapter Three.

Generally the interviews process is structured like a discussion whereby one person (the researcher) asks and controls the discussion in order to get as much of the opinions from the other party (Aziz, 2015). Qualitative research utilises a lot of

interviewing techniques as a way of gathering views and opinions (Denzin, 2017). For this research one-on-one interviews were personally conducted by the researcher. Such interviews generally results in the generation of substantial amounts of data (Ahmed, Opoku & Aziz, 2016) and for this research the data was considered useful for understanding the status quo on service delivery quality in Nkomazi. The interview process always requires that the researcher exercises great care as dealing with people needs a lot of flexibility. This is necessary given that the respondents are not compelled to provide the answers and can withdraw at any time if they so wish. A great deal of flexibility was therefore applied and yielded what was considered to be meaningful results for the research (Khan, 2014).

Face-to-face interviews were conducted primarily in English to mitigate any bias that could have risen if siSwati language had been used. SiSwati language could have been used in this study because it is the native language for Nkomazi communities. The guiding questions were used to assist to extract relevant and comprehensive information including respondents' perceptions of the impact of LED interventions in developing SMEs (Speranza, Wiesmann & Rist, 2014). During the face-to-face interview sessions, the researcher interrogated participants by asking follow-up questions probing the circumstances before the municipal intervention and after the intervention in line with suggestions by Stuckey (2013). The SME group that did not receive any assistance at all served as a control group to vouch the responses by the assisted group of SMEs.

Interviews were used to generate independent and individual opinions from the participants that undertake service delivery and from those that experience service delivery challenges in the municipality. With the data that was generated during the interview process, the research was able to confirm or refute some of the findings that have been made in the previous chapters. Some of the participants engaged included the municipal manager, the managers in the performance management section, development planning, manager for IDP as well as ward committee chairman. The full list of the participants was identified in the ensuing section on sample size. From that stage onwards the process then involved interrogating the participants in order for them to express their perceptions on service delivery in Nkomazi. With respect to the

SMMEs, the focus was on the extent of the effectiveness of the LED interventions by the local municipality.

5.7.1.1 Benefits of using Interviews

Studies conducted by Saunders and Bezzina (2015) suggest that most qualitative research uses face-to-face interviews to collect data. As a data collection technique, one of the major advantages that arises from its use is that the researcher is able to obtain free flowing data (Downing, Tekian & Yudkowsky, 2016). This allows the researcher to keep track of the process and also to remain relevant. Issues can also be explored in more depth (Arantes do Amaral, dos Santos & Rodrigues, 2018). The fact that the interview process is carried on a face-to-face basis means that the respondent will give the process the full attention. In line with arguments by Sim, Saunders, Waterfield and Kingstone (2018) during the face-to-face interviews the researcher was able to observe and collect not only verbal but also nonverbal data (Thomson and McLeod, 2015). This was critical as this gave the research a cue on how to proceed with the probing.

Generally, Creswell and Clark (2017) argue that the benefits of face-to-face interviews far outweigh any possible weaknesses. The authors noted that face-to-face interviews tend to offer advantages in terms of data quality although the disadvantages accrue in terms of time consumptions and budget constraint. These views are echoed by Kumar (2016) who contends that interviews are more flexible giving the interviewer the chance to direct and redirect the discussion. By taking advantage of this characteristic during the interviews with the selected participants from Nkomazi, the researcher was able to control and redirect the interview, and as the discussions progressed various aspects of information were revealed which were of interest for the purposes of understanding the full nature of service delivery issues in the municipality. Careful use of the interview schedule assisted the research process to obtain what the researcher considered to be reliable data.

5.7.1.2 Semi-Structured Interviews

Several types of interviews exist of which the two commonest are structured and unstructured interviews (Kumar, 2016). Because unstructured interviews are more

flexible, this became the choice for the study, so that as much data as possible could be collected. The data collection was done using open-ended or semi-structured interviews. A few semi-structured interview questions were incorporated in order to extract only the biographical component of the data. This included data such as age, experience, department and position occupied in the municipality. With the participants from the community, the researcher had to be more flexible with the use of the interview. However, the flexibility applied did not have to compromise the data collected. While the same research instrument was used with the municipal employees as well as the community members, the research assumed that the community members were not technical experts and as such applied the questions carefully so that they could understand and provide meaningful answers. At the same time the researcher's tone during the interview with the municipal officials was slightly different as it was assumed they are custodians of the IDPs and have technical knowledge of the processes and could answer most questions without much elaboration from the interviewer. However, in probing the community members and community leaders there was a greater degree of flexibility allowing them to express more of their opinions and perceptions.

With the SMME participants the interviews were also based on an interview schedule attached as Appendix C. This schedule had more structured questions than the one used for community members and leaders. The objective was to extract some metrics in line with the SLA model. The interview process involved visiting targeted SMMEs and conducting the interview at the business premises. In the next sections, the researcher discusses the components of interview schedules used in this study.

5.7.1.3 Analysis of interview schedule for community members and leadership

The interview schedule used to gather data was made up of different sections in line with different themes that made the core of the data gathering process. The first section was used to collect demographic data of respondents. This data includes the gender, age group as well the position occupied in the municipality.

The second section focused on rating the general quality of service in the municipality without giving significant details. This question served as a control question so that the

general conclusion given by the respondent would be verified whether it was consistent or not. Other questions in this section asked the respondents to provide a background to the municipal service delivery issues, and also to highlight the major service delivery developments in the municipality. Knowledge of the background of the municipality was expected to assist in understanding the nature of the challenges that have to be tackled in Nkomazi Local Municipality. At the same time the key developments in the municipality were expected to assist in understanding how some of the challenges had been addressed, hence give an indication of whether the service delivery issues in the municipality were being met.

The third section focused on the details of achievements in the municipality. The questions sought specific developments within the 2011-2016 financial years, as well as specific challenges faced within this period. In addition, respondents were asked to relate the challenges that were faced as the municipality dealt with service delivery issues.

The fourth section (Section D) of the interview focused on the service delivery priorities of the municipality. Besides identifying the issues that have been at the centre of the municipal plans, respondents were expected to relate whether the prioritised issues have been met, to what extent they have been met and the reasons thereof for failure or success. It is these comments on priority service delivery issues that formed the basis of the comparison with municipal IDP documents, which were used to determine whether the Nkomazi Local Municipality has been able to provide basic services.

On the basis of comments from the other questions, respondents were then asked to conclude in Section E of the interview schedule on whether the municipality had delivered basic services in the 2011-2016 years. Regardless of the conclusion, respondents provided inputs regarding the possible ways of improving service delivery in the locality. This question allowed the respondents to make positive contributions on how to improve service delivery in Nkomazi.

5.7.1.4 Analysis of interview schedule for SMMEs

For SMMEs, the interview schedule was split into two in order to cater for LED project beneficiaries and non-LED beneficiaries. Appendix D is the attached interview schedule for the SMMEs that benefited, whereas Appendix E is for the SMMEs that have not yet benefited from any LED programmes by the Nkomazi municipality. Section A of the benefiting SMMEs comprised the biographical aspects of the participants, namely the place of interview, sex of participant, age in years and educational level.

The second section (Section B) was based on measuring the *Sustainable Livelihoods Framework* metrics in the form of assets identified in the following categories;

- Natural assets (e.g. livestock grazing, water, forests, land, game)
- Physical assets (e.g. water points, electricity, transport and communication – telephone, fences, houses, production equipment and means)
- Social assets (e.g. household networks, church, CBO, relationship with NLM, member of a group)
- Human assets (e.g. skills and knowledge, health, education, work experience)
- Financial assets (e.g. income from remittance, pensions, wages, savings and credits)

Participants were asked to list and quantify categories of assets that they possessed compared to the period before the LED interventions by the municipality. These statistics were meant to assess how their livelihoods had been impacted positively or negatively by the municipality's LED interventions".

Section C of the beneficiary interview schedule sought to assess the opinion of the participants on a range of issues that are summarised in Table 5.3.

Table 5.3: Questions for SMMEs beneficiaries of the LED programme

Question Number	Issues covered
1-7	Biographical data
8	Timing of income flow in terms of seasonality
9	State of livelihoods since the LED interventions by the Local municipality
10	Changes in household's wealth
11	Adequacy of income to satisfy household needs
12	Level of satisfaction since the LED interventions by the local municipality
13	Level of satisfaction of household members since the LED interventions by the local municipality
14	Nature of assistance besides the Nkomazi LED interventions.
15	Extent and nature of any external interference in assistance
16	Nature of investments made from economic gains
17	Nature of assets needed most at the moment.
18	Nature of economic activities that participant would like to grow / expand
19	Challenges preventing the participant from increasing assets
20	Nature of any new kinds of economic activities which participant would like to undertake.
21	Views of participant on whether Local municipality assist or hamper new economic activities

Source: Researcher's own table

The control group for the SMMEs made up of the non-beneficiary SMME in the Nkomazi Local Municipality was asked similar questions in section A and Section B of the interview schedule (Biographical data as well as data on assets). However, with this group the emphasis of Section C of the interview schedule was to obtain more of the opinion from participants regarding perceived or observed benefits of the LED interventions. Table 5.4 gives a summary of the specific issues that were asked.

Table 5.4: Questionnaire for SMMEs non-beneficiaries of the LED programme

Question Number	Issues covered
1-7	Biographical data
8	<p>Perception of participant on whether the LED interventions by NLM are working for beneficiary SMMEs. The participant had to comment whether each of the asset categories seem to have increased or not.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Natural assets b) Physical assets c) Financial assets d) Social assets e) Human assets
9	Suggestions on what should be done to improve the community's asset base, income streams and food security
10	Opinion on whether the LED interventions can play an important role in improving the community's asset base and food security, and which community members are likely to gain or lose.
11	Opinion on whether the LED project's principles should be adjusted to promote the project to be self-reliant without or with minimal government support
12	<p>Opinion on whether the SMMEs that are selected for LED interventions have benefited in terms of food security considering two specific dimensions of <i>food availability and food accessibility</i>.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Food availability with regards to increase in domestic production, export capacity, food stock b) Food accessibility with regards to reduced poverty, increased purchasing power, income, transport and market infrastructure
13	Comments on the LED interventions

Source: Researcher's own table

Data gathering involved using the different approaches and the research questions formed the basic guidelines for probes. In line with recommendations by Sim, Saunders, Waterfield and Kingstone (2018) this research used different sources such as documentation to interrogate or verify comments that had been made by the participants. “The data generated had to complement each other, bringing veracity to the data gathered through interviews and municipal reports. The data that was generated formed the basis for establishing the different types of interventions recommended for Nkomazi Local Municipality.

5.7.2 Interview process

During the interviews, the researcher recorded notes manually. The researcher decided not to use a tape recorder given that service delivery issues are politically charged issues, where officials are not comfortable being put on tape. Recorded notes were simply made up of verbatim words coming from each of the respondents. The researcher did not change any of the words so as to ensure maximum dependability (Smith & Small, 2017). At the end of the interviews, the notes were read back to the participant so that they could vouch the veracity of what had been recorded on paper.

While one acknowledges that total objectivity cannot be achieved in research, the researcher tried to remain impartial at all times in order to collect reliable data in line with suggestions by Bourque and Bourdon (2017). Putting oneself into the shoes of the participants, the researcher took an empathetic approach allowing for easy understanding of the context of the Nkomazi Local Municipality. Besides the objectivity challenges, the researcher took into consideration some of the issues highlighted by Kumar (2016), one of which involves time management. Nkomazi is a wide rural municipality and communities are sparsely populated. This meant the researcher had to travel from one part of the municipality to the other, covering distance of up to 30 kilometres or 40 kilometres in order to reach certain participants. Despite the fact that most of the participants were mainly located in Malalane the administrative town, some participants were located far off in the municipal rural areas. The interviews with the 15 community members as well as the 10 SMMEs were all done in 5 different locations of the municipality.

Having drawn up a schedule of meetings with the participants, the researcher went through formalities of introducing the purpose of the research so that the respondent would be at ease. This involved giving a brief background of the academic exercise. This was considered very crucial as there was need to allay any fears that the participants could develop given the position held by the researcher at the District level. During the interview, the researcher had to expand or explain a number of questions in order to obtain all the relevant information. The interview schedules that were used for this research are attached as Appendix A to Appendix D.

Besides the interviews, the direct observations at Ward Development meetings required no interview schedule. As highlighted in previous sections, in the three meetings observed, the main technique was to sit quietly and observe and record all the relevant comments, and proceedings during the meeting. With the rest of the data collection however, the researcher had to do a one-on-one interview. It was imperative to pre-test the research instrument prior to conducting the actual interviews. The pre-testing process and purpose is explained in the next section.

5.7.3 Pre-testing interview schedules

Data collection for this study was in two phases; secondary data collection from the municipal IDPs for the five years beginning 2011-2012 till 2015-16 and also primary data collection through interviews. The interview schedules were designed so that they would assist in answering all the research questions.

The main research question of this study is reiterated as follows:

What is the performance of Nkomazi Local Municipality in the implementation of its Integrated Development Plan?

This main question was supported by a set of five sub-questions as follows:

- *What challenges are faced by Nkomazi Local Municipality with respect to its service delivery mandate to its local constituencies?*
- *How does the municipality measure in terms of its key deliverables as stated in the five years' IDPs between 2011 and 2016?*

- *What are the perceptions of the leadership in terms of basic social service delivery performance of the municipality?*
- *Is there a disjuncture between basic service delivery plans (IDP) and current practice in the Nkomazi local municipality?*
- *Is Nkomazi Municipality able to fulfil its basic social service delivery mandate to its local constituencies?*

For primary data collection the interview schedules that were developed were tested through a pilot study to ensure validity and reliability. Two different pilot studies were done involving the non-business participants (community members and leadership) and another involving the SMMEs. This assisted in discovering errors and potential challenges the instruments had and these were used in modifying the instruments. The pilot studies helped to include and or remove questions that adversely affected the final output. In line with views expressed by Terre Blanche, Durrheim and Painter (2014) the interview schedules had to pass validity and reliability tests. The reliability test was conducted in order to assess whether the interview schedule was understood consistently and applied consistently during the whole process of data collection. On the other hand, validity was the aspect measuring the success of how the interview schedule was actually capturing the required and relevant data. Gorad (2014) explains that researchers use content validity to assess the completeness of the questionnaire. This assists the researcher to draft enough questions that cover the subject area sufficiently. In this study, the pilot study was instrumental in that it provided evidence to critique the research instrument so that it could be improved.

During the pilot study, three people from the Nkomazi Local Municipality were interviewed. The results of the interview assisted in refining the approach that was eventually used with the rest of the participants. It was during this phase that the researcher realised that participants could be intimidated by the official capacity position held by the researcher at the District. Hence in the final interviews and the observations there was great emphasis on allaying fears on what could happen to the interviewees. However, the pilot study with one SMME yielded good results which assisted the research in modifying the interview schedule to make it clearer.

In order to ensure a high level of trustworthiness of the instrument, the researcher administered the questions ready to cues from the participants. The questioning technique was consistent and the researcher was as objective as possible, approaching each participant with a fresh perspective. In order to make this possible, the interviews were spaced apart by days so that no one interview could affect the other. Each interview response was recorded separately, word-for-word as evidence for the analysis stage. In addition, the recorded data was always read back to the participant so that they could vouch if it was a correct rendition of what they had said. To this end, the results truly reflected the participants' own views about their role and their perceptions on service delivery in Nkomazi local municipality. In the direct observations during the Ward Development meetings, the researcher recorded notes of the conduct of the meetings and important issues that were raised by the participants. These notes were later corroborated with the minutes from the Municipality's own records of the same meetings.

Researchers such as Smart (2016) suggest that in order to enrich the data collection process, the researcher should use multiple sources of data, a process known as triangulation. Using such a technique is expected to bring depth and detail to the issues being discussed. Triangulation was used in this study and will be discussed later in some sections of this report.

5.7.4 Document analysis

The document analysis assisted the research to assess the trends in service delivery performance of the targeted 5-year period. The assessment involved determining the extent of backlogs that have accrued in the Nkomazi Local Municipality. Document analysis generated a large amount of data.

Most of the data collected before the interviews were conducted was collected by way of document analysis. This method was chosen given that service delivery is a well-covered topic in local government. Many reports have been generated over service delivery issues and the study took advantage of the fact that they are publicly available to use them to collect data. Some reports used in the study, include the Auditor General reports, internal municipal reports, reports from oversight committees as well

as reports from the Presidential Hotline. These reports assisted the study to have a more comprehensive perspective of the state of service delivery, not only in Nkomazi but the rest of the country.

Mukhopadhyay and Gupta (2014), note that document analysis is used to when the researcher reviews the historical data on the subject of the research. The secondary data available through previous reports on service delivery was in different formats and part of the analysis meant that the researcher had to convert it to a standard format. In this study as highlighted above, several official municipal documents were used, particularly the Nkomazi Local Municipality Integrated Development Plan for the 5-year period 2011/12 to 2015/16. Other significant references were made to the Annual Reports of the Nkomazi Municipality for the same 5-year period (2011-2016), as well as the Presidential hotline for Mpumalanga province.

One of the most important documents that was used in this research is the IDP. The IDP is the central implementation document for the municipality showing the nature of the plans for service delivery before they are executed. Therefore, beginning with the 2011/12 financial year, this study traced the performance of the municipality in terms of its intended service delivery objectives as outlined in the IDPs. The performance indicators traced covered the following service delivery issues; water provision, human settlements, electrification of households, waste management, roads and storm water drainage facilities. Other statistics traced include population growth, employment status, household incomes, as well as GDP growth over the years. In the financial years between 2011 and 2016 comparisons were made, noting the failures and shortcomings in the service delivery programmes. From this perspective, the researcher made conclusions on some of the issues raised in respect to service delivery in Nkomazi. It was also possible to make comparisons on whether the leadership in Nkomazi Local Municipality is capable of carrying out the service delivery mandate. Although a timeframe of five financial years may appear short, the comments made in these official documents was able to reveal the extent to which the municipality was able or will be able to provide the expected services to its inhabitants. Similarly, the IDP Reports were in some cases able to indicate the nature of the solutions that are needed for the Nkomazi Local Municipality to fulfil its service delivery

mandate. The document analysis process was complemented by observations at municipal wards meetings which is described in sub-section 5.6.5.

5.7.4.1 Quality Metrics for Documents Analysed

While all the documents used were official, Gambeson (2014) suggests that data sources should be evaluated. As a result, some of the typical checks made on the documents used in this study included examining the following issues:

Authenticity – This requires that a document used be original (Marczyk, DeMatteo & Festinger, 2017). The researcher considered these documents to be authentic given that they were designed by the NLM as part of their annual report requirements and remain the property of the municipality.

Credibility – In terms of credibility, a researcher has to be able to have substantive evidence that the information used is true and generally free from bias (Bourque, and Bourdon, 2017). The documents selected for this study give an outline of the official IDPs of Nkomazi Local Municipality. In addition, subsequent reports between 2011-2016 were used to vouch the credibility of previous documents through cross references made in the reports for different years.

Representativeness – This implies that the records show a typical scenario of the phenomenon being studied (Khan, 2014). The official documents selected were considered to be representative as they pertain to the status quo in Nkomazi over the given time period. They have been subjected to audit and presented as municipal official documents in terms of the Municipal Systems Act 2000. They are the official documents outlining the scope of service delivery within the local space. In addition the news articles used were also considered to be representative as they came from credible newspapers, purporting to represent the views of the community. The community members were deemed to be representative in the context that they were part of the community and had been living in the area long enough to be true representatives.

Meaning – This relates to the understanding that a third party can have on the documents being used. It requires that documents be in a language that general users

can decipher (Saunders and Bezzina, 2015). The choice of documents was informed by the theoretical framework adopted in this study as presented in Chapter Three. In addition, as an employee of the Ehlanzeni District Municipality occupying a high level professional position, the researcher is familiar with the municipal processes. This involves interaction with the relevant policy documents that are used by the local municipalities on a daily basis.

5.7.5 Direct observation

Another important data collection method used was that of direct observation. This involved attending three Ward committee meetings in order to assess first-hand the IDP development and consultation process in motion. Three Ward committee meetings were attended in Mbuzini, KaMaqhekeza and Jeepes Reef at different times of the research period. Observation of the conduct of these meetings allowed the researcher to understand the key factors at play in the real world of IDP implementation, giving credence to the paper-based reports from the municipality in terms of how they involve the local community in planning service delivery issues. In these meetings, after obtaining the necessary clearance as an observer, the researcher sat and noted the proceedings as an ordinary observer. The researcher avoided interfering with the IDP process. Those responsible for the conduct of meetings were briefed beforehand that a researcher was attending not as a senior employee but as a student. The researcher's seating position during the meeting was also strategic so that it would not draw much attention from either the officials of the Municipality or the community members present. The purpose was to ensure that the meeting would be conducted with no influence from the researcher's presence.

With the document review and analysis, the emphasis was on the official documents and publications which have been identified in Table 4.3. Denzin (2017) suggests that the use of secondary data is very important given that it can be used to corroborate data from primary collection. The researcher identified secondary data which entailed information obtained by way of studying current and past documentation available on the NLM and related to the subject of study (Denzin, 2017). The review of literature also assisted in establishing a frame of reference for the study. It should be noted that the subject of service delivery is well covered in research (Nyamukachi, 2014; Marais,

Everatt & Dube, 2014) and is affected by a number of policy guidelines from government. Service delivery is discussed in different fora, and this informed the research approach in data collection, reporting, analysis and discussion. This literature emerged from published journal articles, international, regional and domestic policy documents, books. The collected data was triangulated with available literature to establish its relevance and meaning in informing the research on how the Nkomazi Local Municipality can improve its delivery of basic services to the communities through the IDP programmes.

In the next section detailed discussion is given on the process of data analysis.

5.8 Methods of data analysis and synthesis

Saunders et al. (2016) define data analysis as the process of converting raw facts into information or meaning. Both semantic and latent thematic analyses were used in this study. Semantic in that the researcher was interested in what the participants said, that is, the explicit and surface meanings of data, while latent thematic analysis looked beyond what has been said and *'...starts to identify or examine the underlying ideas, assumptions, and conceptualisations – and ideologies - that are theorised as shaping or informing the semantic content of the data'* (Braun & Clarke, 2006.84).

The data analysis process entails making a series of notes and revising them in order to make sense. With regards to the process of analysing data, it was started at inception of the project, as soon as basic documents pertaining to the municipality were collected. This is because the researcher had to have a basic understanding of how the municipality has progressed, which in turn assisted in developing further strategies on how to deal with the rest of the data collection process. The following steps were followed in the data analysis process:

Step 1: Familiarisation: Data gathered from various sources described above, were pooled together and appropriate data analyses were performed to arrive at information. Face-to-face interviews, document analysis and direct observation were the primary sources of data for this study. The researcher also had to verify data across time frames, comparing one document against the other. The verifications

helped to isolate some of the challenges that the municipality was facing. In order to maintain data integrity, the responses from interviews were transcribed verbatim, and themes generated were coded and sorted according to the themes which the study sought to address. One of the earliest steps involved data transcription, in which case the text is converted from manually written notes in the journals to the electronic text which can be manipulated into the identified themes. At the first instance, data was transcribed word for word, and later stages involved editing and categorising the data into themes. Great care was required during this process as the research results hinges on the accuracy of the responses collected.

Step 2: Data coding: The next step was to tease and flush out errors in the collected data. This step involved coding of emerging themes as they were identified through data analysis. If there were errors, the researcher had to repeat the process as shown in Figure 5.1 below. In the event that there were no errors, the **next step** was to generate themes by identifying patterns of themes in datasets. Pearson, Albon and Hubball (2015) suggest the use of thematic analysis as the most flexible method of analysis that can be applied in both deductive and inductive approach.

Step 4: Reviewing themes: Once data was categorised, the themes were given specific codes fitting with those themes. This process is known as open coding and assisted the researcher to conduct a very close examination of the data (Smart, 2016). The analysis process of this study employed recommendations by Thomson and McLeod (2015), whereby the researcher enriches the analysis by utilising multiple methods to generate facts and opinions. Initially the data had to be sifted, then it was classified into categories as a way of managing it into smaller portions.

Step 5: Defining and naming themes: As shown in Figure 5.1 emerging themes were put into categories. Thematic analysis was used to group data into sections which were described as best as possible using common linkages, with accompanying tables that reflected numerical frequencies or percentages. Categories represented the themes that emerged as the topics were discussed during the interview process (Downing, Tekian & Yudkowsky, 2016). With reference to the themes, the researcher made a number of revisions in order to capture the true meaning portrayed by the

data. Each stage of the process required that the researcher make comparisons of findings with those in the literature.

Step 6: Data summary into findings/write-up. The last step was to write a report of the findings. Themes were discussed in relation to the research objectives and with constant reference to the literature review presented in Chapters 3 and 4 of the study. This Thematic Data Analysis process required that the researcher apply the mind in order to discover converging data patterns which belonged to one theme. Through the Thematic data Analysis process, it was then possible to critic some of the findings in literature to arrive at conclusions whether this research agrees with previous findings or not. Aziz (2016) recommends that a researcher has to draw meaning by integrating and summarising findings in the process of producing a report. The data processing steps that were used are summarised in the flowchart below.

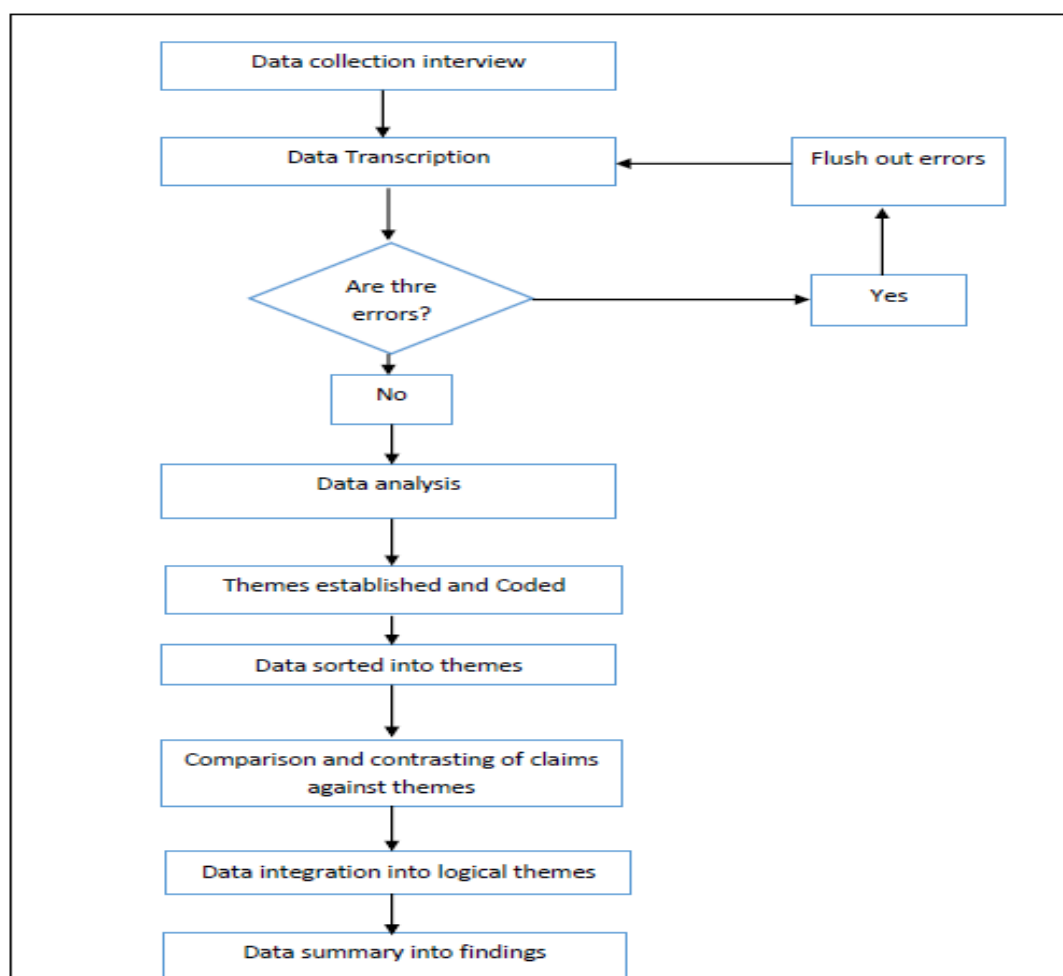


Figure 5.1 Steps in the data analysis process

Source: Author (2020)

Triangulation: Among a number of researchers, Leedy and Omrod's (2016) suggested that the use of multiple methods to analyse research findings assists the researcher in developing a rich meaning from the data. Daniel, Dumar and Omar (2018) define triangulation as a process that allows thorough interrogation of sources of data so that a common ground with the same meaning may emerge. After using triangulation and drawing conclusion, a researcher should be satisfied that the data used can stand the test as evidence of the phenomenon being interrogated. In this case, by using a number of sources and interpreting them using various themes, the researcher arrived at conclusions which generally agreed about the status quo in Nkomazi Local Municipality.

Figure 5.2 shows that the research responded to the research questions by way of a triangulation of research data. This involved analysis of literature of existing seminal academic authors (desk research); content analysis of existing municipal data in the IDPs for the period 2011 to 2016 (desk research), and interviews with primary stakeholders in industry (field research)". Observations were also made at ward 3 committee meetings that were attended.

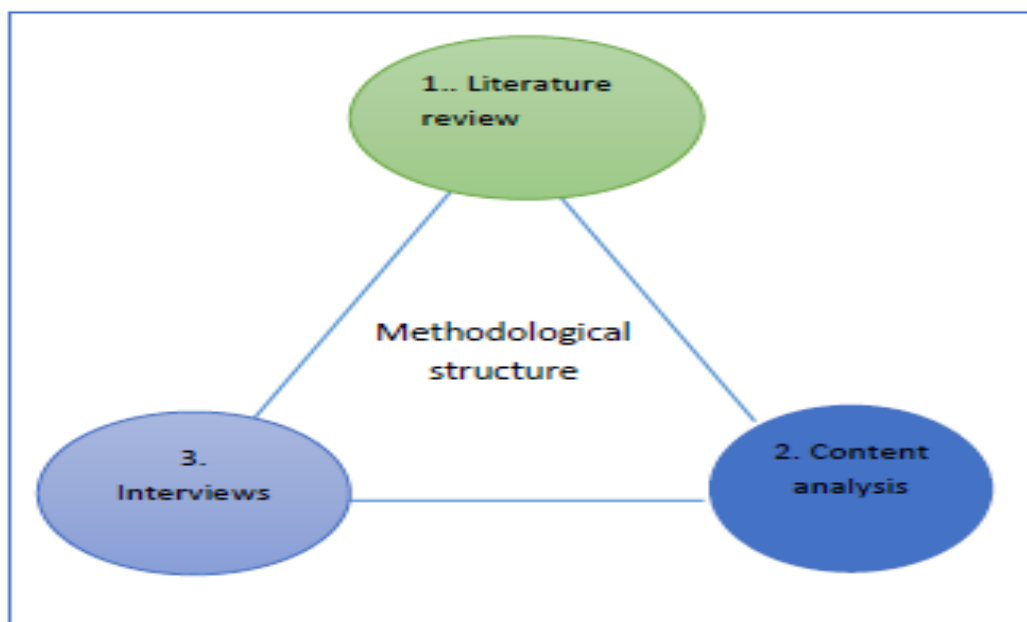


Figure 5.2: Methodological Structure; Triangulation of Data

Source: Lichtman, 2014:201

The researcher settled on the use of pseudo names so as to protect the identities of each of the participant and to make the report readable. “Common South African names were selected so that they would make easy reading for any person, and yet the names were in no way connected to the participants interviewed. The participant names, regardless of the fact that they were known to me, were not recorded on the interview schedule or notes in line with the need to protect their identity (Terre Blanche, Durrheim & Painter, 2014). The preliminary stages of data interpretation involved identifying a number of variables that were discussed in the study. Data was then sorted according to these variables reflecting what various authors have discovered in literature on related research. The research flow process is illustrated in Figure 5.3, and shows a summary of the framework of all the steps and processes used in this data. Each step or process is amplified in different chapters”, culminating in the development of a modified service delivery model in Chapter Six.

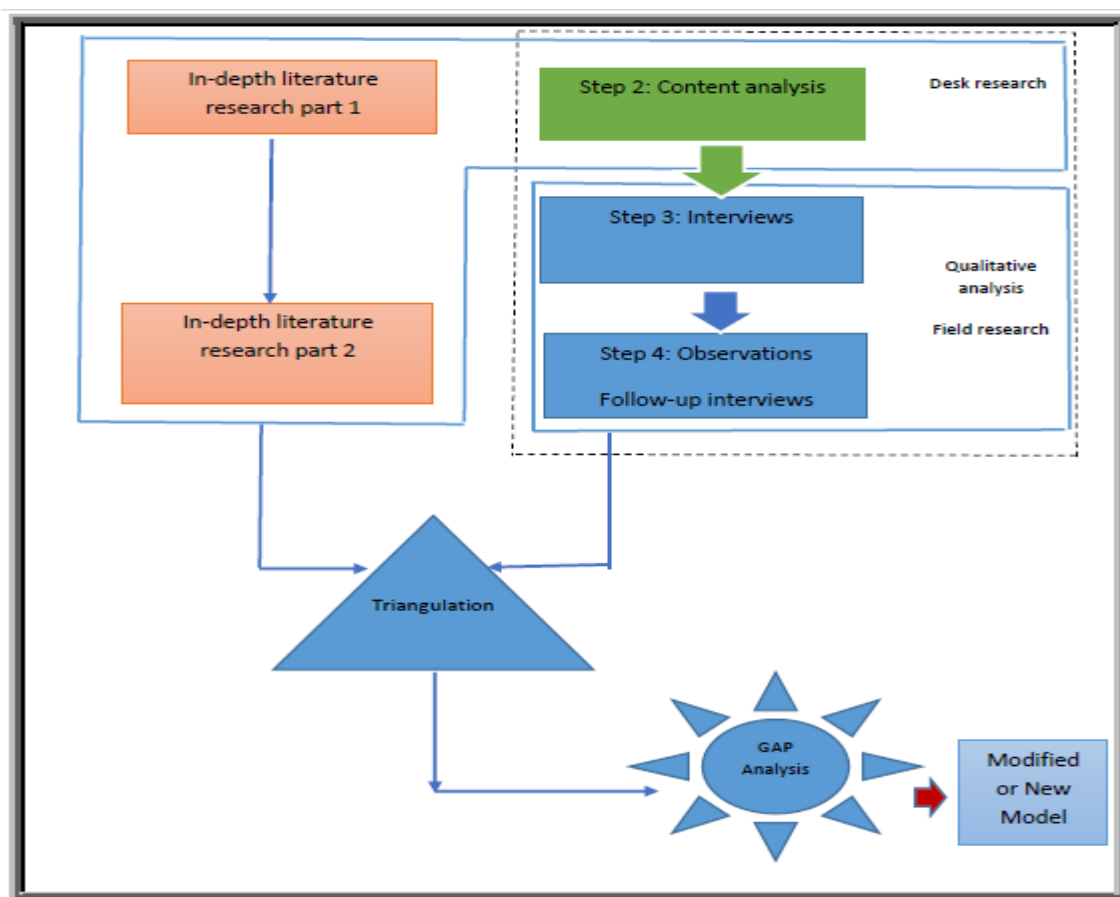


Figure 5.3: Research process flow

Source: Friese, 2014:403

The next section generally covers the ethical dimensions that guided the conduct of this research.

5.9 Ethical considerations

Ethical “considerations are meant to safeguard both the researcher and the participant from unnecessary harm (Totawar & Prasad, 2016). Research guidelines require a certain level of ethics to be observed when involving participants in a research. Issues that are emphasised in research ethics cover matters of risk exposure of the respondent, possible repercussions from participating in the research, and appropriate procedures to use in order to keep the dignity or respect of the respondent. On a basic level the respondent is accorded the right to refuse, to withdraw from the research or to demand that their participation remain anonymous. A number of these ethical considerations are articulated below.

Totawar and Prasad (2016) suggest that the application of ethical standards is meant to safeguard the privacy of the participants as well as keep them from any possible harm that may be related to their participation in the research. The first ethical safeguard which was followed in this research was to seek direct authority from the Municipal principals (gatekeeper permission). The purpose of the gate-keeper permission was to ensure that the researcher was allowed access to various data sources at the municipality, as well as access to offices and the human resources. Some of the data that was required from the municipality included the SME database so that the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach could be tested. At another level the ethics also require that the participants themselves give the approval to be part of the process. This was done using a consent form, which each participant had to read, and assent to. The consent form gave an outline of the expectations from the researcher and the rights of the participant. In addition, the form also listed a number of promises by the researcher, among them the fact that the names of participants were to be concealed as far as possible in order to avoid any possible embarrassment or backlash. The researcher gave an undertaking that pseudo names would be used in keeping the data so that no one would be identified as a participant.

The nature of the research required that strict rules of confidentiality be observed. Municipal data is subject to government secrecy regulations, and hence the researcher had to make an undertaking that these government policies were observed without deviation with respect to the data collected as well as the comments from the interviews. Ethics guidelines also mean that besides the physical protection from harm, the researcher needs to protect the participants from emotional harm. This could be protection from statements that are considered derogatory, or insulting, demeaning comments or insinuations that affect a person psychologically (Plooy et al. (2014). The researcher had to safeguard the participants from jeopardising their work by conducting the interviews at convenient times outside restricted working hours. The researcher made personal arrangements with each participant, who agreed to the timelines and modus operandi of the interview. With all the safeguards taken, the researcher also tried to maintain a high level of ethics by acknowledging all appropriate sources using appropriate academic styles.

Due to the researcher's senior position in the Ehlanzeni District Municipality, it was necessary to maintain a professional relationship with employees from the local municipality. The researcher had to ensure that all participants were aware that the research was done in a personal capacity and not on behalf of the District or any other authority. Previous relationships of an official nature were discarded so that the participants could feel free to express themselves. For instance, in Ward meetings, the participants were briefed that the researcher's presence was not related to the business of the day. Full rights of participants were also explained, in particular that they had a right to withdraw at any time during the interview. The objective of these stringent controls was to ensure that the data was not contaminated, due to coercion of the participants. All participants engaged for this study indicated they had done so voluntarily.

5.10 Trustworthiness of the study

According to Creswell and Clark (2017) a qualitative study is said to be trustworthy if different researchers engage on the same study, yet obtain similar or, the same results. The instrument for the study is at the centre of the determination whether a study can be said to be dependable or not. When a study is reliable, the researcher is

able to repeat the research and each time obtain the same results. A key process undertaken in this study was the pre-testing of interview guides. This ensured that the research instruments addressed issues that they were designed to address. In addition, the four criteria used to assess the data validity and reliability were credibility, transferability, conformability and dependability.

5.10.1 Credibility

Saunders et al. (2012) define credibility as an element associated with whether findings are believable or not. Credibility in this case, was measured from the viewpoint of the participant. The role of the researcher therefore, was to describe the study phenomena from the participant's eyes. In this research the data was said to be believable because it was captured at source. This involved participants verifying that a correct version of accounts had been recorded. The interpretations made were verified, hence this was a crucial step in assuring credibility of the findings. Similarly, with regards to the direct observations, the researcher checked for correspondence with all the notes made against the official municipal minutes of the same meeting.

5.10.2 Transferability

According to Saunders and Bezzina (2015), the concept of data transferability implies that results from one study can be used to infer meaning in another context. Generalisability of data has to be done with caution because contexts differ. There must be consideration of all assumptions that were made in the original research. In this case the task of checking the transferability was the onus of the researcher who compared the results with similar situations to see if the outcomes showed a level of correlation. Transferability requires that the researcher matches the contexts so that they match to a greater extent, this makes data transferability more reliable. In this research, the researcher made transferability possible by gathering data in the form of notes and in journals. Any other researcher who accesses these notes and journals should be able to retrace all the steps taken in order to obtain more or less the related conclusions in another similarly placed local municipality.

5.10.3 Dependability

Another measure of data reliability ensured in this study pertained to data dependability. This is based on the assumption that results can be replicated elsewhere. Saunders and Bezzina (2015) suggest that dependability is concerned with the possibility of obtaining similar results if an observation is made twice on the same thing. However, Qualres (2016) argues that the idea of dependability requires that researcher must account for the continuously evolving context of the research environment. Data dependability in this research was made possible by the researcher taking steps to meticulously record every step of the process in order to assist any future researchers who may want to repeat or conduct a similar study. Comments by each of the participants were carefully preserved for possible future reference. Official minutes of the meetings were also used, which showed a permanent record of what transpired in the observed Ward meetings.

5.10.4 Conformability

Conformability allowed the researcher to bring about a unique experience of the research phenomenon, which was then compared with that of other researchers (Qualval, 2016). In ensuring confirmability, some researchers take the position of an umpire, checking the process that was used and concluding whether the results conform or not. Confirmability may entail actively searching for and describing negative instances that contradict earlier research. For this study, the researcher conducted 'data audits'. A data audit involves an overall examination of the data collection and analysis procedures that had been applied throughout and making judgements about the potential for bias or distortion inherent in the process. Conformability brought in the aspect that allowed the researcher to make comparisons with other research done in the same areas of study. As far as the analysis was concerned, most of the findings were corroborated with findings in literature review and this points to a very high level of confirmability. The next section presents a brief outline of some of the limitations encountered in this study.

5.11 Limitations of the study

A study of this nature is bound by a number of limitations. One of the major challenges faced was that the researcher was known by most of the participants, especially those

from the local municipality. In order to deal with this challenge, the researcher arranged meetings over the phone first before the face-to-face interview. The purpose of the phone conversation was dual; to explain the purpose of the interview and to reassure the member that the researcher was conducting the study in a personal capacity as a PhD student. The explanation covered the circumstances of the study and how the results would be used so that the participants would feel free to answer the research questions. In addition, the researcher made sure the questioning technique was not overbearing on the participant, giving them a chance to decide to answer or not. With reference to the interviews, the researcher established that most participants freely answered the questions and did not seem intimidated. The researcher was able to engage in an open conversations with all the participants and encouraged them to ask questions when they were not clear of the direction of the conversation. From the open attitude used, the researcher obtained the participants' trust and so was able to pry into the issues that affected service delivery in Nkomazi. Most of the participants confessed that they had never been free to express their unrestrained opinions on service delivery given that they are always under pressure to perform under difficult circumstances.

The researcher dealt with non-availability of respondents. Upon making appointments, there was no guarantee that respondents would be available at agreed times. This scenario forced the researcher to keep making additional appointments. The only consolation for the researcher was that the size of the sample was relatively small. At the same, time because of work commitments, the researcher could not be flexible on the issue of time and place for the interviews, but had to locate the interviews at the NLM offices in Malelane. This was not considered a very convenient place, but there were no better options. The other limitation was that the interviews could only be conducted at the convenience of the managers which was not always convenient for the research given the time constraints. However, given the challenges of conducting interviews, the researcher had to go through the process and ensure a sufficient number of managers were interviewed. Not only managers brought time-related challenges, but most municipal officials were engaged in some busy schedules which made the interview scheduling process a huge challenge. With the SMMEs the interviews had to be scheduled in such a way that it would not disrupt daily operations.

This presented its own challenges. Time constraints also impacted on the cost of doing the research as the rescheduling meant visiting Nkomazi Local Municipality a number of times over a period of time. A larger sample would have helped increase trustworthiness of the results but it also meant that the budget for the research would have gone up for the researcher.

One other challenge with the research involved confidentiality. The public service operates under a veil of secrecy whereby state officials do not have to divulge certain information which is said to be confidential. In this study, the researcher was cognisant of this fact to the extent that names of the participants were hidden, and instead code names were utilised. The researcher also made sure that participants were made aware of certain levels of privacy and protection that were accorded in this research. This relates to all the specified privacy guidelines that were incorporated in the consent form that is attached as Appendix 2 of this study.

5.12 Chapter summary

This chapter presented the research design and methodology used to collect data for the study. The research is a qualitative study which implies that an interpretivist was the guiding research philosophy. Two types of research instruments were used for the two types of data collection that were carried out, one for extracting the main data, based on the chosen sample of municipal leaders, leading community members and prominent people in the Nkomazi area. The second instrument was used with SMEs during the testing of the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework (SLA). Relevant and proper sampling techniques were applied in choosing a representative sample for the study. A number of ethical guidelines were followed in order to extract data and maintain its integrity. In this chapter, the prominent aspects of the research design for this study were discussed. It emerged that in choosing a research design for this study the researcher had to consider methods for obtaining data that would assist in answering the research question regarding the ability of the Nkomazi Local Municipality to conduct its service delivery mandate". In the next chapter, a detailed account of the findings of the empirical part of the study is presented.

CHAPTER SIX: DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

6.1 Introduction

This chapter synthesises and discusses the data collected in this study. The researcher first considered the secondary sources, comprising the Nkomazi municipal IDPs from 2011 to 2016 as well as the municipal plans and other official reports. Most of these official reports have been identified in the previous chapter and form the core of the communication by the municipality on its intended plans to the national government as well as to the members of the public. These documents provided a crucial contextual background to the interviews done with a number of the municipal officials and the community members. Municipal leaders include officials in the employment of NLM, who execute their duties as per their terms of employment. They derive their mandate from their official capacity and the position they occupy in the Nkomazi organisation chart. Because of their work requirements in relation to the community they were considered to have a special significance in issues of service delivery in the municipality. In the analysis of results, the responses from these were affixed with NLM after the pseudo name of the respondent. Similarly, the municipal leaders included the opposition members from the Democratic alliance and the ANC. The comments from the members of the community are also clearly identified whenever they are quoted. Findings from the SMMEs are presented separately as they deal with the measurement of the impacts of specific LED programmes in the community among the SMME businesses.

6.2 Brief description of data collection

An interview protocol was administered to the participants by the researcher. Most of the interviews were conducted at the municipal offices in Malalane – Nkomazi, the exception being the data from community members and SMMEs. The 15 members of the community that were interviewed as well as the 10 SMMEs came from five different locations within the municipality. The first set of Interviews were conducted between September and November 2019. These involved the municipal leaders and the community members. The second set of interviews involving the SMMEs were conducted later at the beginning of December 2019. The interviews with the SMMEs was done in order to vouch the usability of the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach

model in measuring the effectiveness of service delivery programmes in the municipality with specific emphasis on the LED programme.

Initially pilot studies with officials from the municipality and some SMMEs were done to check the veracity of the interview protocols. In the pilot study for the leadership and community members, five officials were interviewed, after which the interview protocol was refined and then used to interview the sampled respondents. With the SMMEs interview schedule, two SMMEs were used in the pilot study. The pilot study results were used to refine all the interview protocols so that it would assist in collecting relevant data.

Other data used in this study came from document analysis. As highlighted before in chapter four, these documents included the Auditor General reports and internal municipal reports, reports from oversight committees, Presidential hotline as well as municipal annual reports.

6.2.1 Response rate analysis

A total of 50 people were interviewed, comprising 25 municipal officials, 15 community members and 10 SMME owners/representatives were interviewed between September and November 2019. The total sample size was 50 participants. The municipal officials were generally considered to be policy and decision makers. Of those interviewed, there was a fair representation in respect of gender, with 65 percent being male respondents while the other 35 percent were female". Generally, there were more males among the officials interviewed in Nkomazi and this is what was reflected in the sample survey. The gender trend also replicates at the provincial and the national level.

All respondents were categorised into two ranges, one ranged from the 26-35-year category and that of 46 years and above category. The range of the age groups of the sample was broad enough for the purpose of the study. There were no responses from the 18-25 age category, because the survey focused on the senior officials and no one in that range met the criteria of being in senior positions in the municipality. At the same time, community members were also mature people who have been in the

municipality for over five years, and are more than 26 years old. Thus, most of the interviewees from the Nkomazi local municipality can be said to be matured in age and having reasonable length of experience and exposure in the municipal affairs as well. Figure 6.1 below illustrates the age categories of the respondents.

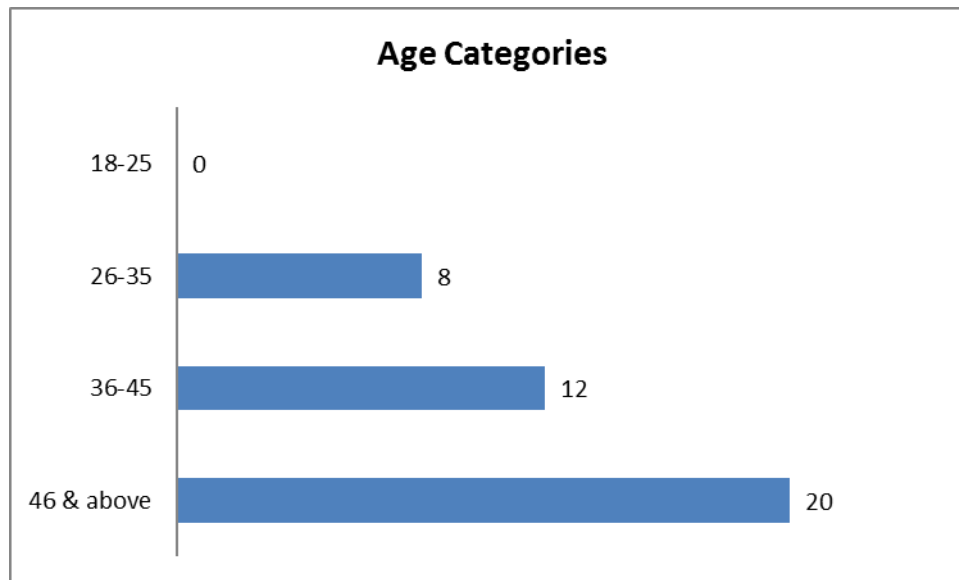


Figure 6.1: Age Categories

In terms of their positions, the sample comprised a mixed group of people including those in very senior positions, the technical staff as well as the support staff. The sampled staff came from across all departments especially those that are at the forefront of service delivery such as housing, water and sanitation as well as roads and electricity. Table 6.1 below shows a profile of the sample that was used in data gathering. Pseudo names were chosen so that the analysis of findings would make easy reading. The names were also meant to hide their identifies of the participants. Throughout the report the pseudo names are used to identify the responses that were given.

Table 6.1: Profile of participants

Pseudo- Name	Position	Race	Gender
1- Mluleki	Coordinator – Performance management	Black	Male
2- Bruno	Deputy manager – M&E / IPMS	Black	Female
3- Mbongeni	Manager – Local Economic Development	Black	Male
4- Nomcebo	Manager – Office of the Executive Mayor	Black	Male
5- Edward	Deputy Manager – Led Tourism & Rural development	Black	Male
6- Lindokuhle	Manager – mayoral Support	Black	Male
7- Laura	Chief Local Economic Development Officer	Black	Male
8- Malika	Manager – Water demand & quality	Black	Female
9- Bongani	Deputy Manager- Strategic Planning	Black	Male
10- Lindelwa	Manager - Infrastructure	Black	Female
11- Hlulani	Manager – LED Tourism & Rural Development	Black	Female
12- Irchard	Deputy Manager – Corporate Services	Black	Male
13- Giles	Officer – Municipal managers office	Black	Male
14- Sindisiwe	Deputy manager – IDP	Black	Female
15-Bongumusa	Acting Manager – Water & Sanitation	Black	Female
16- Tokelo	Mayoral Committee - Member	Black	Male
17- Afika	Coordinator – LED & Tourism	Black	Female
18- Bongane	Acting manager – Budget & Treasury	Black	Male

19- Prince	Mayoral Committee -Member	Black	Male
20- Branden	Manager – Planning & Development	Black	Male
21- Langa	Manager - LED	Black	Male
22- Molefe	Manager – Corporate services	Black	Male
23- Leila	Opposition Member	Black	Female
24- Sindisiwe	Opposition member	Black	Female
25- Mduduzi	Opposition member	Black	Male
26- Calvin	Community member	Black	Male
27- Deon	Community member	Black	Male
28- Anele	Community member	Black	Female
29- Bonisiwe	Community member	Black	Female
30 - Charles	Community member	Black	Male
31 - Thabang	Community member	Black	Male
32 - Vukani	Community member	Black	Male
33 Tshepo	Community member	Black	Male
34 - Sthandiwe	Community member	Black	Female
35 - Zanele	Community member	Black	Female
36 - Moloki	Community member	Black	Female
37 - Cayla	Community member	Black	Female
38 - Clinton	Community member	Black	Male
39 - Themba	Community member	Black	Male
40- Xolani	Community member	Black	Male

6.2.2 Research questions

This study assessed the performance of Nkomazi local municipality in terms of its IDP, to establish if service delivery is an elusive target or not. Therefore, the overarching question was:

What is the performance of Nkomazi Local Municipality in the implementation of its Integrated Development Plan?

Interviews were conducted among the respondents from the municipality in order to collect data that assisted in addressing the overarching question and the four main questions below (also identified in Chapter One). These were used to probe the issues affecting the municipality in respect to service delivery. The questions were:

1. *What challenges are faced by NKLM in respect to its service delivery mandate to its local constituencies*
2. *How does the municipality measure in terms of its key deliverables as stated in the five years' IDPs between 2011 and 2016?*
3. *What are the perceptions of the leadership in terms of basic social service delivery performance of the municipality?*
4. *To what extent is the Nkomazi local municipality capable to fulfil its service delivery mandate to its constituencies?*
5. *Is Nkomazi Municipality able to meet its basic social service delivery mandate to its local constituencies?*

Different aspects of these questions are addressed in the sections that follow, and an attempt is made to link the findings in Nkomazi with those from other areas in South Africa or the rest of the world.

6.3 Data from secondary sources and interviews

This data was collected from a variety of municipal records and interviews and provided us with a clear understanding of the status of the municipal services, and elucidate the issues identified in the municipal reports as well as from the responses made by municipal officials.

6.3.1 Background of developments in the Nkomazi Local Municipality

Nkomazi is a municipality that inherited poverty pockets due to the fact that it was previously serviced by the former KaNgwane government. This was an apartheid-created homeland for black rural communities which was also referred to as a Bantustan in the old apartheid regime. Thus the municipality has a divided past pitting whites versus blacks. On that basis, the level of development of infrastructure and delivery of services was not the same and has remained largely so even up to now. Nkomazi is also mainly rural and agricultural, making it more challenging for the

municipality to cover all the areas in terms of delivery of services due to limited resources and the vastness of the areas to be covered. Given this situation, most of the officials interviewed regard this as the major source of the current service delivery crisis, and therefore in the former KaNgwane areas service delivery has remained a major challenge.

The general understanding among the leaders is that service delivery in the rural areas or villages (the former KaNgwane Black areas), has however become a challenge to sustain because there is no cost recovery for most of the services rendered. Municipal officials indicated that to a greater extent services are paid for by the former peri-urban towns in the municipality namely Malelane, Komatipoort, Marloth Park, and Hectorspruit.

.....the revenue collection system set up for the KaMhlushwa Township with regards to water services has collapsed due to non-compliance in terms of payments by the residents (All respondents).

However, this study could not establish the reasons for non-payment from the residents' point of view but made inferences from the numerous reports that were analysed. Nevertheless, without revenue collection service delivery will always be a challenge. Communities are receiving water for free and the rate of water misuse is noted to be high. Some participants cited that there is no refuse collection in almost 80% of the villages in the municipality. Therefore, garbage is all over the municipality, with new prospects of improvement however, given that a new landfill site has been built. Streets (roads) were also noted to be in a very bad state because there is hardly any maintenance done. The concerns are serious and some officials were concerned that what is happening in the townships and villages is starting to seriously affect the peri-urban areas; one participant eloquently expressed this sad state of affairs in this fashion;

... we are robbing Peter to pay Paul or killing the hen that lay the golden egg, services are starting to collapse in the former peri-urban towns; Malelane , Komatipoort and Marloth Park (Mbongeni-NLM).

The implications of the concern raised above is explained in sections that follow and generally this highlights the revenue collection challenges facing the municipality, given the skewed distribution of income. This puts into sharp focus the legacy issues in respect to service delivery and backlogs created by the apartheid development policies that impoverished largely black populations in rural settings. While the urban areas tend to have a higher revenue recovery rate, the rest of the municipal areas hardly pay for those services, but the municipality is compelled to provide services throughout. As a result they “have to use some of the money collected from urban areas to pay for services in the non-paying rural areas. In the end, revenue collected from the urban areas is not sufficient to cater for their own needs, hence the gradual deterioration of services in all areas. These funding challenges are what have been echoed by Arku and Oosterbaan (2015); and Schumpeter (2017) and are symptomatic of local municipalities in most developing nations even as highlighted by the World Bank surveys (World Bank, 2010).

The following sections illustrate the findings from the IDPs of the municipality for the years beginning 2011 to 2016. The major challenge arising from the use of the IDP in Nkomazi to measure the rate of service delivery is that most of the IDP figures are themselves out of date. Thus for instance, while measuring the provision of water in the 2011-2012 IDP, statistics used by the Nkomazi Municipality relate to a much earlier period based on the 2007 Statistics SA Community Survey. As a result, no current statistics were available for the municipality to make informed analysis of the status quo. In some instances, the municipality uses even the 2001 population statistics, which is more than 10 years old and more than 15 years ago at the time this research was done in 2016. This also, is symptomatic of challenging service delivery as noted by (Rakodi, 2014), whereby the local municipalities cannot even accurately measure the service delivery backlogs. All the IDPs from 2011-2016 note that the current systems make it a challenge to have an up to date measure of most of the critical metrics. It is within this context that the following analyses are made, the limitations of which impact the level of service delivery negatively in the Nkomazi municipality.

6.3.2 Achievements and progress in the last five years (2011 – 2016)

In the period between 2011 and 2016 the municipality made a number of achievements and progress which are even noted in the IDPs. These achievements include activities that ensured the improvement and the well-being of the communities. The IDP of 2015-16 indicates that series of crime-related campaigns on community safety and policing seem to have reduced the crime levels in the municipality. With crime under control, the municipality can now concentrate on economic activities that improve incomes of communities. In addition, the municipality has also been conducting workshops on community and youth development activities. On the recreation sector, the municipality managed to renovate and refurbish the two stadiums of Kamhlushwa and KamaQhekeza so that they can be used for national events. These two are now in good condition for any significant sporting events. Indeed, many other achievements were made in each of the service delivery areas noted below. In the following sections each of the key service delivery areas is highlighted and the achievements are outlined together with the key challenges faced in the issue concerned.

6.3.3 Key service delivery priorities

The key service delivery priorities in the municipality as identified by the respondents as well as the 5-year IDPs include the following:

1. provision of bulk water and water reticulation,
2. sanitation,
3. refuse removal,
4. electricity,
5. roads,
6. housing (through the Department of Human Settlements),
7. sports ground facilities,
8. community halls,
9. libraries and
10. land tenure.

These challenges are the same as identified by other authors in various other municipalities; Damborg, Danson and Halkier (2017) in Bangladesh, Ohemeng and

Grant (2015) in Canada, and Nigeria, Cronje et al, (2014) in Johannesburg in South Africa. Over the years, the IDPs show that the Nkomazi municipality has paid quite a lot of attention to these issues. In the following sections the researcher presents the status quo with respect to each of these and other general service delivery issues.

6.3.3.1 Provision of water and sanitation

An analysis of the IDPs for the period covered in this study shows that the same water challenges have been noted over the years (2011-2016). The IDPs noted that over the years, the growing water and sanitation problem has been compounded by a growing urban population and the rural character of the municipality. However, concerted efforts have been made since 2001 to improve the state of affairs. While improvements were noted in the 2011-12 IDP, the huge backlogs have continued to pose a serious challenge in the rural communities. Water backlogs stood at 25,167 in 2007 (IDP, 2011-12), which represented 23% of the households. These households did not have access to water. While the 2011-12 IDP anticipated to reduce this backlog by 6,292 households per year, it would have taken 5 or 6 years to eliminate the backlog. But the situation in 2015-16 IDP does not show any significant improvement. This implies that whatever interventions that have taken place regarding the water issue have not been adequate to deal with the challenge. The delays are affecting service delivery and this is in tandem with the conclusions drawn by Powell (2012) who noted that at the rate at which services are delivered in some sub-Saharan countries, it would take them maybe 50 years to accomplish the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

A situational analysis undertaken which forms part of the Long-Term Development Framework of 2013/14, IDP and other Sector Plans shows the following situation regarding the water and sanitation issues.

Table 6.2 Water and sanitation provision

Service		No of Households	No of Households (%)
Water provision	Total households provided	67,247	70%
	Households on backlog	28,906	30%
	Total	96,153	100%
Sanitation	Total households provided	53,212	44.2%
	Households on backlog	67,217	55.8%
	Total	120,429	100%

Source: IDP (2015-16)

Sanitation issues pose similar problems as water, considering that these two issues are closely related. The Nkomazi IDPs noted that since 2004 water and sanitation projects have been accelerated for instance through the Ventilated Improved Pit (VIP) toilets mostly in the rural villages. As outlined in Table 6.2 above, as of 2015-16 the backlogs for sanitation were as high as 55.8 percent of the total households. According to a study conducted by the Human Settlement Department in 2008, the municipality had a backlog of 56,717 in sanitation. Over the years, the number of the backlogs has increased due to a number of factors that are highlighted in the sections below. The municipality provides free basic sanitation in the form of VIP toilets and the Department of Human Settlement provides financial support and the required skills for the programme (IDP 2014-15:100). Sanitation is the responsibility of two different authorities, the municipality heavily depends on the Department of Human Settlements for financial support. As a result, this relationship affects the pace of the service delivery. In the 2015-16 IDP the municipality indicates that it has a number of sewer outflow upgrading projects that were being carried out in the urban areas of Malelane and Komatipoort. Similarly, in schools and clinics the municipality sustains sanitation facilities by emptying pit toilets and septic tanks. However, without financial support from the provincial department, sanitation services remain constrained. The funding challenge as identified by Cameron (2014) seems to plague most of the rural municipalities in South Africa, and Nkomazi seems to be amongst the worst affected municipalities due to its peculiar circumstances.

An analysis of the majority of the participants' comments in the survey done at Nkomazi generally agree that service delivery in terms of water and sanitation has improved with only a few indicating that there are challenges as reflected below:

Over the past fifteen years, ...been massive infrastructure development in the form of roads, houses, schools, hospitals and water and sanitation services (Nomcebo-NLM).

...There has been serious development in terms of the development of malls and improving basic services like water supply (Laura-NLM).

..Access to clean running water and paving of streets are at the core of our service delivery challenges (Mluleki-NLM).

The participants from the opposition were however not supportive of this positive outlook of the NLM. In this regard, the opposition party in the municipality was critical on the treatment of indigents in the local municipality:

The DA in Mpumalanga is concerned that indigent families in Nkomazi are being denied free basic services by the ANC municipal government. Free basic services have regressed this financial year in some parts to a disgraceful 0%. Of those who applied for free basic sanitation none were provided with that service. This municipality is in violation of its own indigent policy (Langa- DA).

These opposition views were supported by some of the community participants who noted that despite the ushering of democratic freedom in 1994, such basic things as water and sanitation remain out of reach. One community member elucidate:

This is one of the communities in this area, that have to go without water. Residents of Zone 10 (Jeppes Reef) are tired of empty promises... on everything; water, roads and electricity. We met several important people before about the issue, but we never got straight answers. We have had

promises from our councillor to resolve this issue but that was it, now we have to walk long kilometres to get water at Schoemansdal (Mduduzi-DA).

Contentions that service delivery in terms of water and sanitation have improved are however, not supported by the data in the Nkomazi IDPs over the years as outlined above. The comments by the opposition and the community members find credence in the official documents of the municipality. The 2015-16 IDP in particular noted that water and sanitation issues are priority issues that keep the Mayor and the Municipal Manager awake at night. The figures tabled in the IDP documents from 2011 to 2016 also show that these issues have hardly improved in a 'massive way'. It seems that some respondents preferred to show a much rosier picture than the situation on the ground. That the water and sanitation issues remain a challenge is supported by a number of protests that were staged in some communities belonging to the Nkomazi Local Municipality over these issues. The IDPs reports during the study period consistently show that the municipality has a lot of ground to cover, and a number of reasons are cited as to why service delivery in this regard has not been up to required levels. These reasons are identified in the following sections.

6.3.3.2 Water and sanitation challenges

A number of challenges were cited as the major source of the service delivery challenges in terms of the water and sanitation issues. The IDP of 2015-16 summarises these problems some of which have been worsening over the years.

Ageing infrastructure: A major problem in Nkomazi relates to ageing infrastructure, hence the municipality cannot cope with the supply into the 54 villages that are part of its service area. Frequent infrastructure breakdowns imply that there are persistent interruptions, which strains the municipal budget. This is consistent with findings by Damborg, Danson and Halkier (2017) and Cleave, Arku and Chatwin (2017), who make a contrast between service delivery in developing nations and those in developed nations, and insist that in developing nations the focus is still on basic infrastructure challenges and '*roads, rates and rubbish*' issues.

Population growth: Another major issue highlighted in the interviews concerns the increasing population which requires that water schemes be extended continuously. However, as the Nkomazi municipality admits, the extension of water schemes is slow to be implemented mainly because of 'capacity and budget' constraints as well as a number of other major challenges facing the municipality. Capacity challenges due to population increase are cited by the OECD in its various reports of 2010, 2011 and 2014, as well as a number of authors among them Carlson, Johnston and Dawson, (2018); Hansen and Wethal (2014); Phillips and Pittman (2014). However, while most authors link population growth mainly with challenges of urbanisation, with Nkomazi, the growth is happening in a poor rural municipality, hence the problems are magnified because of a combination of poor revenue collection base and increasing demand for service delivery at the same time.

Water rights challenges: While the Municipality makes use of water tankers, the increasing population makes it difficult for the municipality to keep up with water and sanitation demand to all the villages. The IDPs note that bulk water supply projects implemented by Ehlanzeni District which are aimed to address these backlogs have been delayed due to water rights allocation (IDP, 2014-15). This is a problem associated with another provincial department that allocates water rights and yet the service delivery has to be done by the municipality. At the moment the municipality noted that it can only deliver bulk sanitation in urban areas.

Lack of Operations and Maintenance plans: The absence of Operation and Maintenance plans has also been cited as a major crippling factor to water and sanitation issues (IDP, 2015-16). This challenge is worsened by the fact that budget allocation for this key area is limited. The municipality operates on a very tight budget and this affects entirely all its service delivery programmes.

6.3.3.3 Human Settlement - Housing

Another critical municipal service delivery mandate pertains to the provision of housing. Observations from the IDPs also show that demand for housing in rural villages of the municipality has been increasing. This housing mandate is mainly the responsibility of the Department of Human Settlement, which has managed to provide

a sizeable number of houses though far from meeting the backlog in terms of demand (IDP, 2011-12). The reliability of this data is highly questionable however because the different IDPs show different figures for the housing backlogs, while referring to the same period. The year 2008 is used as a benchmark period in the IDPs. But according to the Nkomazi Housing Chapters developed in 2008 on behalf of the municipality by the Department of Human Settlement, the backlog for housing in the municipal area was 23,536. At the same time, in terms of the Housing Needs Register which the 2015-16 IDP deems accurate, the backlog is currently at 7,050 and being updated on an on-going basis.

It must however, be noted that housing provision largely remains a Provincial function and the municipality assists with the identification of beneficiaries. The process to collect up-to date housing requirements has been very slow as noted in the 2013-14, 2014-15 and 2015-16 IDPs. In all these documents, the municipality was noted to have embarked 'on an exercise to collect data from all the 33 wards in order to determine the *housing demand* of the residents of Nkomazi and also to measure if the backlog is met on a yearly basis'. By the time the 2015-16 IDP was compiled, this process had been started but not completed. As a result the municipality's own data could not be used to verify whether the housing backlog has indeed gone down to 7050. As illustrated in the sections above, the failure to collate reliable data on the service delivery status is also a symptom of poor service delivery in many other studies done by 2018.

The comments from the interview participants paint a good picture in terms of housing delivery in general, just as they portray favourably with water and sanitation. Nevertheless a large number of participants are negative and show that a lot has to be done in terms of housing provision. One of the participants, who is critical about the municipality's standards of service had this to say about housing delivery:

..the Municipality standards of service delivery are still very poor because communities still do not have access to basic services such as water. This is besides other major issues such as housing for which there is always an outcry in some of those outlying areas (Lindelwa-NLM).

Service delivery challenges are ascribed to a number of factors and some pertain to conflicting mandates and inadequate budgets. This becomes clear when Bongumusa who is a manager for sanitation services in the municipality explains:

..We are operating under serious financial constraints especially since housing is not our direct mandate. But 'these people' they come to us and cannot go the Province for that (Bongumusa-NLM).

Another participant who is a Manager for Corporate Services provides another challenge that compounds service delivery issues as they indicate that:

It is not easy for us to deal with all housing challenges, there we have a number of problems considering that the areas we are talking about belong to the traditional chiefs...(Irchard-NLM).

While the participants from the municipality tend to generally agree with comments by both the opposition and the community, the difference was in the source of the problem. The community responses as well as the opposition seemed to put the entire blame on the municipality, while the municipal officials mostly identified factors beyond their control.

Our houses, bridges and roads even sewerage systems are being built by unskilled contractors. If you check all these projects you see that they not durable. These contractors are appointed but have no capacity to deliver. That is an ANC problem (Molefe -DA).

This area also doesn't have electricity but we have living here since 2007. We have had 2 children dying by candle fire in a shack. Our local authority even promised that family an RDP house but until this far they haven't received that house. They always make those promises which they never keep (Deon-Community).

Comments in the IDPs over the study period 2011-2016, agree with interview responses, as the IDPs all note the same challenges pertaining to the municipality. Given the nature of these challenges, it appears that any positive comments regarding

housing service delivery are only cosmetic as the official IDP documents paint a situation far from acceptable. Among other issues, the IDPs note that land availability is a major hindrance to the provision of houses. This is because the land is owned by private individuals or falls directly under the control of the traditional leaders. The traditional leaders seem to use their own set of rules which do not always sync with municipal plans. Similar land tenure issues affecting service delivery have been noted in other countries such as Australia by the Department of Indigenous Affairs in Western Australia (2009). These problems are also similar to the prevailing situation in Nkomazi and relate to the non-rateability of the traditional areas.

Immigration was also noted as a compounding factor in this study. The impact of immigrants on service delivery is echoed in the findings by Jayne (2017) in Uganda; Belletti, Marescotti and Touzard (2017) in Ethiopia; Feldman, Hadjimichael, Lanahan and Kemeny (2016); Warner and Sullivan (2017) who cover Botswana, Cameroon, Ghana, Mozambique and Tanzania. Swaziland and Mozambique citizens for various reasons come to Nkomazi and these immigrants form a majority of the people contributing to the housing backlog. At international level the problem of so-called economic refugees means that people from the neighbouring nations continue to pass through the porous borders into the province, then access low paid jobs on the farms, and yet cannot afford rental accommodation, so they end up living in shacks or poor housing facilities. The choice of poor housing facilities is because of affordability and convenience for foreign workers. Nevertheless, the housing backlog is not comprised predominantly of immigrants, but by natural-born South Africans whose demands are made at each and every possible opportunity.

The 2015-16 IDP notes further challenges regarding the housing issues included the inability to access well-located, suitable and affordable land for both social and middle-income housing. This implies that even if the budget for housing development was available, the space to do the development would not be available. This is so given the comments in the 2015-16 IDP;

Due to the rural nature of the municipality, land ownership is a serious challenge, given that most of our land belongs to or is under the control of the

chief. In most other cases the land is in the hands of commercial farmers. Delays in resolving land claims have hindered planned developments across the entire municipal area (own emphasis). Any form of land use controls at the moment exists only in the White urban areas, and no such controls exist in the rural and tribal areas. Poor land use management has lead indirectly to growing informal settlements. Traditional Leaders need to be effectively consulted and engaged in addressing the land use management issue (IDP, 2015-16: 119).

Whether the municipality is able to deal with the growing challenge of human settlements is questionable given that the department is staffed by 2 officials who have to traverse the length and breadth of the municipality dealing with the myriad of problems identified above. However regardless of the challenges, the municipality shows that it has taken some steps in order to redress these problems as highlighted in another section of the 2015-16 IDP. This includes the purchase of some pieces of land so that they can be developed into residential areas. At the same time the latest 2015-16 IDP shows that the Municipality had started updating its database on housing demand (IDP, 2015-16: 119).

Besides the challenges identified above, the Municipality experiences major delays in township establishment and rezoning of land including delays in environmental approvals. This has more to do with administrative hiccups and the occasional bureaucracy. The low-income levels in the municipality also implies that the intended beneficiaries cannot afford to pay for all the municipal costs involved. This leaves the municipality in a quandary and has to turn to other spheres of government for help in this regard. All these challenges are amplified by the fact that the municipality does not have a budget of its own for housing service delivery, instead the Department of Human Settlement (DHS) allocates funding for government subsidized housing units, and this budget is at most limited.

6.3.3.4 Electrification of households

The provision of electricity to households has experienced a lot of improvement over the years. Based on the electrification programme of the municipality together with

Department of Minerals and Energy, the electricity backlog in terms of household connections stood at 36,247 in 2001 (IDP, 2011-12). Since then a lot of effort has gone into addressing this backlog, and the table below gives an outline of the status as illustrated in the 2015-16 IDP.

Table 6.3 Energy Sources

Energy Sources	2014-15		2015-16	
	Households	Percent	Households	Percent
Electricity	80,153	83.3%	80,153	83.3%
Gas	654	0.7%	654	0.7%
Paraffin	1,158	1.2%	1,158	1.2%
Solar	299	0.3%	299	0.3%
Candles (Not valid)	13,507	14.0%	13,507	14.0%
None	431	0.4%	431	0.4%
TOTAL	96,202	100%	96,202	100%

Source: Stats SA 2011

The Nkomazi municipality is currently using a very old and possibly irrelevant electricity master plan developed more than 10 years ago. Financial challenges have stalled any plans to upgrade the master plan, and in terms of the 2015-16 IDP the service delivery backlog stood at 17 percent or 16,049 households.

As a result, some areas especially in-fills have no electricity. The reasons cited for this disparity include the sparsely populated settlements, poor spatial planning as well as increasing rate of new unplanned settlements. New settlements are linked to the housing challenges that have been outlined above. Despite some positive improvements, the municipality still faces challenges in its relations with Electricity Supply Commission (Eskom) with regards to budgeting alignment when it comes to bulk supply. This includes the fact that Eskom takes long to provide quotations for bulk supplies to increase capacity for development (IDP, 2014-15; IDP, 2015-16). At the same time the boundaries between Eskom-supplied areas and municipality-supplied areas overlap in a number of places, which cause a duplication and ends up with Eskom 'double billing' the municipality. These are administrative challenges that have not been resolved and pose a challenge to the municipal budget. At the same time the

municipality acknowledges that it has limited capacity in the delivery of services resulting in non-compliance with National Energy Regulator of South Africa's (NERSA) standards or requirements. Other administrative issues include Eskom providing electricity to areas which are not in line with the municipal Spatial Development Framework (SDF). This is mainly due to the fact that the alignment of planning between the municipality and Eskom is weak. The result is that areas prioritised by the municipality take long to receive service delivery and communities end up protesting because they feel neglected. Warner and Sullivan (2017) made similar findings in South East Asia where they established the major weakness as lack of coordination with local authorities not cooperating with the extension workers on the ground.

Most of the comments on the provision of electricity are positive, with the only concerns being expressed about the provisions pertaining to new, expanding and unplanned settlements. In addition, the main challenge with electricity is the issue of illegal connections and non-recovery of costs. As with the other services, electricity is being provided for free. This is eloquently presented by three respondents who are manager LED, Deputy Manager Monitoring & Evaluation / IPMS and Deputy Manager – Strategic Planning as they highlight the challenges in respect to provision of electricity to inhabitants of NLM:

We have a mandate to provide free 'basic electricity but we end up providing free electricity. This means that we hardly recover the full cost and so we are simply subsidising the (rural) communities (Hlulani-NLM).

We should formalise the informal settlements and start billing people who can afford the services (Bruno-NLM).

We have tried some cost recovery strategies for services such as electricity and water in some communities, but they have largely failed (Bongani-NLM).

The nature of the challenge is enormous with respect to non-recovery of cost when it comes to provisions of services as one participant explained,

..communities are getting free services, not that we have to provide free services, but what would you do given the poor levels of income, most people are on the grants here (Lindelwa-NLM).

Comments above contrast sharply with those made by the DA councillor Langa, due to the inability to collect revenue for services rendered, most people in the municipality have by default become part of the 'indigents'. This seems to have created a funding challenge for most of the municipal services.

Findings by the World Bank (2010) point out to 'low cost-recovery rate' as the major reason why certain basic infrastructure is often absent in poor rural communities. As argued before in chapter three, the provision of services at below cost prices is the prime contributory factor towards the lack of capital and low levels of investment in infrastructure. However, given the peculiar situation of Nkomazi it is critical to establish whether full cost recovery models would be possible and to what extent.

6.3.3.5 Waste management

Generally, the situation regarding waste management has not changed in a significant way. This is clear from the comments in the 2011-12 IDP which are similar to those made in the latest 2015-16 IDP. The municipality notes that besides the waste disposal sites in the few urban areas, no other such sites exist in the majority of the rural areas. Plans have been on paper for several years to establish one other major landfill site at Steenbok in order to deal with this challenge. This has been the plan since the 2011-12 IDP and earlier. As of 2015-16 the Table below show the status in terms of refuse collection.

Table 6.4 Refuse removal

Nature of Refuse Removal	No. of Households	Percent
Removed by local authority/private company at least once a week	19,404	20.2%
Removed by local authority/private company less often	1,200	1.2%
Communal refuse dump	3,470	3.6%
Own refuse dump	59,585	61.9%
No rubbish disposal	10,821	11.2%
Other	1,720	1.8%

Source: Stats SA Census (2011: 39-40)

The statistics illustrated in Table 6.4, above do not show a rosy picture with regards to waste management. However, in the 2014-16 IDPs, the municipality indicates that a situational analysis was undertaken in which it was reported that waste collection had improved to 82,126 (80%) against a backlog of only 20,540 (20%) households. The IDP however acknowledges that only 32 out of the 54 villages were benefiting from the waste management service, with the rest not having the service. This gap in service provision is attributed mainly to insufficient budget to purchase new trucks to extend the service. While the municipality has currently completed the construction of Steenbok landfill site, it is not yet operational because a service provider has yet to be appointed. In the meantime, the Municipality has to contend with a lot of illegal dumping. But the major crisis seems to be the non-recovery of costs from the rural areas. This context seems to be accepted by the decision makers in the municipality, in interviews they expressed the following:

We are a rural Municipality and this affects all our service delivery issues. Obviously money or budget constraints affect us because most of these people have no income (Giles-NLM).

If we insist that they pay we end up not collecting any waste. That is our predicament (Tokelo-NLM).

Sometimes we see them (municipal waste trucks), but most of the time they are not coming and that is why we have our own plan. Do we have to wait until they finally pitch up? Who knows if they will ever come (for the rubbish)? (Sindiswa-Community).

Indeed, the Nkomazi Local Municipality faces a predicament in that it is in the unenviable position of being rural, low income and huge at the same time. Because financial resources are limited among its communities, the municipality is also resource-deficient and this creates a cycle of poor service delivery. Odalanu (2015) noted that open refuse dumps are a common sight in Nigeria, and more often, the municipal officials turn a blind eye. Whether this is deliberate or coincidental is not clear but for the period 2011 to 2016, the IDPs show that open refuse dumps in Nkomazi have also been a norm.

6.3.3.6 Roads and storm water

The status regarding the road network and storm water drainage system is derived from the situational analysis that was undertaken in NLM, in terms of the Municipality's Long-Term Development Framework of 2013/14. However, the IDPs covering the study period all reflect similar comments with similar challenges seen in non-tarred roads, extensive damages to roads and general absence of maintenance programme. quoted word for word over the period of the study (Nkomazi IDP, 2014-15:118, Nkomazi IDP, 2015-16).

In the 2015-2016 IDP, the nature of the challenges does not seem to have abated as the IDP cites a growing budget problem, and growing road backlogs, lack of properly skilled personnel. All these have led to community impatience and distrust of government's ability to deliver (Nkomazi IDP, 2015-16 : 5).

In particular over the year 2011 to 2016, the IDPs note that the municipality's road network is mostly gravel, while tarred sections need extensive upgrading (IDP, 2011-12: 39; IDP, 2015-16: 102). The challenges do not seem to be under control as the 2015-16 IDP further states that due to lack of funds, the municipality is unable to review the current Storm Water Master Plan which was developed in 2007 and is out-dated.

Drawing parallels from findings by (McDonagh, 2017) the primary concern within the Nkomazi Municipality is still on the building of 'roads, collection of rates and management of rubbish disposal', which is far different from local government in the developed economies, and even some metro municipalities in South Africa. To make matters worse, the statistics available in the latest IDP emanate from the 2008/9 period as there have been no recent updates regarding the road network and storm water drainage system.

Table 6.5 Road Network in Nkomazi

Category	Kilometre	Percentage (%)
Tarred Public Commuter Transport Roads	28	1.2
Gravel Public Commuter Transport Roads	187	8.2
Tarred Access Roads	4	0.2
Gravel Access Roads	57	2.5
Tarred Main Streets	22	1.0
Gravel Main Streets	5	0.2
Tarred Streets	131	5.8
Gravel Streets	1,833	80.9
Total length in km	1,268	100

Source: Local Municipalities Ehlanzeni District IDP 2008/09

Despite the statistics shown above, the Municipality's own situational analysis undertaken in 2013/14 came up with updated data showing that up to 210.5 km have been tarred, and approximately 2082 km of streets (i.e. internal access roads and provincial roads) constitute the backlog. It seems that dealing with the backlog will be a challenge primarily because the municipality admits that it has a limited budget for roads as the bulk of the funding is mainly allocated to water and sanitation. The dependence on the MIG funds comes with its own limitations as this fund is coordinated from the provincial and national departments, which are independent spheres of government. These grants also have the added challenge that they are tied to specific outcomes and usually are insufficient to cover the whole backlog (IDP, 2015-16). The challenge regarding roads maintained by DPWRT is indeed a policy issue which has negatively affected service delivery implementation. There seems to be policy conflicts which could be resolved by better communication between the local

municipality and provincial government. To all extents it seems that the coordination between these two spheres of government to provide road services is not effective. This arises from the fact that some roads within the municipality are under the ambit of the Ehlanzeni District, yet others are under the province and the N-roads are controlled by the national authority. Communities however find themselves having to deal with the municipality regarding all these roads but the municipality has no capacity to address or resolve all the challenges considering the different levels of responsibility.

The comments by the municipal participants in the interviews are upbeat about the road situation include the following;

The state of the roads has improved (Bruno-NLM).

The municipality has made significant strides in up-lifting the quality of life for its residents through the LED programmes, road construction and schools (Sindisiwe-NLM).

There have been massive infrastructure development in the form of roads, water provision and ensuring access to quality education (Tokelo-NLM).

However not all officials agree about the state of the roads as indicated by Celumusa a manager in the Budget and Treasury department;

..Some of the projects (roads) have been of poor quality but this is an area that is very contentious. As a result the municipality still faces a lot of challenges in terms of infrastructure development (Celumusa-NLM).

A bridge recently collapsed bridge over Ngugwane River which had so far claimed three lives including children. Cars can't cross from one side to the other, it very difficult for the people, ambulances and hearse to cross over. (Calvin-Community)

6.3.3.7 Compounding factors towards service delivery

Service delivery in the Nkomazi Municipality is compounded by a number of factors.

The following sections focus on some of these identified factors:

1. population growth,
2. levels of unemployment,
3. household incomes,
4. financial management systems and
5. local government's relationships with the traditional leaders.

6.3.3.7.1 Population growth

Statistics from the 2001 census, the community survey in 2007 and the national census in 2011 all show that the population of NLM has been increasing. Significant to this increase is the population of the economically active group, those between 15 and 64 years. This group increased from 55.1% to 60.5% between 2001 and 2011 and was projected to increase further over the years. What is notable in NLM is that the population increases among the youth or the economically active group is outpacing even the growth of the population as a whole. This will lead to more economic strain on the local municipality and a growing number of people who are disgruntled and hopeless. Within the NLM this tends not to be the case as the socioeconomic analysis of the municipality shows.

In terms of NLM, the increasing economically active population has been described as a 'ticking time bomb'. The contention is that as this population group becomes more desperate, they will engage in more desperate acts to secure a certain standard of living. Currently this manifests in the form of protests of which the reasons vary, but unemployment is one of those major outcries. In contrast to high urbanisation challenges highlighted by the OECD between 2010 and 2014, the situation in Nkomazi pertains to an increasing rural population. Nevertheless, the impact of an increasing population is almost the same whether rural or urban, but for Nkomazi the situation is exacerbated because of low revenue levels for the municipality in general. This increasing population places a significant strain on the service delivery requirements.

Increasing population also implies that the level of service delivery in terms of quantity has to increase. More houses, roads, water, sanitation and all associated services have to be provided. Therefore, a related increase in budget is required. Given that financial challenges are currently a major hindrance to effective service delivery, this means that an increasing population will only exacerbate the situation in the foreseeable future.

6.3.3.7.2 *Employment status*

Issues of unemployment are not peculiar to NLM, but are a national challenge. In Nkomazi using the strict definition of unemployment, statistics show that unemployment rates for all groups have decreased from 2001 to 2011 but they still remain high at 34.29 percent. The table below illustrates the unemployment rates at national, provincial, district and municipal level.

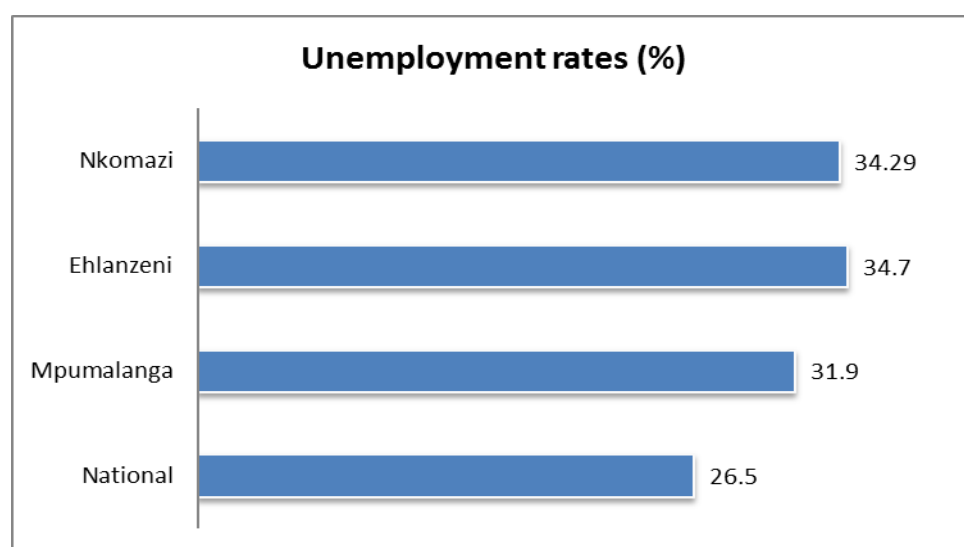


Figure 6.2: Unemployment in South Africa

Source: Statistics South Africa: 2016

It is pertinent to note that the unemployment rates in Nkomazi are much higher than the national averages as shown above. This shows that in South Africa the municipality faces a major challenge in resolving the issue.

In a rural community such as NLM, using the strict definition, however may be misleading because it does not consider the discouraged work seekers. These are people who will still depend entirely on the municipality. In the case of unemployment rates for women and for youth aged 15-35, statistics for Nkomazi show that these are significantly higher than for the general population aged 15-64 years. The inability of these vulnerable groups to access employment is a major determining factor in their general development. In the case of women heading households it will also affect the development status of the entire household.

	1996	2001	2011
Unemployed 15-64	34.79	41.46	34.29
Women unemployment 15-64	45.34	52.34	42.51
Youth unemployment 15-35	40.57	47.47	41.53

Figure 6.3 Unemployment Status- Nkomazi

Source: Nkomazi IDP: 2014-15

Education is not only one of the main factors that contributes unemployment, but is a key indicator of development in general. Given such a situation, the IDPs of NLM over the years 2011 to 2016 continuously highlight the need to take drastic measures to curtail the growing problems. The level of unemployment is a sore point because it has a direct bearing on the disposable incomes of the community members, and their ability to pay for services.

6.3.3.7.3 Annual household income

Annual household income has implications on poverty levels and the ability of the municipality to raise funds for its service delivery programmes. Table 5.6 below show the status of the household incomes in the Municipality.

Table 6.7: Annual household income

Income category	2001		2011	
No Income	18,415	24.4%	16,179	16.8%
R1 - R9600	34,157	45.2%	19,038	19.8%
R9601 - R153600	22,024	29.1%	55,597	57.8%
R153601 +	959	1.3%	5,388	5.6%
Total	75,555	100.0%	96,202	100.0%

Source: IDP: 2015-16

While the table above shows a notable positive change in the number of households that do not have an income, the general view is that at 16.8%, it is still a very high figure. At the same time, the decrease in the low income earners leaves the NLM still reeling from the fact that about 35% of its households are very low income earners. Poverty levels can therefore be said to be decreasing very slowly, and this does not auger well with service delivery challenges. This in turn has a negative impact on those regarded as the indigents and the future of the municipality in terms of its ability to raise money from taxes (Nkomazi IDP, 2015-16: 216).

6.3.3.7.4 Financial challenges

In all the previous analyses, one of the major crippling factors in the Municipality is its inability to raise funds for service delivery. Budgetary constraints imply that most of the plans remain on the drawing board far longer than necessary because of inadequate funds. In the interviews conducted, almost all respondents agree that raising funds in the Municipality has been a major challenge and may remain so for a very long time, unless dramatic changes are made in the revenue collection strategy. A number of participants highlighted the need to improve revenue collection as captured in the interview statements below:

This Municipality needs to implement the revenue enhancement strategy now (Bongani-NLM).

Crafting of the revenue enhancement strategy is needed, and there is need to put the indigent policy in place in order that all settlements pay for services (Laura-NLM).

This municipality cannot be said to be autonomous because it lacks financial viability. The municipality's ability to raise funds is not satisfactory, revenue collection occurs only in urban areas not villages. There are no partnerships forged to solicit funds (Mluleki-NLM).

The Municipality is unable to raise sufficient funding because they only collect rates and taxes in 3 towns only (Bruno-NLM).

We have a very small revenue base, we only collecting in the four towns of Malalane, Marloth Park, Hectorspruit and Komatipoort (Bongani-NLM).

From these comments, conclusions can be drawn that the apartheid government system deliberately excluded the former homeland of Kangwane from developments. Some of the current backlogs and majority of service delivery challenges stem from that period. Indeed, it appears that most of the municipal officials are aware of the financial challenges emanating from the predominance of the rural aspect of the area. Given that most of the area in Nkomazi is dominated by commercial farms as well as hospitality establishments, which are low-wage economic sectors, the challenges of the municipality do not seem to be easy to tackle. Coupled with high unemployment levels, the capitalist establishments that dominate do not promote the elevation of the economic status of the individual citizens and hence the possibility of addressing the necessary funds for development remain remote.

Comments by opposition participants highlight that extent of the challenges which touch on the economic and well as employment issues;

The economic policies we have in place do not promote employment or job creation. What we have is so much talk but little substance on the ground. People need jobs in their hundreds of thousands, but for that to happen we need a sustainable economy driven by capable leaders (Molefe-DA).

This municipality has so much potential but we are (working) well below capacity and hence cannot expect to be self-sufficient financially. The result is

we are running down the few areas that are full of potential, and before you know it, all areas will be hotspots of protests (Langa- DA).

The Nkomazi situation is such that much of the funding for key infrastructure programmes are externally derived, until such a time when the local resources have improved and can be mobilised. As one of the participants noted, the present situation is not tenable as it is likened to ‘robbing Peter to pay Paul’. The transfer of resources from the paying areas to the non-paying means that service delivery is compromised in both areas; the paying areas will not get the best service that equates with the money paid, at the same time the non-paying areas will only get substandard service. In its findings the 80-20 Report in 2014 argued that based on the Johannesburg Metro's analysis, charges for services in affluent areas have been used to subsidize poor areas, and this has led to deterioration of services in the better off areas. Revenue generation in the villages of Nkomazi is however not easy as these areas are under the control of the traditional authorities.

6.3.3.7.5 Relationship with traditional leaders

A key factor that hinders revenue collection in the villages is that the relationship with traditional leaders is acrimonious (IDP, 2013-14). In the Nkomazi IDPs the common concern raised over the survey period 2011-2016 is that the traditional leaders are not active participants in council meetings because they tend to send delegates to attend on their behalf. It seems municipal officials are not so clear on the role of the Chiefs, their role in council is not clear, and their full mandate is not clearly spelt out. This implies that municipal plans that affect the chiefs’ areas take long to finalise if they are dealt with at all”. The institution of the traditional chiefs has been a contentious one and Nkomazi is no exception to the challenges therein.

There is need for stringent measures to be put in place to prevent any persons or institution from undermining processes in municipalities. We need greater co-operation from the traditional leaders especially in the area of housing and allocation of stands (Molefe-DA).

The establishment of traditional leadership institutions was laid down in terms of Section 211 and 212 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, the Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework Act, 2003 (Act 43) and the Mpumalanga Traditional Leadership and Governance Act (3/2005). In addition, The National House of Traditional Leaders Act, 1997 (Act No 10 of 1997) Section 2, paves way for the establishment of the National House of Traditional Leaders. The house will serve for five years and meet at least once every quarter. The role of traditional leaders, certainly in terms of service delivery at a local level within the tribal areas remained ambivalent (Saad-Filho, 2016). Further, the introduction of pieces of legislations such as the Traditional Courts Bill that seeks to empower traditional leaders in the chairing of cases in their respective areas has not assisted in the clarification of those roles. Even with all these endeavours there are still challenges to the recognition of traditional leaders as stakeholders who have a role in the enhancement of service delivery in their areas. The Mpumalanga Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Leaders (COGTA) has gone a step further by nominating traditional leaders to participate in municipal councils so as to enhance their role in the provision of service delivery in their traditional communities.

A recurring theme, which surfaces in traditional leaders' deliberations and debates however, is their disappointment and frustration with elected, local level councillors. Councillors on the other hand argue that traditional leaders impede and hinder service delivery (Conto, Conte, Fiore & Djelveh, 2015). Tension between these two groups can be attributed to the overlapping roles of councillors and traditional leaders where there is no set framework for the governing of relations between the two sides (Conto et al., 2015). The danger of unclear and ambiguous legislation and policies that govern traditional leadership institutions has often led to many problems and challenges. The role of the ward councillor for an example, may impede the functioning of the traditional councils. This causes unnecessary conflict between the two parties. The question is: How can the role of traditional leaders be enhanced in order to improve the provision of goods and services in traditional communities?

Traditional leaders, however, cannot succeed and excel in the performance of their envisaged duties and functions unless appropriate steps are taken to ensure that they

are adequately trained and capacitated. They also need to be equally exposed to a variety of skills development programmes in order to enhance their capacity to discharge their assigned responsibilities (White Paper on Traditional Leadership & Governance, 2003:31).

Cele (2011:11-12) states that before granting traditional leaders powers and functions one needs to understand what are the areas of conflict between traditional leaders and elected councillors. Cele (2011) cites, among others the following pertinent issues:

- The perception that democratic laws and the Constitution of South Africa undermine the age-old traditional roles of chiefs.
- The debate still rages on whether traditional authorities must be allowed to have a political voice given that they are not democratically elected nor administratively qualified to handle modern service delivery issues.
- Whether the all-important function of land administration can be entrusted to traditional leaders or be the sole responsibility of well-trained officials. This is the bone of contention in Nkomazi municipality as traditional authorities often follow their own prerogative in allocating land instead of following the SDF. The result is many unplanned settlements which put pressure on the municipality for provision of basic services.
- The issue of how women are treated in essentially patriarchal systems.
- The question of how to make traditional leaders accountable in so far as the concept is applied in democratic systems. Some arguments persist that traditional leadership is a regressive force when it comes to moves towards achieving accountable and efficient forms of democratic governance in South Africa.

In order to iron out differences between traditional authorities and the municipality, all these conflict areas need to be resolved but this often calls for the intervention of the provincial and national governments (Cele, 2011). This is because most communities still put a lot of faith and value into traditional systems.

Due to the fact that most land is controlled by traditional authorities in Nkomazi, the absence of enforceable land-use by-laws in these areas only compound the service delivery challenges. This often results in uncontrolled land use, and sometimes land

invasions. Many villages have land invasions of one type or the other, resulting in people living in shacks in areas that have been reserved for other municipal developments. The dual authority creates multiple challenges for municipal authorities whereby villagers tend to follow traditional leaders' directives which are not in line with the Spatial Development Framework. Without synchronisation of plans, there is bound to be confusion in terms of service delivery plans for villages. In addition, as highlighted above in terms of housing needs, uncontrolled expansion of settlements puts pressure on the ability of the municipality to provide all the associated amenities such as water and sanitation, electricity, housing, roads and even the public transport. Impatient communities that feel neglected resort to protests as a matter of catching the attention of the authorities.

The villages in Nkomazi, like anywhere else in South Africa, act like a reservoir for people with low incomes because they are 'affordable' (if they pay anything at all), or free at most. People from all walks of life can resort to a village if their income falls drastically. Economic refugees who are people from Swaziland and Mozambique and other African countries running from economic challenges, tend to make the villages their first port of call because of the economic ease with which they can settle in the villages. It is therefore, prudent to conclude that the rural nature of the municipality attracts indigent people who tend to compound the revenue collection and thus impacting on service delivery. Important lessons from other border municipalities could enhance our understanding of the socio-economic factors and land tenure matters. This will enable us to establish the nature of the challenges affecting other local municipalities within rural district municipalities such as Vhembe, and Mopani which borders Zimbabwe, and Mozambique as well as those in KwaZulu-Natal bordering Lesotho and Swaziland. Other studies from other rural municipalities would also need to be compared with Nkomazi to establish the nature of the service delivery challenges and establish unique ways of dealing with similar challenges. These rural municipalities need unique local economic development initiatives that recognise their special challenges as discussed below, are still a challenge in the Nkomazi Municipality.

6.3.3.8 Core challenges to economic development in Nkomazi

Core challenges impeding economic development in the NLM are discussed in this section.

6.3.3.8.1 Agriculture related challenges

The IDP of 2015-16 acknowledges that there is an uncoordinated approach to farmer development and support by the Ehlanzeni District, the Local Municipality and sector support departments. As a result, the mainstay of the Nkomazi economy remains performing below par. One of the reasons for this can also be attributed to the numerous unresolved land claims and land ownership wrangling. Naturally, issues of land claims are costly and time-consuming and in the situation at Nkomazi, they only prolong the process of economic development. These are delays in the system to resolve matters of land ownership, whereas, land is a prerequisite for agricultural development and other development agenda for the municipality. Besides the land issues, the municipality also noted that there seems to be lacking the appropriate levels of entrepreneurial, farming and marketing skills, especially among resettled farmers. These issues include lack of farming mentors in all types of farming, lack of capital funding for machinery and stock and lack of motivation among the youth to engage in agricultural activities. In addition, the municipality seems to have an inadequate spatial framework to deal with the challenges of the area. These challenges are not limited to agriculture related issues but transcend to other sectors as well.

6.3.3.8.2 General economic development constraints

Economic development in NLM requires an ongoing focus on promoting fast economic growth. This could then be reflected in increasing per capita GDP, high levels of employment, eradication of poverty and possibly a more equitable distribution of income. For a municipality such as Nkomazi, the elevation of economic development programmes is crucial as it directly impacts the income levels and hence the funding sources for the municipality. This has not been happening in Nkomazi and the municipal challenges faced in this regard relate to general poor relations with the established businesses, emerging entrepreneurs, and a non-performing local economic development unit. The source of these problems seems to be multifaceted.

From the point of view of the IDP, a number of LED programmes have been implemented, yet the impact on economic development has not been assessed. However, a number of other issues arise from the implementation, including internal challenges as well as administration challenges associated with these local economic development programmes.

Some possible LED programmes are affected by the perceived and real crime levels and security concerns among visitors, residents and businesses. The municipality needs to attract as much investment as possible to the locality and among the interviewed officials, there is recognition of that need;

The municipality must include and encourage the participation of all necessary stakeholders and businesses during the integrated planning process to allow easy integration of resources (Afika-NLM).

There is need for funding mechanism for infrastructure projects to create more job opportunities and the development of the tourism sector to make Nkomazi a tourism destination (Mluleki, Hlulani-NLM).

..Yes the municipality is poverty stricken, it falls amongst the eight CRDP municipalities (Mluleki-NLM).

The municipality is still facing challenges in attracting external investment. Skills shortage and the inability to retain scarce skills personnel is still a challenge. There is still massive infrastructure backlogs to be dealt with and resources are not matching demand (Celumusa-NLM).

The challenges are not limited to the municipal capacity but also encompass service providers. Some respondents indicated that some of the projects done for the municipality have been of poor quality, and at governance level the oversight function over compliance with legislation in financial management has simply been lacking. Some participants attributed this problem to poor planning, poor leadership role understanding and the perennial funding shortages.

Our monitoring systems as a municipality are so defective. There were too many loopholes and these are abused by unscrupulous people within the governing party. We need measures to ensure allocative mechanisms in place are fair for all citizens (Langa-DA).

Lack of appropriate technical expertise on the part of the municipality is also cited as a major hindrance to service delivery, and this is closely associated with the poor skills levels and low education capacity, as well as poor budgets. Yet other reasons cited include poor short term and long-term planning. Some participants complained that there are too many small plans which misdirect the effort of the municipality. Lack of long term plans by the municipality seems to point to lack of strategic vision by the key role players such as the Mayor or the Municipal Manager. As political appointees, lack of foresight due to short-termism cannot be ruled out. At the same time, most of the municipal plans often suffer from lack of implementation and absence of a sustainable maintenance plan. When all these issues are found in one municipality, the result is the dearth of service delivery where it is needed the most. The fact that service delivery faces serious challenges is shared by a number of authors (Odalonu, 2015; Md Shahriar, 2015; Takahashi, 2017). Lovan, Murray and Shaffer (2017) note the prevalence of corruption, huge infrastructure problems and human resource capacity. Similarly Vivian (2014) identifies capacity constraints, urban-rural migration, lack of infrastructure, as well as poor investment in infrastructure. At the same time Odolanu's analysis of Nigeria shows multiple challenges in service delivery including poor implementation of plans, non-existence of plans, deteriorating infrastructure whether its water, roads or electricity (Odolanu, 2015).

A number of internal challenges were also cited that affect the service delivery mandate of Nkomazi municipality. One of the issues cited pertains to 'silo planning' whereby different departments fail to synchronise their planning in order to avoid duplication and possible wastage of resources. To this end, some participants noted departments that need to apply more teamwork in their planning include the Technical Services, Geographic Information System, Town Planning and Strategic Planning department. Besides synchronised planning, there is an apparent need for institutionalized structures for planning of projects. This would ensure that plans do

not gather dust over the years without implementation. A casual glance in the IDPs from 2011-12 showed that most of the challenges currently being experienced in Nkomazi started way before the study period. In some cases, the plans are in existence but the implementation is lacking. For instance, the Revenue Enhancement Strategy developed as early as 2011-12 has not been implemented, seemingly because there are no champions to lead implementation of the strategy. This once again points to the seemingly inadequate role played by the Mayor and the Municipal Manager as project champions in the municipality. This lack of decisiveness is causing the municipality to lose revenue especially in areas that are not formalised. Another example, is that of the Spatial Land Use Management (SPLUMA) which was also introduced without a budget. The plans become irrelevant over time as they gather dust. Findings by the 80-20 Report (2014), show that implementation challenges are at the core of some of the service delivery challenges. While the plans may be available, without a proper implementation strategy, most of these plans remain on the shelves gathering dust. Thus, the conclusion by Oi (2015); and Edwards (2017), states that it takes more than appropriate skills to deliver service is vilified to some extent.

6.3.3.9 Administrative challenges encountered with the financial management system

Nkomazi Local Municipality utilises E-Venus as a financial management system. This is a comprehensive computerised package which is adequate for most of the accounting needs of the municipality. However, a number of problems are encountered in the operation of the package and these emanate mainly from inability to operate the program. The 2015-16 IDP noted that there have been no procedures and training of revenue staff for month-end balancing and processing. In addition, receipt numbers do not print on individual accounts, and some accounts will not even print. Revenue staff also struggle to do registration of properties and processing of journals on the system and this has been attributed to inadequate training on how to use the package. While the E-Venus system comes with a manual, the contention is that it is not user-friendly and therefore, accounts staff find it difficult to use. The computerised system is riddled with a number of weaknesses of which the undesirable outcome is that the municipality cannot come up with accurate bills each month.

Failure to produce accurate bills means that the municipality has to deal with numerous complaints, or inaccurate revenue collections. These challenges that can easily be overcome by retraining, the administrative procedures to execute it have taken a number of years to resolve while the municipality continues to lose revenue in the meantime. Generally, in contracts with service providers there is a support component built in the contract and also training can be organised in house and therefore, it is questionable why situations should deteriorate this far after committing substantial amounts to a service provider for a financial package. Indeed, the municipality also has an option to use other service providers to assist in dealing with the current difficulties.

6.4 Has the municipality delivered on its service delivery plans?

Given the findings above including comments from the survey respondents, it was pertinent to ask whether the municipality can be said to be delivering on its service delivery mandate. This question elicited a number of mixed responses to the service delivery situation in Nkomazi. Some of the respondents that captured the essence of the challenge in Nkomazi include the following;

...On water the municipality is trying but illegal connections and water leaks will always be a challenge. On electricity, yes there has been some improvements, as well as on the reliability of the service, many houses are connected. On roads the quality of roads constructed is very poor, and maintenance will be difficult, and many roads need to be redone (Mbongeni-NLM).

The Municipality has made significant strides in uplifting the quality of life for its residents through the LED programmes, job creation and provision of social grants. There have been massive infrastructure developments in the form of roads, water provision and ensuring access to quality education (Tokelo-NLM).

The Municipality has no capacity to deal with the current service delivery challenges. Robust engagement on visionary focus is sine qua non to continuous coaching, monitoring and evaluation. The OTP, COGTA and SALGA need to determine intervention mechanisms (Giles-NLM).

The Municipality is capable of delivering, all they need to do is to work as a team, have a clearer plan and resolve the issue of revenue base (Bongani-NLM).

The Municipality has no capacity to deliver service, they need to appoint skilled and capacitated people to deliver on the services. The ANC appointed officials need to run away from politics of patronage where they appoint kith and kin. It's a systematic destruction of the same hen that lays the eggs (Molefe-DA).

The views that the Municipality has delivered on its priority areas is valid to some extent and is also supported by the IDPs over the study period. At the same time, views that service delivery is encumbered are also valid because the IDPs give statistics that validate those claims. However generally, it seems the Nkomazi municipality is facing major service delivery challenges. The IDP of 2015-16 lists a number of service delivery issues which they say 'keep the mayor and the municipal manager awake at night'. This euphemism relates to the troublesome, problematic services delivery issues listed as water, electricity and public protests. Throughout the years covered in the study period, the annual IDPs relate similar shortcomings in the service delivery mandate. By September 2015 Nkomazi had experienced eight officially reported service delivery protests over a range of issues and these highlight the plight of the people in the community. While some of the officials interviewed overemphasised the ability of the Municipality over the past five years, the communities have expressed their dissatisfaction in more ways than one.

6.5 Chapter summary

This chapter dealt with the findings from the IDPs of the Nkomazi local municipality for the period 2011 to 2016 as well as the responses by the officials from the municipality that were interviewed. Generally, the responses from the officials indicate that the municipality has tried its best to meet the service delivery needs of the communities. At the same time, responses from the community show that they are more disgruntled than ever before. The community responses and those made by the opposition members tally, and seem to pin the blame of the ruling party policies. Statistics have been presented in the form of tables to indicate the progress made in relation to poverty levels, provision of electricity, roads, storm-water drains and housing. This is

the evidence for the assertions made by the respondents. The main challenge is that service delivery has not been the same in all areas, as the urban areas receive a fairly consistent level of service for which they are paying for. The rural areas generally do not pay for the services and hence get subsidised by the four main urban areas in the municipality. Service delivery in the rural areas is unpredictable and has not improved significantly despite claims to the contrary by the respondents. The greatest challenge in the municipality seems to be a combination of haphazard planning and poor revenue collections. The Nkomazi Municipality is heavily dependent on the Province and the State for development grants.

From the discussion in this chapter, the challenges facing the municipality are quite apparent, very demanding and of a mammoth size, but they are still manageable. However, innovative strategies and highly capable leaders are required to chart a way out of the myriad of problems besetting the municipality. The next chapter presents the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach, which was adopted and applied to the Nkomazi Local Municipality in order to assess the effectiveness of some of the municipality's interventions in the local economy.

CHAPTER SEVEN: PROPOSED CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR IMPROVED SERVICE DELIVERY

7.1 Introduction

This chapter presents and discusses the proposed conceptual framework for service delivery in local government institutions. The chapter restates that research gaps from the theoretical works that were discussed in this study, resulting in the development of the new framework whose constructs are discussed in relation to service delivery in Nkomazi Local Municipality. The research gaps identified in theoretical frameworks are restated first followed by gaps found in literature review.

7.2 Research gaps in theoretical frameworks

These research gaps are restated from chapter two of the study. The major weakness of the Efficient Services Model was that it de-emphasised the need for inclusivity or democratic participation by beneficiaries as long as the services are being provided effectively and efficiently. However it does not give specific ways of measuring *efficiency or effectiveness* as these are subjective terms. Therefore, the researcher posits that these gaps should be addressed through a holistic approach that involves a slew of constructs.

Not all pundits of the democratic model think that is the panacea to service delivery challenges. Among other issues, there are concerns that involving local people may lead to a variety of unwanted outcomes. The model results in a possible increase in the workload, need for extra but unavailable resources. However, alienating citizens from decision-making is perceived as a way of concealing nefarious acts that breed corruption. Involvement of citizenry should be reconsidered if municipalities desire to improve service delivery.

Despite the professed successes of the LED model, a number of challenges stem from its usage. Some authors question why some municipalities are very successful than others when using LED. The challenges of making LED to work stem from the fact that no concrete outcomes are drawn in the setting up of the partnership (Huxham & Hilbert, 2018).

The civic-centric model are often criticised because they lack formal structures (Desse, 2012). They have a tendency of being loose informal arrangements and they cannot be relied on to tackle the more demanding service delivery requirements. Another major drawback that has been levelled against this model could be seen regarding its supposed lack of transparency and accountability. Govender (2012) states that transparency and accountability are influenced by governance structures and systems in place. However, South African municipalities have been widely reported to be breeding grounds for corruption and a lack of accountability and transparency.

One of the most noted weaknesses of LEDAs is their tendency to let corruption thrive (Banfield, 2015). In terms of the other alternative service delivery arrangements, there is great potential to improve service, when they are properly implemented. Critics of LEDAs cite their susceptibility to public sector corruption as a factor that downplays their role. Public sector corruption due to lack of accountability and transparency has contributed significantly to misuse of resources which could be used for developmental projects. Corruption should be curbed to prevent personal enrichments at the expense of taxpayers.

The Sustainable livelihoods model involves actors at all levels; state, private organisation, civic organisations, the general public and development agents. State actors are instrumental in providing key infrastructural assets, such as roads water, electricity. The drawback of the model is its focus on community assets foregoing other factors that drive service delivery.

With reference to the above weaknesses, there was motivation to develop a conceptual framework that might guide local municipalities to monitor, audit and improve service delivery. Key constructs that arise from the gaps include: exclusivity/democratic participation; cannot measure efficiency; workload which depletes available resources; lack of concrete outcomes; lack of formal structures; lack of transparency and accountability; failure to curb corruption; skilled human capital and misalignment of IPD goals with municipal objectives. These key constructs were used to develop the proposed conceptual framework for service delivery as discussed in chapter seven of the study.

7.3 Gaps identified in literature review

The research study consulted a wide range of literature to augment, argue and synthesize ideas put forward in this study. The research admits that rich literature was presented in this study, focusing on the challenges faced by municipalities regarding service delivery. Some of the notable gaps that emerged from literature include:

There was generic discussion of policies that guide municipalities in their operations. However, the study failed to provide practical steps of how policies were implemented in municipalities. In addition, there was no indication if any of the policies were properly implemented and how effective/ineffective they were. Literature did not provide answers if municipalities were conversant with policies and the repercussions of transgressions (Damborg et al., 2014).

Literature extensively discussed the concept of corruption and how it affects service delivery and performance of institutions. However, there were deficiencies to understand the interventions in place to curb corruption. Lessons from other countries and municipalities have not demonstrated practical steps to curb corruption. Conto et al. (2015) argue that accountability and transparency are extended service deliveries hence transgressions should carry heavy punishments and rewards for following regulations. The views by Conto et al. (2015) do not prescribe such punishments and rewards, therefore, this a drawback presented in literature.

An overview of transparency and accountability briefly highlighted that it was the breeding ground for corruption. Literature review discussed transparency and accountability under the auspices of corruption, yet, this is an important concept that should be dealt with separately highlighting its impact to service delivery and communities. Public services need to be driven by customer needs rather than what the service providers are prepared to give (Cameron, 2014). This calls for public servants to act with a sense of transparency and accountability.

Another gap identified in literature was its failure to identify and recommend a specific service delivery framework for municipalities. A number of models were suggested based on how they worked in other countries. Most of the models were derived from

developed economies, thus, might not be applicable to South Africa whose dynamics are different from developed economies. The study also failed to identify a locally designed service delivery framework which could resonate with the prevailing conditions in local government. Beauegard (2014) demonstrates that service delivery in some developed nations has evolved to higher order requests for non-essential services such as sports facilities or cultural facilities.

With reference to the research gaps identified in theoretical frameworks and literature review, the study proposes a conceptual framework, an indigenous model which might be applied to local government authorities to improve service delivery. The model was designed in line with events occurring in a natural setting-NLM. Service delivery is an elusive target for many service organisations. The next section discusses the proposed conceptual framework.

7.4 Proposed conceptual framework for service delivery in local municipalities

The illustration in Figure 7.1 below depicts eight variables that should be considered by management in local municipalities if there is desire to achieve any specific goals. At the centre of figure 7.1, there is an oval shape where all variables are converging. As soon as the variables converge, there is a continuous interaction of activities which cannot not be understood by merely looking at the model, but practitioners understand configurations or patterns of interactions that produce high quality service delivery. The central oval shape also portrays a successful municipality is one whose efforts are coordinated in a holistic approach, guided by policies. Local authorities have to deal with the challenge arising from lack of infrastructure. Among major concerns are poor road systems, inadequate water supply systems, lack of effluent services, inability to provide or to attend to public amenities including health centres, schools, community halls and street lighting. Service delivery is also found lacking when it comes to matters of basic communication systems. In other cases where the local authority administers housing, more challenges manifest in the form of inefficient allocative mechanisms (Buchanan, 2018). At the centre of the service delivery challenges are lack of a supportive budgetary system, which in turn translates to lack of physical resources. Without appropriate resources, the service delivery agent is set

up to fail in its mandate (Clark & Wojcik, 2018). Figure 7.1 below depicts the proposed conceptual framework whose constructs are discussed immediately afterwards.

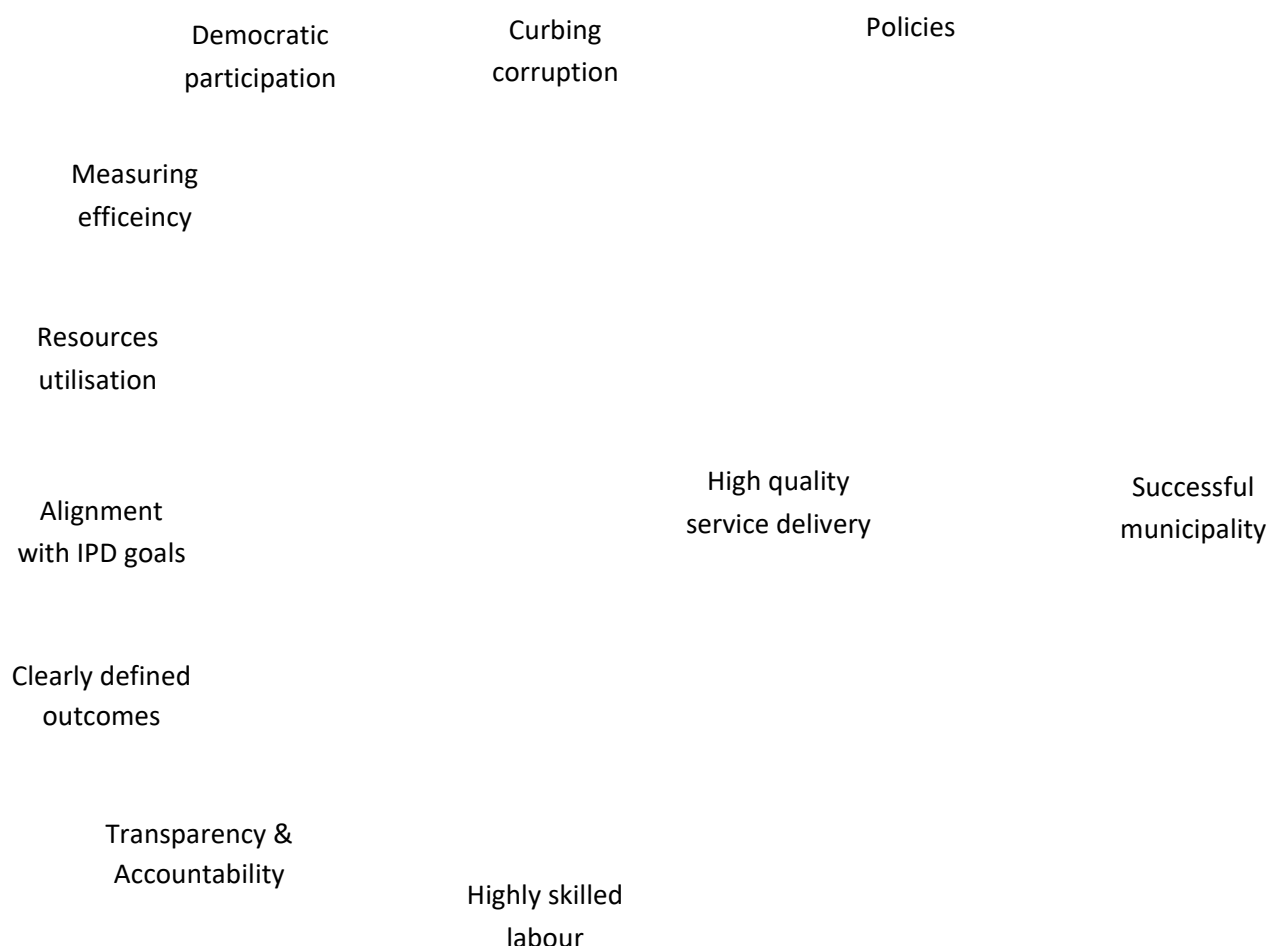


Figure 7.1: Proposed conceptual framework for service delivery

Source: Author (2020)

The next section discusses the variables shown in figure 7.1 above.

7.4.1 Highly skilled workforce

Both literature review and primary study revealed that local governments attract less skilled and qualified personnel because of poor working conditions and low salaries. Thus, lack of qualified personnel especially in certain key technical areas, unresponsive civil service create challenges for NLM. The other issues revolve around lack of leadership, lack of autonomy in decision making, poor work culture (Ibok,

2014). Cloete, Eigelaar-Meets, Fortuin and Sewell (2018) state that there is a crisis for skills development in South African municipalities.

The skills brought to the workplace by municipal employees are a critical input in the delivery of services in a municipality. The researcher asserts that objective of managing municipal personnel is therefore not to necessarily minimise the “wage bill”, but rather to ensure that people with the required skills are recruited, retained and appropriately deployed. Aphane (2020) argues that in most instances senior appointments in municipalities are done on the basis of political affiliations- that is, they are political employees subservient to their political parties. In addition, less qualified personnel are appointed into positions that they do not have knowledge about or have no idea what is expected of them.

Every municipality needs sufficient workers and the right skills mix to deliver services effectively. Thus, getting the right mix of skills means striking an appropriate balance between managers, technical personnel and others particularly in key sectors. For example, the positions of municipal manager and chief financial officer are critical to sound corporate governance and the effective management of the municipality. Therefore, every municipality should ensure that these two critical positions are filled by appropriately qualified individuals who can lead the administrative roles. Section 57 of the Municipal Systems Act (2000) is very clear that all managers who report directly to the municipal manager must be subject to annual performance agreement. It is because these managers are responsible for different service delivery departments within the municipality.

Human capital externalities emphasize the role of human capital to boost local government productivity (Lucas, 1988). A more productive workforce raises a municipality’s incentives to entry, which in turn raises employment opportunities for both skilled and unskilled workers (Moretti, 2004). During the interviews, participants and literature review showed that infrastructure challenges contributed significantly to protests in NLM. Attributable to the lack of infrastructure are issues related to lack of financial and skilled human resources. Municipalities engage in construction (engineering, town and regional planning; financial planning and project management)

activities which all require highly skilled individuals, who are always in scarce or very expensive to recruit and replace.

Draai and Oshoniyi (2013) state that the availability of competent local government officials who are able to demonstrate performance and managerial leadership and accountability in terms of the mandate is critical to the realisation of strategic local government goals. In this instance, competence refers to the inter-relationship between the public officials and the institution to meet optimal and measurable performance that lead service outcomes. Municipalities need individuals with competence to provide strategic direction and leadership to meet local development.

The researcher is cognisant that South Africa is afflicted by scarcity of skills that severely impacts on productivity of the economy as well as meeting developmental needs. All spheres of government have been and continue to be confronted with scarce skills because of the deficit of qualified and experienced talent or individuals are unavailable or do not meet the stipulated criteria (Erasmus & Breier, 2009:3). The legacy systems of apartheid contributed significantly to the scarcity of skills in South Africa, because the system of education at the time, was deficient in promoting equity, participation and accessibility. Some individuals were prohibited from accessing certain professions, training resulting in lack of skill and qualified expert practitioners. Service delivery in municipalities has been impeded by the absence of particular abilities such as general management and information and communication technology that is required to meet productivity and service delivery.

7.4.2 Transparency and accountability

The issues of transparency and accountability are strategic entry points for addressing local government reform because they are key features that enhance public sector credibility and legitimacy. Participants indicated that increasing public sector credibility created a positive image of the NLM and enable citizens and government to effectively govern, utilise resources, provide services and increase the community's overall quality of life. In developed economies, auditing commissions are set-up with the aim of achieving accountability and transparency. Auditing Commissions include citizen representatives, chamber representatives and local municipal officials. The objectives

of the Commission are to facilitate community participation and to oversee and audit works and social programs.

Theoretical works discussed in Chapter two failed to interrogate the challenges of accountability and transparency in local government. The State of local government in South Africa report (2009:109) posits that a lack of accountability and internal oversight are key features that deprive citizens high-quality services. Municipalities are poorly governed as a result of widespread municipal corruption and abuse of political office. In addition, the formal accountable municipal systems are inaccessible and ineffective, which in turn lead to lack of accountability and transparency (Maropo, 2014:1).

Positive perceptions about local government can only be strengthened through transparency, professionalism and accountability. Heywood (2007) states that transparency and accountability are core values that determine governance by which society manages its economic, political and societal affairs. Governance entail the various ways through which social life is coordinated, thus Govender (2012) states that governance is about implementation of laws, the actual provision of services and products to citizens of the country by government.

In order to improve service delivery, NLM and other municipalities should not overlook accountability and transparency. Litvak (2012:78) defines accountability as an obligation that explains and justifies actions taken by politicians and public officials- public accountability. Public accountability demands that the actions of local government institutions must be published in order to encourage public criticism and debate. The researcher asserts that public accountability compels municipal officials and councillors to openly debate and justify their actions taken, thereby empowering institutions of legislation to exercise control over public resources on behalf of their citizens.

Transparency compliments accountability in that it covers suitability, accessibility, reliability and quality (Litvak, 2012::74). In other simple terms, transparency is the opposite of confidentiality and privacy because it is related to clarity of all municipal

activities to get explanations and comprehensiveness. The researcher posits that transparency is the foundation to avoid discrimination against some people and privileges for others, corruption, protectionism and to prevent abuse. Therefore, public officials and politicians must be as open as possible about all actions and decisions taken by them for community services. It is through transparency that local government promotes accountability and provision of information for citizens.

There are reports that politicians and municipal officials are in the propensity of accruing wealth at the expense of poor communities in NLM, hence they become non-transparent and lack accountability. Political infighting, conflict between senior management and councillors and human resources management issues negatively impact and influence and result in a lack of accountability and transparency. Pundits of the Efficient Services Model and Democratic Model state that involving local people may lead to a variety of unwanted outcomes. The models result in a possible increase in the workload, need for extra but unavailable resources. However, the researcher disagrees that involving many stakeholders enhances accountability and transparency in public officials.

7.4.3 Clearly defined outcomes

Politicians and public officials have to learn to establish quantifiable objectives where possible, and thereafter should be accountable for meeting those objectives. Setting the service standard of performance should be done by public officials and politicians at municipal institutions, and therefore they must measure themselves to ensure that they meet the standard that is accountable. That will subsequently be the service standard that is accepted as transparent. This will be the important aspect in the development of adequate accountability practices. Therefore, the organizational leadership future is found in good performance by both politicians and officials which should be based on more accurate performance measures and reporting mechanism. The performance measures that should be developed must place equal emphasis on the service delivery agreed upon. This development and incorporation with a view to accountability will improve ways to measure the performances of municipal officials (Litvak, 2012:83).

7.4.4 Alignment with IDP goals

In South Africa the Integrated Development Plan is the mechanism through which local government compiles the development needs of the municipality (Welford, 2016; Amin, 2017). The IDP serves as a principal strategic management instrument for municipalities. It is legislated by the Municipal Systems Act 2000 (Act 32 of 2000). Oranje and Huyssteen in (Fox and Van Rooyen 2004:131- 132), see integrated development planning as a crucial instrument of development planning in the local sphere, and as a process that helps municipalities to prepare strategic development plans on the basis of a five-year period (Municipal Systems Act 2000 (Act 32 of 2000), Section 35 (1)).

It can only be evidence-based process grounded in research and location -based as it is aimed at addressing problems and challenges in situ. Other views show the IDP to be a super plan, a way of coordinating the work of otherwise disparate departments towards one noble objective. IDP is seen as occurring within the local economic and social context of a given area. It also depends on the nature of the infrastructure available as well as general conditions of living.

The IDP works as the framework around which all municipal projects are governed and promoted. The IDP is a platform to include all stakeholders in the municipal space on issues of development. This includes the fact that other government departments need to work along with the IDP, even stream-lining their budgets towards the realisation of IDP goals and objectives. In the ensuing sections there is discussion on the centrality of IDP in the service delivery issues at local government (Welford, 2016). Thus, the IDP is based on community needs and priorities, allowing communities to participate in identifying their most important needs. In addition, the IDP process encourages all stakeholders who reside and conduct business within a municipal area to participate in the preparation and implementation of the development plan.

Past theoretical works have failed to interrogate the alignment of municipal goals with the IDP goals, creating a vacuum for service delivery. During the interviews, participants stated that employees are given tasks or assignments without clearly outlined objectives. This demonstrated that municipal management is contributing to

the confusion amongst employees by not engaging and discussing the IDP goals and how they influenced municipal goals.

According to the White Paper on Local Government, 1998, Integrated Development Plan is one of the three tools of developmental local government. The other two are performance management and partnership with citizens. In order to ensure co-ordination of the three spheres, municipalities are compelled to align their planning activities with those of national and provincial spheres, as well as those of municipalities that might be affected by their planning (Cloete and Thornhill 2005:119-121). The IDP is a principal strategic instrument that guides and informs all planning, budgeting, management and decision-making in a municipality.

Mathye (2002:30) is of the opinion that municipalities must ensure that the projects are in line with the objectives and strategies of municipalities. Traditional leaders who represent traditional authorities in municipal councils participate in the debates. The whole plan in terms of the initiation of the project, and its implementation through to monitoring should be planned in this phase. The municipality is able to design a programme for a period of five years, as required by law. The researcher concurs with Mathye (2002) by including the “alignment with IDP goals” variable in the proposed conceptual framework because past theoretical works have overlooked the importance of IDP as a strategic management instrument. All municipal objectives and strategies should be designed and aligned to the IDP goals. This helps both management and employees to understand their responsibilities and goals.

The next section discusses optimum utilisation and allocation of resources.

7.4.5 Optimum utilisation and allocation of resources

The Sustainable Livelihoods Framework delved more on the five types of assets/resources that sustained NLM communities. Municipal resources refer to human, financial, immovable, movable, tangible and intangible assets (Govender, 2012). The five broad categories of assets are discussed as follows:

Human assets, skills and knowledge: Specific human assets identified during the survey included – *being able to acquire new skills and knowledge due to intervention*

of the Nkomazi local Municipality. The more complex the business is, the higher the level of mental skills required in order to run it. Higher levels of education are not always correlating with business success but are required in order to resolve complex business challenges.

Natural assets: The natural assets derive from the environment included the physical elements, soil, water and air. On the other hand, these assets relate to the environmental conditions such as the hydrological cycle, which governs some of the useful livelihoods' activities. Some of the natural assets that were identified as being available among the businesses surveyed include water, land, livestock grazing land. The natural assets are a prerequisite for establishing most businesses especially in a rural set-up such as Nkomazi. The NLM has been instrumental through the LED programme (among other programmes) in availing these assets. As a rural community Nkomazi has abundant land which can be used by entrepreneurs for a number of enterprises. Among these enterprises are such ventures that include retail shops, small scale and subsistence livestock farming (cattle and goats), tourism services and manufacturing. The abundance of natural resources is critical in measuring the effect of municipal interventions among the population". In Nkomazi, the local municipality has through the LED programme assisted in availing land to some of the landless.

Physical assets: From the interviews done, "the business owners identified that they had access to the following assets: electricity, telephone communication, water points, running water, production equipment, transport a, fences and houses. Most of the physical assets available to the SMMEs surveyed were facilitated by the municipality.

Social assets: The social asset refers to the social resources, (networks, social claims, social relations, affiliations, associations) upon which people draw when pursuing different livelihood strategies (Oberlack, Tejada, Messerli, Rist & Giger, 2016). Among the social assets, participants identified improved relationships with the Nkomazi Local Municipality, a range of household networks, and churches, as well as being a member of one or two business and economic groups. Social assets are often linked to business networking. In the context of livelihoods framework, the existence of a support group such as a *Stokvel*, allows members an extension from which they

can access facilities that would normally be unavailable from conventional systems. For instance, some members acknowledged that they were able to save modest sums through the *Stokvel* mechanism and hence they can take care of their families in times of need. The *Stokvel* provides an alternate subsidized banking mechanism, which is convenient to the members.

Financial assets: The respondents identified increased savings and access to credit, availability of wages and pensions. Savings were mentioned by more participants and the importance of this arises from the fact that capita in the SLF is mobilized from the efforts of the people, of which savings from the most important component.

Technology assets: In the contemporary business environment, many business processes are automated to improve efficiency and service delivery (Maropo, 2014). Information technology assets are integral components of the organisation's systems and network infrastructure. The rapidly increasing demand for municipal services and the National initiatives for accelerated infrastructure development and maintenance required a higher level of expertise and knowledge of management systems.

The researcher posits that it is the responsibility of municipal management to mobilise, allocate and efficiently utilise the above resources in order to provide high quality services. Efficient use of resources should culminate in improved service delivery, standard of living and investor confidence. Investors generate interest in municipalities that demonstrate transparency, accountability and progress. In addition, investors might be prepared to provide some of the resources required by the municipality. Managing resources is an integral part of internal procedures. There are reports that many local government related matters focus on blatant criminal acts such as thefts, bribes, fraud in different forms and manipulation of the tender processes (Tshibalo, 2018). Yet there is rampant misuse of information and communication devices and services resources, which lead to significant loss to councils. Such conduct is unacceptable because it cheats the communities whilst paying too much for the quantum and quality of services they receive.

The NLM might not achieve its vision if municipal resources are not managed properly. For example, private telephone calls are not accounted for creating a huge telephone bill. Employees and management should be held accountable. Furthermore, misuse of municipal vehicles, printing devices for private matters, misuse of travelling allowances, use of IT equipment for personal businesses and other resources should all be guided by policies to mitigate misuse, but rather improve services. The researcher, therefore, states that proper utilisation of resources is important for maintaining productivity, because it prevents staff from underperforming or being overburdened by workloads and burn-outs. Projects can be managed with better visibility, reducing the risk of oversights. By including the mobilization and optimum utilisation of resources variable in the proposed conceptual framework, the researcher asserts municipalities will yield better return on investment.

Municipal management would be able to create a resource utilisation report to show them all the resources they have available and how they are currently performing with reference to service delivery- an elusive target. Effective utilisation of resources entails getting things done in the right manner, in minimum time with the minimum cost incurred and with no wastage of resources.

The next section discusses the concept of measuring efficiency and effectiveness.

7.4.6 Measuring efficiency and effectiveness

The accountability of government is often measured by the level of services provided at the local level. Arguments by a number of authors show that generally the level of trust in government rises when service delivery improves (Beauegard, 2014; Malemela & Yingi, 2016). There are many indicators used to evaluate local government efficiency. Measuring public sector efficiency is not an easy task (Boyle, 2006) despite the existence of so many performance evaluation systems in place.

Over the years, many countries have experienced fiscal crises as they lost capacity to sustain growing public expenditure. Demand for public services has not waned under fiscal crises, and the public sector is expected to respond to sophisticated demands by the citizens. One of the strategies to respond to these demands is to decentralize state

activities, while there are doubts if decentralisation improves efficiency (Kazepov, 2010). The capacity of the public sector to produce goods and services from the available resources it extracts from society defines efficiency. The question one poses is, “Does the NLM have capacity to transform a set of inputs into a set of outputs?”

In order to implement strategies for measuring efficiency and effectiveness, the NLM management has to consider resources at its disposal and what projects are being undertaken. Cognisance should be given to total expenditure on selected functions, healthcare facilities, quality of local workforce, availability of land as has been discussed in previous chapters. High labour costs could be a symptom of inefficiency.

7.4.7 Democratic participation of citizens

One of the most powerful tools to assure public access to information is a participatory public budgetary hearing program and planning. This public hearing is a participatory mechanism that allows for the elaboration of the municipal budget in a citizen forum. Citizens participate in government decision-making to increase cooperation in the municipal budget process (World Bank, 2018). Making information available to the public is necessary, albeit insufficient, step in building transparency in local governments. A participatory process is necessary in order to assure accountability and reinforce health citizenry-government relations.

The participatory methodology used in workshops increases transparency, credibility and the capacity to address municipal problems. Civil society become an integral part of the local-decision-making system. Citizens decide the manner in which local government expenditures are allocated. The researcher believes that democratic participation in running the affairs of the Nkomazi Local Municipality will provide citizens with an understanding that puts an end to bribery, frees up financial resources that could otherwise be allocated to essential services. Citizens will then feel more satisfied with municipal services and complain less as a result of the appreciation of the fact that prioritization and trade-offs are necessary when working with limited financial resources.

Democratic participation empowers stakeholders to care about projects and monitor their performance. Buchanan (2018) posits that participation through workshops is vital because workshops elicit strong interest on the part of civil society to understand administrative organisation, thus, workshops enable citizens to improve the quality of municipal management. Participants indicated that they are alienated from the decision-making processes in the NLM, because the municipality was out of touch with its citizenry. The study also revealed that alienating the public from decision-making processes and secrecy surrounding local government, reinforced the public perception of potential wrongdoing, thereby, increasing the incentives for corruption and decreasing the incentives to generate and save municipal resources.

Participants also stated that citizen participation enhances transparency and accountability. The views raised during the interviews are in line with the researcher's assertions in the proposed conceptual model that, involving citizens helps them to remain abreast of municipal policies, programs and activities by reviewing documents and information such as disclosure of assets by senior management, council members and performance indicators for delivery of key services.

Existing platforms are weak and inefficient for public participation, thus, create problems for officials and politicians to be held accountable for their actions and decisions by the public. Thus, public participation is an imperative feature for inclusion the proposed conceptual framework for service delivery because it addresses the weaknesses of the Efficient Services model which de-emphasises the need for inclusivity or democratic participation by beneficiaries as long as the services are being provided effectively and efficiently.

7.4.8 Curbing corruption

Bolatito and Ibrahim (2014) indicate that corruption is a major challenge confronting many institutions, both private and public sector. There are reports that high levels of corruption by government officials have detrimental effects on service delivery. . Perceptions of wholesale abuse of funds by public officials makes a mockery of the service delivery mandate to the grassroots, as officials are perceived to be enriching themselves at the expense of the deserving members of the public (Jayne, 2017;

Schumpeter, 2017). Belletti, Marescotti and Touzard (2017) state that unethical conduct is consequential to municipalities, further exposing these institutions without capacity to perform their mandates. Countries like Nigeria, Zimbabwe and South Africa have reported high rates of graft by government officials, which derail the completion of service delivery projects (Chukwuemeka et al., 2014).

In different ways, corruption is said to result in inflated prices for projects, contracts may be abandoned or delayed while in some cases books are cooked up to cover up for losses by local authorities. In most cases the outcome is that government pays far beyond the service rendered and this has not benefitted service delivery in a positive way (Bolatito & Ibrahim, 2014). For example, South Africa has established a Commission of enquiry- "State Capture" to ascertain the level of looting that happened during the period of Mr Jacob Zuma's presidency. Information presented at the State Capture Commission of inquiry points to lack of good governance and accountability. Officials serving the public should exhibit discipline and integrity than any other members of society. Belletti et al. (2017) state that public officers have an obligation of honest and ingenuous accounting and commitment to democratic processes.

Municipal management, as custodians of public institutions should attend to long-term legitimacy of these institutions- legitimacy that is prone to erosion with every report of corruption or perception thereof (Anti-Corruption Coordinating Committee, 2019). Corruption can be eradicated if awareness is raised on good governance including communication on the anti-corruption work being performed in municipalities and highlighting the roles of communities in the fight against unethical conduct, fraud and corruption by public officials.

In order to curb corruption, fraud and unethical behaviour, individual ethical behaviour or actions by employees should be applied. These actions are determined by policies, procedures and business objectives with which employees are required to comply. If a person is conscious of his/her conduct is against common good of the organisation or other employees, such conduct is unethical (Anti-Corruption Coordinating Committee, 2019). The integrity of employees acting on behalf of the municipality underlies all local government relationships, including those with customers, suppliers

and communities as well as those between employees, thus, highest standards of ethical business conduct are required of Local Government in fulfilling their responsibilities.

The World Bank (2018) states that corruption ranks together with effective democratic representation as the most important problems facing local governments. Because local governments are challenged to develop innovative ways of building effective, accountable and transparent systems that are able to deliver services. Corruption distorts allocation and utilisation of resources and the performance of local governments, which result in increased social polarisation, inefficiency in public services, low investment in municipalities and decreased economic growth (World Bank, 2018). Combating corruption is crucial to the broader goal of achieving more effective, fair and efficient local governments. The rationale for curbing corruption should not arise from the perception of corruption as “immoral or ethical behaviour”, rather the rationale should be the negative impact corruption has on economic development and investment and its role in deepening poverty in local governments (World Bank, 2018).

Participants indicated that the rate of corruption in the NLM was alarming and detrimental to service delivery. The views by participants have been buttressed by the discussions above, thus, it is imperative to curb corruption with the sole objective of improving service delivery in the NLM.

7.4.9 Policy implementation

Planning is the key in the implementation of policies including the IDP. All activities need to be presented with a plan on how they should be realized. As a local government activity, planning refers to the processes of assisting in the taking of decisions on the allocation and the use of the existing resources (Mabin in Parnell et al. 2002:40). During the time of resistance in the 1980s, there was a demand for planning to be a participatory process – by the people of South Africa – and not just a unilateral process (Mabin in Parnell et al. 2002:44-45).

Policy implementation, as part of the whole policy-formulation process, means that traditional leaders must also participate in the deliberations of municipal councils, where community decisions are taken. The Municipal Systems Act, 2000 (Act 32 of 2000), Section (81) provides that traditional authorities, which traditionally observe a system of customary law in the area of a municipality, may participate through their traditional leaders, identified in terms of sub-section (2), in the deliberation of the council of that particular municipality; and those traditional leaders must be allowed to attend and participate in any meeting of the council.

Policies must be complemented by appropriate procedures in order to determine the attitudes, behaviour and ethical standards of the leaders of an organisation. Policies and procedures are certainly required to promote the organisational culture for upholding acceptable behaviour and to mitigate risks. In this paper the author set out to do three things: the economic impact of resources misuse; to assess the policies; procedures and information and compliance mechanism instigated in regard to resource misuse; and seeks to recommend the methods that can be applied to curtail the dilemmas often encountered by municipal councils.

The challenge confronting many local government authorities is the violation/transgression of policies. Both management and employees have developed a tendency to disregard policies and engage in nefarious and unethical business practices- corruption. Bajari et al. (2014) and Matshazi (2017) state that governance should be enforced and appropriate punishments (jail custodial sentences, hefty fines) should be clearly outlined in the code of conduct. Audit Committees comprising people external to the organisation should be appointed. The appointments should not be done along partisan political lines. Monitoring and evaluation of policies should be done on a regular basis and anomalies reported and attended to mitigate damage and losses.

7.5 Application of the proposed conceptual model

It has been highlighted that the major contribution of the study is the development of a conceptual model which might be used as an industry best practice to achieve superior service delivery. The study sought to establish a solution to service delivery-

an elusive target for the NLM, thus, this section applies the proposed conceptual framework to a local government environment.

With reference to the discussion above, the researcher has pointed out that the nine constructs point to a circle and their combined influence on service delivery can only be measured by teasing out the patterns from the circle (Chigada & Kyobe, 2018). The proposed conceptual model is built on gaps that have not been identified by other models and were missing from the literature review. The constructs in the proposed study have been tested before in other environments but not in a local government environment.

The developed model can be used in conjunction with other models, irrespective of the industry or business environment. The study contends that the nine constructs identified are common in many firms today. Further validation of the conceptual model will be performed when this report is presented to management of the NLM. The researcher will take a leading role in the implementation of the proposed model, reducing all processes to writing. The steps that will be followed include a formal introduction of the model to various divisions, followed by meetings and presentations of the model. This will give stakeholders opportunities to ask questions for clarity. The researcher will ensure that the purpose of the model is to enhance service delivery without compromising workflow processes or job losses.

After the completion of the consultative processes, management will establish project teams to identify and work on each of the constructs highlighted in the model. Clemence and Gido (2012) state that when managing complex projects, the Work Break Down (WBS) helps project teams to decompose the project into smaller manageable work packages. This approach will enable equitable resources distribution and monitoring of the progress. All stakeholders will be involved in the project from inception to completion. As in a normal project management environment, all tools, techniques, skills and knowledge will be applied to the implementation of the conceptual model. The researcher contends that with all the stakeholders' commitment and available resources, this model will be successfully implemented with positive results expected as each construct is managed.

7.6 Chapter summary

This chapter presented a discussion of the proposed conceptual framework for improving service delivery in local governments. Nine constructs were identified as major gaps from past theoretical works and literature review. If properly implemented through the guidance municipal management and the researcher, the NLM might derive benefits and improve its performance. The following chapter presents conclusions and recommendations on the basis of findings made in this study.

CHAPTER EIGHT: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 Introduction

This chapter provides conclusions drawn from the major findings of the research. The findings are supported by a service delivery model which provides new ways and means to address the service delivery challenges at the Nkomazi Local Municipality. Thereafter the implications for research, practice, policy and training are outlined.

8.2 Service delivery model for Nkomazi

The analysis made in this study showed that municipal service delivery is governed by (1) the Integrated Development Plan and the Performance Management System; (2) intergovernmental relations; (3) the Expanded Public Works Programme; (4) Batho Pele; (5) the budget; and (6) policy and procedures. The provision of municipal services is at the core of most of the promises made by government to the people of South Africa. The local municipalities bear the weight of delivering these promises that will result in the development of communities and the creation of job opportunities. However, in order to fulfil that mandate there is need for the local municipality to be a dynamic organisation that demonstrates resourcefulness, efficiency, transparency and accountability.

From the researcher's viewpoint, recommendations for effective service delivery in Nkomazi are not a matter of reinventing the wheel, but rather requires an implementation, monitoring and evaluation of plans that are already in place. The municipality does not suffer from lack of plans but lack of implementation. Where implementation is not the core challenge, the projects or plans are stalled due to a myriad of other reasons. The proposed conceptual model discussed in Chapter 7 captures essential components that impede municipalities from achieving service delivery targets. Most of the models of service delivery identified in Chapter Two would only partially address the issues in the municipality.

Recommendations in this study do not assume that service delivery issues are a simple case of cobbling up plans, fitting them into the Five-year IDP and then implementing at the first allocation of a budget. The complex demands of local

governance make service delivery such a challenge that even under well-run municipalities, projects may be stalled due to the many competing and diverse interests concerned.

8.3 Analysis of livelihood strategies in the Nkomazi context

In order for Nkomazi Local Municipality to effectively offer service delivery, the local livelihoods of the people must be considered in context. This requires that the 'household status' be evaluated in terms of access to certain assets; natural capital, physical capital, human capital, financial capital and social capital. The presence or absence of these assets is critical because they form the basis on which labour is combined in different proportions in order to implement certain livelihood strategies.

Livelihood strategies or activities which the NLM implement as LED interventions could involve basic domestic activities such as chicken rearing, or small scale agriculture, business, tourism, general trading or even pastoralism. Various permutations and combinations for assistance are possible through the LED programme. These LED programmes need to be supported by the NLM in order to improve the household budgets/ incomes, improve the well-being of the Nkomazi society through improved health systems, security and freedom of choice among other things. However, the LED support or intervention requires deliberate policies, governance systems and institutions as well as markets to be in place. All these need to be addressed simultaneously in order for sustainable livelihoods balance to be maintained.

The absence of certain assets as mentioned in the surveys with SMMEs exemplifies the vulnerabilities that need to be addressed in order to holistically implement an effective service delivery programme. Without concerted effort by the NLM, service delivery will be seen as ineffective. The survey done on the SMMEs context shows that both beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries of the past LED interventions, feel that more support is required in various aspects. Identifying the vulnerable asset is required as an initial step towards developing specific LED programmes that resolve community challenges.

8.4. Assumptions governing the proposed service delivery model

A number of assumptions about its ability to work have to be made. In the following sections a few of these assumptions are discussed.

8.4.1 People-centred service delivery

Modern societies are complex and hence service delivery solutions even for a rural municipality cannot be expected to be a simple affair. The service delivery model for Nkomazi realises the need to put communities at the centre of service delivery management. It does not make them managers of service delivery process but, capable partners who should not be passive recipients of goods and services from government. The model requires short term to long term plans to generate this transformation. The service delivery model is centred around the vision of the local municipality, and should be a useful tool for carrying out the municipal vision through LED interventions that are tailor made for each locality.

8.4.2 Developmental local government

Another important assumption of the model is that it assumes that municipalities seek to promote developmental local government. “The model emphasises ‘localness’ in terms of initiatives, enterprises and local solutions within the context of the municipality, the district, the province and finally the national level. This concept of promoting local effort becomes the mantra for drumming up solutions to service delivery problems in the municipality at all levels. Within the community based organisations, individuals, groups and business should rally to resolve service delivery issues with the help of the appropriate tiers and sector based departments. Several models of PPPs can be adopted and utilised in order to make service delivery a reality. These PPPs could involve members of the community and not only the big local businesses.

Thus, for instance, in order to upgrade a community hall, road or a bridge would require to galvanise local expertise (labour), local physical resources, time and coordination of activities by the municipalities, and partial funding from government. The communities do not have to be passive recipients of the services and hence creative

ways have to be established to make them contribute their effort, financially, materially and physically.

On this basis, the proposed model might face resistance because of the entitlement culture among senior municipal management. As a result one of the long term objectives under the model could involve dealing with the elimination of the entrenched culture and infusing a new culture for purposes of developmental local government. The medium term and long term plans could be used as the basis for such fundamental shifts. Established cultures among people cannot be transformed overnight hence the need to work on them for as long as possible. This is because this will signify a major shift in the way things are done in most municipalities in South Africa.

On the other hand, the service model affords an opportunity for the municipality to put service delivery in the hands of the beneficiaries by involving them in more ways than simply decision making at IDP level. The proposed model allows the municipality to mobilise local resources and utilise these to manage the pace of service delivery. The assessment of the community livelihoods assets forms a core aspect of the model. Innovative ways of managing service delivery will reduce pressure on the municipality since the recipients will be part of the solution. The service delivery model cannot be implemented in its fullness overnight but needs to be rolled out over time such that communities and the municipal leaders are at par and understand how to function. International aid agencies adopt similar models when they are assisting disadvantaged communities (Brinkerhoff & Brinkerhoff, 2014; World Bank, 2014), so that when they eventually leave the area, the projects are self-sustaining and will depend very little, if at all, on government. The service model for Nkomazi however, will require political will and support so that communities are not mobilised to revolt for the sake of political expediency.

8.4.3 Policy shift

In the context of the NLM there is a need to implement a deliberate policy shift in governance systems, LED and general policy, institutions and markets. This study has made a number of recommendations which have a number of policy implications especially in the manner in which the municipality is managed. Local government

programmes are normally run on a bureaucratic ticket and yet the community protests are usually targeted against such bureaucracy. Communities complain that they are tired of waiting, worn-out of being ignored when local government thrives on established bureaucratic procedures which often lead to certain types of delays. Therefore, this implies that if communities in Nkomazi are made aware of methods of carrying out business, the concept of 'business as usual' will seriously be challenged through the accountability audits.

This requires that Nkomazi local Municipality should have leaders and an administration that is efficient on comparable terms with the private sector business, but accountable enough to the stakeholders. This should be possible only through innovative, strategic leaders who are prepared to turn around the fortunes of the municipality. In order for the municipality to reach such a level, there is need to review a number of existing policies which may be stifling service delivery in the municipality. It is beyond this study to establish the legal and policy impediments in the Nkomazi Local Municipality, hence such issues could be the subject of future studies so that the future of the municipality may be guaranteed. Among the possible policy changes required include water rights issues, land use management, tenure and title deeds, accountability policy, performance management specific service delivery measures of success or failure and performance measurement systems.

In the following sections, the study focuses on some of the general conclusions and recommendations that were made for resolving the service delivery challenges of Nkomazi.

8.5 Conclusions

A number of theoretical and empirical objectives were achieved within the framework of this study. Conclusions were drawn from the observations, and these are summarised in the following paragraphs which address the supporting questions that assisted in conducting this research.

8.5.1 How is Nkomazi local municipality performing in terms of its key deliverables as stated in the five years' IDPs between 2011 and 2016?

In the review of NLM IDPs and related documents, it was evident that the key deliverables spheres in the case of Nkomazi Local Municipality are water and sanitation, housing, electricity, roads and waste management. The Municipal IDPs show remarkable progress in some areas of service delivery such as provision of water and sanitation. However, the rate of dealing with demand for this service is much slower than the demand. Similarly in terms of electricity much progress has been seen but the municipality cannot cope because of many other sprouting settlements.

8.5.1.1 Water and sanitation service provision in Nkomazi

Progress in terms of water provision has been notable but is still inadequate. Reports show that NLM managed to install water tanks in areas such as Steenbok and Mangweni, and undertook some construction in Mzinti, Mangweni, Aniva, Block C, Langelooop and Joe Slovo. At the same time there have been extension of reticulation and Erf connections in other areas benefiting a number of households.

The IDPs between 2011 and 2016 all admit that the municipality is facing mounting challenges in various communities. The primary pressure comes from the increasing population, poor revenue collection, and inadequate funding and community pressure for service delivery. From the responses obtained through the survey done with the municipal officials, service delivery is still lacking in terms of all key service delivery variables. In the whole municipality the number of households without access to water and sanitation has increased between 2011 and 2014 according to the Ehlanzeni District Consolidated report. At the same time the rate at which the municipality is clearing the backlog is far less than the rate at which the backlog is growing. All participants complained of water and sanitation backlogs in the areas that were selected for the interviews; Mbuzini, Jeepes Reef, Naas, Steenbok and Bosfontein. At the time of the interviews the NLM had not updated the backlogs water and sanitation status, but indications in the Annual Reports show that most of the backlogs are still outstanding.

As of 2015 out of the total population of households, 91 810 are said to have access whereas the other 22 952 have no access to sanitation. The municipal plans show that the NLM plans to tackle this backlog by connecting 330 households per annum, which is a far cry from the total number that is outstanding. At that rate it may take quite a long time before the backlog is cleared.

Upgrading of raw water, filters and clarifiers in some areas including Komatipoort to has been stalled and was expected to be completed in phases over some years, with the first phase being done in to benefit 1148 households by June 2017. In the meantime those areas still affected by lack of water and sanitation have to remain patient but without a clue when their turn for service would come.

8.5.1.2 Relationship with traditional leaders

One of the major issues affecting Nkomazi local municipality relates to policy issues regarding the relations with the traditional authorities. As identified in chapter five, the absence of clarity on the functions and mandate of the traditional leaders plays a significant role in some of the service delivery challenges experienced in the municipality. The IDP of 2015-16 of Nkomazi identifies the need for a summit with traditional leaders on allocation of land because cases of land allocations or invasions without considering municipal spatial planning are widespread. The IDP further notes that policy documents have to be developed on formalisation or township establishment (Nkomazi IDP, 2015-16). There is obviously a need to develop better relationship with traditional leaders since the current relationship is considered to be ineffective. The IDP of 2015-16 further notes that traditional leaders are not active participants in council meetings and often they send delegates to attend crucial meetings on their behalf. Where the traditional authorities sit, and their role in council is not clear. Not attending council sittings is against the established mechanism that has been put in place for them to attend. In addition, this goes against the provisions of the Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework Act 43 of 2003 and the Mpumalanga Traditional Leadership and Governance Act 3 of 2005 as well as the Mpumalanga Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Leaders.

The discernible friction between the traditional leaders and the municipality leaves room for people to vent their frustration on the municipality. The level of dissatisfaction among the communities is high, public perception on the ability of the municipality to deliver is low. Skeptical comments from some respondents are valid considering the protests in the communities as well as a comparison of the IDPs over the years. While the comments of communities were limited to a few respondents in this study, it is apparent that public perception of the municipal performance is at an all-time low. In 2015 eight service delivery protests were recorded over various issues (Masango, 2015). The comments from the two opposition members, though laced with political connotations, also highlight the nature of the challenges facing the municipality.

Therefore, as far the performance on key deliverables, the researcher's conclusion is that Nkomazi Local Municipality is not doing well. So many service delivery areas need to be improved urgently in order to contain rising discontent and general dissatisfaction.

8.5.2 What are the perceptions of the leadership in terms of service delivery performance of the Nkomazi local municipality?

The Nkomazi Municipality officials besides the opposition members, generally believe that they are doing a fair or good job under the given circumstances. Few NLM officials who are respondents in the study are of the opinion that the service delivery is poor. However, the IDPs within the period considered by the study have indicated a contrary perspective of such official optimism. Therefore, it seems that the NLM leadership believes that nobody could have done a better job under the same circumstances. The leadership believes that they are giving the municipality value for money. However, sector plans show that have been in existence for a number of years but have not been implemented. The sector plans are instrumental in the IDP as they are mandatory, showing key plans for critical sectors of the municipality. For instance, the Municipal Systems Act of 2000 requires sector plans for the following: water services development; integrated waste management, housing plan / strategy, LED strategy, tourism plan and financial plan. Some sector plans are district-wide but they all show the strategy of dealing with major service delivery issues, and help in guiding on the progress made in the plans of the municipality.

In terms of such sector plans that have been incorporated in Nkomazi, the IDP of 2015-16 gives a breakdown of all stalled projects, delayed projects as well as those that have been aborted; communities have risen up in arms protesting against perceived poor service delivery; the Auditor General has issued qualified audit opinion since the 2012-13 financial year. An analysis of the annual reports shows that the municipality received an unqualified audit in 2009/10, a disclaimer in 2010/11, then qualified reports both in 2013/14 and 2015/16. These are issues that should raise a flag in terms of how the municipality has conducted its business against agreed upon norms and this seem to have impacted negatively on service delivery performance calling for more action to arrest the situation. Most qualified audits pertained to non-compliance with financial reporting standards, as well as administration matters. The IDP of 2015-16 makes an admission that there has been a regression in meeting audit standards and hence a host of activities have been recommended for putting into action. While some of these recommendations have been put in place, the question that begs answers is how the municipality keeps getting qualified reports. Could this indicate challenges in the qualifications of those who have been mandated to lead the municipality or are there other factors that explain the state of affairs? Despite the fact that some service delivery issues are beyond their control, municipal officials should take charge, accept the responsibility that service delivery could have been better.

In conclusion the Nkomazi Local Municipality has made progress made in some most areas as shown in table 6.1 especially in the areas of water and sanitation. However as highlighted earlier, the rate of service delivery has been slower than demand. Backlogs have been increasing in electricity provision, water and sanitation, housing, roads and storm-water drains as well as refuse collection (waste management). Urgent attention needs to be directed to all these areas as they are at the centre of the service delivery protests in the municipality.

8.5.3 What is the disjuncture between service delivery plans (IDP) and practice in the Nkomazi local municipality?

The analysis of the 5-year IDPs of Nkomazi show that most sector plans are in place (IDP 2015-16: 221), and have been approved by Council and reviewed on a regular

basis. Some of the most critical sector plans which are at various levels of approval or implementation include the following:

- a) Environmental Management Framework –2014/15
- b) Water Service Development Plan – 2012/13
- c) Integrated Waste Management Plan –2008/09
- d) Migration Plan – 2014/15
- e) Social Cohesion – 2014/15
- f) Disaster Management Plan – 2010/11
- g) Comprehensive Infrastructure Plan – 2011/12
- h) Human Settlements Housing Chapters - 2008/09
- i) Roads and Storm Water Master Plan – 2008/09
- j) Electricity Master Plan – 2008/09
- k) Integrated Transport Plan is currently being compiled (2015-16)
- l) Comprehensive Infrastructure Plan [CIP] being reviewed (2015-16)

There are two cardinal issues noted in this area. One is planning paralysis and the other lack of skilled implementers. Both issues have been noted in the findings as well as the reports from the municipality.

8.5.3.1 Planning Paralysis

It seems that the majority of the plans are in place for compliance purposes only. At the same, time plans are not owned by the respective functionaries (whether administrative or political) of the municipality. In other words, it seems there are no project champions for most of the projects as they are pompously launched but stall soon thereafter. Because project champions are lacking the plans gather dust and are only referred to in the IDPs.

8.5.3.2 Implementation challenges

Despite the availability of annual plans, as the IDPs indicate, these plans are rarely implemented. The lack of implementation has been traced to limited funding allocation to implement programmes and projects as contained in the sector plans.

8.5.3.3 Non alignment of plans and performance management Framework

Another bigger challenge to the sector plans is that they are not aligned, but even if they were aligned among the different departments, the Municipality admits that it does not have the Performance Management Framework to ensure implementation as per the IDP priorities (IDP, 2015-16). It is even crucial that the level of expertise for implementing these plans be reviewed. Whether the municipality has the right numbers of human resources with the appropriate qualifications to pull through the plans is questionable, the above scenario portrays a situation where sector plans are bound to gather dust, service providers will be paid for consultancy for plans that never see the light of the day, and budgets will be spent on plans that are never implemented. These same plans will then be revised after a few years before they were even implemented.

Therefore, the core of the challenges is that the municipality is locked in a planning paralysis and lacks implementers and also resources to fund such ambitious plans. What is needed is to move from the planning phase to implementation with capable project champions.

8.5.4 Is Nkomazi Municipality able to meet its service delivery mandate to its local constituencies?

Given a myriad of challenges facing the NLM Municipality, the reasonable conclusion to the question above is that Nkomazi is not able to meet its service delivery mandate. It is evident from the interviews that the challenges are beyond the control of the municipal officials. This was made evident in the analysis that there is a disjuncture between the IDPs and practice. This context has led to a point that there are a number of backlogs in a number of critical areas such as water and sanitation, electricity, waste management, housing, road and storm water drainage. In order to clear these backlogs, the municipality will need huge financial injections from provincial or national coffers. The greatest threat to the service delivery is that the backlogs have been increasing, and moreover in the years 2016 and 2017, the numbers relating to backlogs was no longer measured and publicised owing to manpower shortages. Whether the municipality will be able to deal with the increasing challenges without intervention is open to debate, but all signs show mounting problems.

The situation in Nkomazi is happening at a time when the country is in a serious grip of service delivery protests and it would be a huge challenge for the state to inject large amounts of money to clear service delivery backlogs, especially given that capacity of municipal officials is also brought into question. Considering the state of affairs in the municipality, the availability of financial resources seems to be one key issue, but it seems it will most likely fail to resolve the major challenges of human resource incapacity, non-availability of land or the lack of project champions. The availability of funds is often pitted as the panacea to all challenges, yet other underlying problems in the municipality may render any efforts fruitless. Among the major issues that would stall the efforts of the officials are the relations between the municipality and the traditional leaders as highlighted above. MMC for infrastructure in Nkomazi, admitted that traditional leaders have been constantly at loggerheads with the municipality in terms of them haphazardly allocating land without approval in all the areas of the municipality.

A serious challenge is the number of new stands. We say to chiefs and kings that the municipality is trailing behind. By law before they can issue out new stands, the municipality needs to be informed and be present during the issuing of them, but despite these efforts, they continue to issue the land (Shongwe, 2016).

8.5.5 What is the performance of Nkomazi Local Municipality in the implementation of its Integrated Development Plan?

This is the main question that this study sought to answer, and the four answers above set the tone for the main conclusion. Nkomazi Municipality is struggling to meet its service delivery mandate. This proposition is supported by evidence in the Municipal IDPs from 2011 to 2016 which show backlogs in various service delivery areas. The Municipality does not have up to date statistics regarding most of its service delivery achievements, and also faces huge cost recovery challenges especially from its rural communities. The municipality is also dealing with basic infrastructure requirements such as provision of water, sanitation, building of roads and storm-water drains, the need for housing as well as provision of electricity. These projects normally require substantial capital injections that cannot not be raised from its communities given the

rampant poverty levels. This is compounded by the fact that funds availed by the Province or the State in the form of Municipal Infrastructure Grants are inadequate. At the current pace, considering population growth and other economic factors, it will take the municipality much longer to clear the backlogs of the basic infrastructure requirements. The economy of the Municipality militates against any efforts to speed up the service delivery issues, and therefore unless drastic interventions are made by the other tiers, service delivery in Nkomazi Local Municipality will remain an elusive target.

8.6 Recommendations

At this juncture a number of recommendations are made as informed by data collected from the IDP, Literature review and interviews with various participants. The recommendations will identify those area that need special focus in relation to general administration and structural challenges faced by the Municipality. In the sphere of general administration, these will include structural problems, poor infrastructure management, staff challenges, and participatory governance and collaboration issues. Further recommendations will also be made in terms of specific service delivery issues.

8.6.1 Recommendations for structural problems

Rakodi (2014) argues that in order for a municipality to have a good to excellent service delivery performance management, there is need for the staff and especially the leadership to understand complex organizational structures. This is because understanding excellent organisational arrangements gives the leadership a good sense of orientation for creative service delivery. With such an understanding the municipality will be in a position to address the key organisational culture required in order to deal with political leadership, employees and customer needs in general. Does the NLM leadership have such a level of understanding which can help them address the complex needs of modern communities under pressing conditions such as those that prevail in NLM? In so far as the situation on the ground is concerned, and as summarised from the IDPs, a serious challenge exists in the municipality as officials do not seem to grasp the complexity of the organisation structure and hence they cannot steer it to produce the best results for the local communities. Evidence of

poor understanding of the complexity of the situation is seen in instances where key positions go for long periods of time without a substantive person being appointed, continuous shifting of priorities, and the absence of a long term integrated development plan. In addition, the absence of project champions for most of the sectoral plans is an indicator that non-implementation will remain a drawback even if funds are made available.

8.6.2 Poor infrastructure management

The argument for infrastructure often assumes that new high-tech gadgets are required to make things work, but as, Warner and Sullivan (2017) argues, often it is the poor management of existing infrastructure which may militate against service delivery. A rural municipality such as NLM needs to deal with poor management of its infrastructure for local economic development. Of notable concern is the status with roads and storm water drainage. As noted in chapter five, in the years 2011 to 2016, the IDPs, gravel roads dominate most rural areas and bridges in a number of communities are yet to be built. In general, road maintenance has been deplorable for a quite a number of years. By 2015, the IDP reflected the fact that shortage of funds was the major reason why the municipality could not review the storm water Master plan of 2007 (IDP, 2011-12: 39; IDP, 2015-16:102).

Given such a situation, it can be argued that failure to maintain the available infrastructure negatively affects the performance of the municipality. The capacity of the municipality to undertake infrastructure maintenance is also questionable given that there are no recent statistics available on the road network and storm water drainage system. All the current statistics emanate from the 2008/9 period (IDP, 2015-16).

There is therefore, an urgent need to provide better infrastructure or improve the existing infrastructure in order to take advantage of the local space for local economic development. There is a substantial need for investing in operations and maintenance time of the existing infrastructure, expertise, personnel and financing for helping manage available land for productive service delivery. The level of creativity or innovation required of the officials for the rural Nkomazi is indeed much higher than in

a metropolis. This is because the officials have to make up for lack of financial resources as well as lack of sufficient human resource expertise, and project champions. As identified in chapter five, the financial challenges strain the municipal budget since they cannot provide even the basic services and have to subsidise rural areas with money collected from the urban areas. Under these circumstances, the funds that would be reserved for large long term infrastructure projects are virtually non-existent. The municipality is therefore caught up once again in a vicious circle where plans are made without a supporting budget, and without the requisite skills to undertake the service delivery mandate. For instance, the financial management department in the 2015-16 IDP had 10 vacancies of key personnel (Senior accountant, Salaries clerk, Accountant, Assistant accountant, Rates clerk, Stock controllers (2), Asset controller, New asset controller). This is besides the other skills shortages reported elsewhere in the municipal documents. The issue to be addressed is why would a municipality have so many vacancies in one department at the same time? This could be indicative of other human resource retention challenges

It appears creativity is lacking among the leadership and problems faced in the municipality seem to be insurmountable as they remain year on year. Subsequent to the enormity of the challenges, extraordinary leadership is what is required, in order to deal decisively with extraordinary circumstances. In the business world, Nkomazi would need the equivalent of 'turnaround strategists' so that it can be revived. Whether this is possible in local government is not debateable as there are numerous cases in the developing world of such special circumstances. Therefore, adopting a *sustainable service delivery model* could be one of the first step in resolving the current challenges. Section 6.4 below makes an attempt at a possible model that could be used by the Nkomazi local municipality to deal with service delivery challenges.

8.6.3 Staff challenges

The existence of elaborate plans is only one of the preconditions for effective service delivery. As concluded by Lovan, Murray and Shaffer (2017), the lack of sufficient and appropriately skilled municipal staff can be a major impediment. As highlighted in the sections above, one of the key departments affected by insufficient human resources is the financial planning division, with 10 key vacancies identified in the IDP of 2015-

16. Other vacancies include those of law enforcement officers, researchers, road engineers, water technicians and almost all departments mention the challenge of budgetary constraints and lack of the skills. Indeed the shortage of operational staff becomes an impediment to other areas since human resources are important ingredients for any local economic development projects. Budgets do not implement themselves and hence NLM needs a sustainable mechanism in place to ensure it attracts and retains the best employees for its service delivery programs. More often, staff positions do not get filled in time and the existing staff are headhunted by the richer, bigger municipalities, with the effect negatively affecting the local municipality service plans. While it is acknowledged that the municipality is poor, this is the reason why it needs innovative plans to ensure that it attracts and retains those employees who work for the municipality. Again the issue revolves around the nature of the leadership that is running the show in the municipality. To what extent can they handle the complex requirements of a modern municipality beset with a myriad of problems?

8.6.4 Participatory governance

The Nkomazi municipality can set priorities for participative control to ensure satisfactory funding to channel into important areas of service delivery through information campaigns. The challenge that has to be resolved by officials is to establish a balance between participatory governance and the challenging budget constraints. Public participation in the IDP process has been described as flawed mainly because the participation has largely been restricted to input-gathering exercises and yet bears very little effectiveness, because communities are not given an opportunity to explore and resolve competing demands (Pieterse et al., 2013). The IDP process often is used as a compliance issue in which communities are gathered and technical presentations are made. The large number of protests bears testimony that the IDP process in respect to consultation and implementation is flawed since communities start to protest over issues that they should know are in the IDP. These protests tend to be violent because in some cases community members do not understand the priorities of the municipalities as there have been limited involvement if any in setting them up. This is so because the IDP participation remains only consultative. It remains divorced from the budget resource allocation and does not make use of joint budgeting between departments (RSA, 2009; City of Cape Town,

2011; CoGTA, 2014). A casual glance through the back-to-basics section of the Nkomazi local municipality for instance shows the waiting status whereby the municipality indicates it has been waiting for COGTA, or Department of Water Affairs, or the District and sometimes even the province, ESKOM, DHS, DRDLR, or DPWRT. These collaboration issues are indicative of the dearth of meaningful and effective inter-departmental planning. If left unresolved then service delivery will surely remain an elusive target in Nkomazi.

8.6.5 Culture of non-collaboration

The organisational structure for effective service delivery needs to deal with issues of effective and beneficial collaboration among different role players. Tomlinson (2011), Oviasuyi, Idaba and Isiracjie (2010) show that a culture of non-collaboration leaves the municipality exposed to poor service delivery. As argued in the preceding chapters, communities do not differentiate between who was supposed to be responsible for service delivery, as it is easier to knock on the municipality doors than at the government head office in Pretoria or Cape Town. Thus, non-existence of effective collaborations works against the municipality. This requires teamwork among service delivery participants because joint efforts facilitate worker supports for effective service delivery. While municipalities welcome assistance from the District and the Province as well as the national government, the relationships within the Nkomazi local municipality are not symbiotic. This is so given that interventions by higher tiers of local governance is often mis-labelled as 'interference. Despite the availability of frameworks that allow for inter-departmental integrated planning and implementation of government projects, the perception among some of the officials is that they would rather be left alone. This is unfortunate as the emphasis should be on the development of more collaboration at every possible opportunity. Passing the buck among officials at sector level, between different spheres is a recipe for prolonged service delivery challenges. The aim of the officials in NLM should therefore, be to create a collaborative organisational culture which should improve service delivery. High levels of collaboration and cooperation among service providers at various levels should help to establish answers to common problems being faced.

The need for more collaboration becomes more pronounced considering the diverse needs of rural constituencies in Nkomazi. Davenport, Shackleton, and Gambiza (2012) argue that without a balance of these competing demands, the municipality leadership will seem overwhelmed with problems. It is under these circumstances that implementation plans of the IDP need the input of different role players at national, provincial and district level, working with the municipal staff on a continuous and on-going basis. Collaborative relationships need to be kept running for as long as possible because poor rural municipalities cannot expect to be weaned from state dependence any time soon.

As can be deduced from all these arguments, the role played by leadership is crucial. Given the many challenges faced, the level of creativity in problem solving among the NLM leadership should be pitched at a much higher level. The leaders need to learn from similarly placed but better municipalities, on how to manage a huge, rural based poor municipality. That way the service delivery challenges can be managed. The crucial question however is whether such a municipality or model can be found in South Africa.

8.6.6 Water and sanitation

The Municipal IDPs contain a number of workable recommendations which may only need to be followed through with practical implementation. In order to deal with the water and sanitation issues some of the following issues could be tackled;

- There is need to obtain funding support to address infrastructure challenges identified as part of the Long Term Plan. Master Plans therefore need to be developed to determine demand and supply projections for water.
- To curb the uncontrolled and illegal movement from across the border into South Africa, there is need to implement the Migration Management Plan which was adopted in June 2015. With all intents and purposes, the migration plan requires collaboration with the department of Home affairs.
- Use of water requires that the Ehlanzeni District in conjunction with the Department of Water Affairs and Sanitation fast track the issuing of water rights and the delivery

of water and review the allocation of water for agricultural, industrial and domestic use.

- The municipality has to put a proper and realistic budget for operations and maintenance, taking into account the huge backlogs.
- The municipality needs to develop a maintenance plan for water services and allocate funding accordingly.
- There is need to co-opt the traditional authorities in land allocation since there are always spatial challenges with regards to traditional councils allocating land, resulting in shifting targets as far as the provision of water is concerned.
- The municipality needs to develop a master plan, on all existing water-related infrastructure to determine the need, supply and demand.

8.6.7 Housing

Although housing falls under the Provincial department of Human Settlements, the following recommendations could help assuage the current situation:

- The spatial challenges with regards to traditional councils allocating land has negative consequences on the delivery of human settlements. As with the water and sanitation issue, when land is allocated without the Municipality being aware, this results in targets having to be shifted in the provision of the service. The plans of the traditional authorities need to be in sync with the spatial development plan of the municipality. There is a need for cooperative governance and also for involvement of municipalities in planning of rural development and also working closely with the human settlement in provincial and national level. These would mean a genuine engagement based on legislations that govern each sphere of government.
- The municipality needs to find a way of improving its relationship or communication with the traditional councils especially when it comes to service delivery issues.
- Land availability is critical for some of the LED programmes of the municipality and hence, the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform (DRDLR) needs to assist in speeding up the release of state land to ensure completion of township establishment projects. Involvement of communities in the planning and implementation of such ventures is critical and forums to deals with these matter

are essential and urgently needed where they do not already exist. In particular the involvement of the traditional leaders is paramount, but constant liaison with the office of the chiefs should be made a priority issue. Sufficient numbers of staff need to be appointed to liaise with the chiefs and the Ehlanzeni District could be roped in to assist.

8.6.8 Provision of electricity

- The local and district municipalities, provincial COGTA need to engage ESKOM to ensure that relations are improved and that plans are synchronised.
- Both ESKOM and the Nkomazi local municipality need to speed up electrification in priority areas. These include the areas of high economic growth potential so that LED programmes can be established.

The IDP of 2015-16 highlights that the municipality needs to install smart meters at ESKOM's bulk connection points to deal with erroneous billing. Erroneous bills waste the time and effort of the municipal officials as they have to spend time addressing a magnitude of queries.

8.6.9 Waste management

- As stated in the IDP of 2015-16 and from statements from interviewees, the municipality needs to prioritize waste management in its budget. Some of the waste management plans have been outstanding for a long time. While limited progress has been made in this regard, the Steenbok land fill site needs to become operational and therefore the appointment of a service provider with the required equipment to run the site appointed should be treated as a matter of urgency.
- The municipality needs to undertake waste management awareness campaigns so that communities cooperate in terms of open dumpsites.
- The municipality to develop strategies to support and develop waste recyclers. A cue could be taken from some other municipalities on how they have effectively turned recycling into a job-creating enterprise.
- There is need to implement revenue enhancement strategy so as to recover the cost of waste collection.

8.6.10 Other general recommendations

- Proper monitoring and evaluation of projects is crucial in order to assess the status of service delivery.
- Relevant and qualified personnel as well as service providers should be allocated jobs so that the municipality gets value for money
- The municipality must find a way of prioritising projects and areas where revenue collection can be maximised. Pilot projects could be started trying different models for revenue collection.
- The municipality is investing a lot in areas where the majority of people do not pay for services, this has a negative impact on the municipality as these services are not sustainable, therefore there is need to find a workable solution on how to recover costs from all areas serviced by the municipality.
- The municipality needs to have in place an Integrated Transport plan in order to deal with transport related issues.
- The need to use sector plans as the basis for budget allocation.
- The municipality needs to elevate the importance of strategic management sessions involving all the administrative as well as political leadership to ensure implementation of plans.
- The Municipality must ensure that the performance management framework is in place and implemented to ensure project implementation as per the IDP and other supporting plans.

This research has clearly identified that the one effective way to expedite service delivery is to change the administrative mentality of the municipality so that officials are more developmental oriented and less focused on micro-managing the LED programme. Here the Batho Pele principles, among other characteristics, which emphasize a culture of effective service delivery, could play a major role. The mechanisms required for effective service delivery are varied and should be pervasive, permeating even to the lowest level of the organisation. Leadership, in this case refers to all people responsible for delivering service to the local community and these particularly refer to municipal or district officials in their capacity as agents of the state.

To achieve this, the roles of the Mayor and the Municipal Manager as project sponsors should take a new dimension considering that many projects have to be sponsored simultaneously. As mentioned by some of the SMMEs that were involved, to ensure sustainable livelihoods, the Municipality's LED programmes need to address issues of assets in all their entirety. A number of recommendations are made as a way of overcoming the challenge of having one or few project promoters against many projects to be undertaken. These recommendations should form the basis of implementing the service delivery model, and include strengthening structures and systems in the service delivery mandate.

8.7 Implications for research, policy, practice and skills development

This section gives a brief outlines of the implications for research, policy and practice. The findings of this research have an implication on the service delivery systems of Nkomazi Local Municipality.

8.7 1. Further studies

This study could be a point of departure for future research studies. A number of these areas for possible study are highlighted below.

- a) Impact assessment studies may be done to measure the actual impact of each type of service provided by the municipality. The current situation where the municipality uses out dated metrics makes it impossible to measure the effectiveness of its service delivery mandate.
- b) Cross sectional studies need to be done on similarly placed municipalities in South Africa to establish the extent to which Nkomazi compares with the rest.
- c) Further research could also determine if the findings of this research are consistent across different rural based municipalities in South Africa. There is a need to duplicate the research in other parts of South Africa in order to confirm if the results of this research can be generalised across the whole country. In addition a more specialised and detailed research would focus on specific service delivery areas without cutting across the whole spectrum. This would be important as the service delivery demands differ from one municipality to the other.

8.7.2 Implications for policy

As highlighted in some of the recommendations, the findings show that NLM needs new ways of conducting service delivery. This also requires a policy shift in the IDP process, the monitoring and evaluation system, audit of service delivery and communication systems. Policy changes will assist in reshaping the overall trajectory of service delivery by inculcating in the people who implement, a sense of responsibility and accountability. Policy shift is especially critical in making the implementers accountable for failure to deliver services. This is one area that the study model has a built in system to ensure that there is accountability. The reward system in the municipality should be amended to recognise the need to tie performance to results. At the same time the IDP process should also be amended to allow for feedback and constant monitoring of previous plans instead of constantly generating new and implementable plans year after year.

Other policy changes needed should deal with the need to align the local municipality to the District, and the province. Findings in this study showed a disjuncture between the plans of the different spheres. Any policy shift should come along with plans for training the users of the new policies. Among those who should be part of the training are members of the Ward Committees, and all the key role players in service delivery in Nkomazi.

8.7.3 Implication for practice

For service delivery implementers, the findings from this study require a number of things. As highlighted in the proposed model above, one of the things required to apply this model is for people who are responsible for service delivery to have the right attitudes so that they can provide value for money in affected communities. A new service delivery culture is not a matter of policy but of attitudes and mind sets that are displayed by people in their day to day activities. This has to be developed over time and requires that quality management systems be pervasive in the municipality.

The new model also requires application of 'Batho Pele' principles in such a way that the effectiveness of service delivery will not be questionable. These principles encompass consultation, service standards, access, courtesy, information, openness

and transparency, redress and value for money. The 'Batho Pele' principles should not be taken as mere slogans otherwise the new service delivery model will be rendered useless. At each stage of service delivery there must be value addition. The new model requires that the local municipality operates with the efficiency of a private entity but still remain accountable to the stakeholders or electorate.

The practice of service delivery is usually the most challenging, given the fact that there are many variables at play in the local municipality. However if the leadership takes the right direction, they should be able to lead the rest of the team towards the attainment of the right objectives. The leadership in Nkomazi has the biggest responsibility of ensuring that the service delivery mandate is achieved. So far from the discussions presented, the ability to carry out this responsibility has been erratic.

8.7.4 Implications for skills development

In order to inculcate a new way of doing service delivery, it has been emphasised in previous sections that this requires the involvement of all the stakeholders. Of more importance however is that fact that those directly responsible for service delivery need to be properly equipped by going through various skills development sessions. The skills development should include both the technical as well as the soft or human skills. Comprehensive skills development programmes need to be established so that service delivery implementers are not lacking in critical skills. This calls for continuous development and monitoring of skills gaps on the basis of new demands by the communities of Nkomazi. The Nkomazi municipality should also monitor the level of skills among the workforce and take advantage of the Skills Development Act 97 of 1998 to upgrade skills among the employees. Skills development is an ongoing process and hence should be complemented by a continuous development programme supported by the municipality.

8.8 Final conclusion

This study sought to establish the state of service delivery in Nkomazi Local Municipality. The major research question was: *what is the performance of Nkomazi Local Municipality in the implementation of its Integrated Development Plan?* This question has been adequately answered by showing that the Nkomazi Municipality is

operating under very challenging circumstances and therefore is struggling to provide basic service delivery to most of its communities especially the rural areas. The nature of the challenges have been outlined, as well as the possible recommendations on the way forward”. To a great extent the study objectives were met as all the sub questions were addressed with empirical evidence provided to support the conclusions reached.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1:INTERVIEW GUIDE

My name is Nontobeko Portia Mahlalela, a registered student at University of Kwa-Zulu Natal for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Leadership. As part of my studies, I am required to conduct a research to explore the experiences of Nkomazi Local Municipality in service delivery. My research study focuses on the general provision of services in all the local communities of the municipality.

I will be conducting interviews with selected officials from the Nkomazi local municipality as well as selected leading members from the communities as recipients or providers of service delivery. The information collected from all interview sessions will be solely used for the purposes of the research study and will not be shared with other individuals or published on any other media.

The discussions during the interview sessions will remain confidential. All personal information such as names of people will not form part of the research report. The participation of individuals in interview sessions is completely voluntary and all participants have a choice not to proceed with the interview session should they feel uncomfortable to do so. This interview session will last for about 45 minutes.

Section A: Demographic Data

A1	Gender (Tick appropriate)				
	Male			Female	

A2	Age group	18-25	26-35	36-45	46+
	(Tick appropriate)				

A3. Position (State your role or function in the municipality)

A6	How would you rate the quality of service delivery in NLM in general?									
	Excellent		Good		Fair		Poor		Not Sure	

Section B: Ice Breaker

B1: Kindly provide a background of Nkomazi Local Municipality. Describe service delivery in Nkomazi local municipality.

B2: What have been the major developments to date. Indicate some highlights.

Section C: Achievements and Progress

C1: Between 2011-2016, what have been the major developments of the Nkomazi municipality?

C2: What are the challenges that the municipality faced in the delivery of services between 2011-2016?

C3: Are there any solutions to these challenges and what are they?

Section D: Key Service Delivery Priorities

D1: What were the key service delivery priorities of the municipality in the past five years?

D2: Were all these priorities achieved? To what extent were they achieved? And how?

D3: Is there any priority or are there any priorities which the municipality could not achieve? Why?

Section E: Conclusion

E1: Would you say the municipality has delivered on its service delivery plans and promises in the past five years? Why?

E2: Is there anything you feel should be done differently to ensure that communities of Nkomazi receive services in a sustainable manner? What is it and why?

Thank you very much for your time and participation.

APPENDIX 2: CONSENT FORM

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

PhD Research Project

Researcher: Nontobeko Portia Mahlalela

Supervisor: Dr. Emmanuel Mutambara

Co-Supervisor: Prof Lumkile Lalendle

CONSENT

I..... (full names of participant) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participating in the research project.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire.

I hereby consent / do not consent to record the interview.

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT: _____

DATE: _____

APPENDIX 3: QUESTIONS FOR SMMES THAT BENEFITED FROM LED PROGRAMME OF THE NKOMAZI LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

Respondent's No.	
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Section A: Biographical Data

1	Place of interview	
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2	Sex	
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3	Age in years:	
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4	Educational level:	
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Section B: Livelihood, assets and income

5) Could you please mention all different livelihood assets available to your household:

- a) Natural (e.g. livestock grazing, water, forests, land, game)
- b) Physical (e.g. water points, electricity, transport and communication – telephone, fences, houses, production equipment and means)
- c) Social (e.g. household networks, church, CBO, relationship with NLM, member of a group)
- d) Human (e.g. skills and knowledge, health, education, work experience)
- e) Financial (e.g. income from remittance, pensions, wages, savings and credits)

6) What is the estimated total cash income of your household earnings per month? (Include cash from salary, pension, remittances, income from business)
(Tick a category)

	Income category	Response
1	R 0 – 500	
2	R 501 - 1000	
3	R 1001 – 5000	
4	R 5001 – 10 000	
5	R 10 001 – 20 000	
6	R More than R 50 000.	

7) What are the sources of your income? Tick these items where relevant:

	Type of assets used	Sources of income before LED interventions by Nkomazi LM	Current sources of income	Has your income from this kind of asset increased since the interventions?	Has your income from this kind of asset decreased since the interventions?	Not Applicable
7.1	Livestock - goats					
7.2	Livestock - sheep					
7.3	Livestock – cattle					
7.4	Livestock – pigs					
7.5	Livestock - chickens					
7.6	Employment / job					
7.7	Crops & vegetable					
7.8	Tourism - Tour guiding					
7.9	Tourism - accommodation					
7.10	Tourism - catering					
7.11	Plants harvested from veld					
7.12	Minerals					
7.13	Social grants					
7.14	Remittances					

7.15	Making and selling crafts					
7.16	Business – trading					
7.17	Business - manufacturing					
7.18	Old age pensions					
7.19	Bank savings - interest					
7.20	Credit/borrowing					
7.21	Others (specify)					

8. When do you get your most income: At the end of the month? In specific seasons? In specific years? Elaborate.
9. Overall, is there any improvement in your livelihoods since the LED interventions by the Local municipality?
10. Would you say that your household's wealth has increased?
11. Is this income adequate to satisfy your household needs? Why or why not?
12. Are you a happier person since the LED interventions by the local municipality? Why or why not?
13. Do you think that your household members are happier since the LED interventions by the local municipality? Why or why not?
14. Are there any institutions or organisations (e.g. NGOs, other government departments, donors) which are assisting you in increasing your household's assets, income and food security?
15. Are there any institutions or organisations (e.g. NGOs, other government departments, donors) which are preventing you, from increasing your household's assets, income and food security?
16. What investment do you make in your economic activities? (e.g. purchasing equipment, paying for training).
17. What kind of assets do you need most right now, in order to get the other assets to work effectively for you? (e.g. operating capital/cash flow, or skills, etc.)
18. What economic activities would you like to grow?
19. What is preventing you from increasing your assets?

20. Are there new kinds of economic activities which you would like to undertake?
Specify.
21. Will the presence of the Local municipality assist you or hamper you in undertaking such new activities? If so, or not so, please elaborate?

APPENDIX 4: QUESTIONS FOR SMMEs THAT HAVE NOT BENEFITED FROM THE NKOMAZI LOCAL MUNICIPALITY LED PROGRAMMES

Respondent's No.	
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Section A: Biographical Data

1	Place of interview	
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2	Sex	
---	-----	--

3	Age in years:	
---	---------------	--

4	Educational level:	
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Section B: Livelihood, assets and income

5) Could you please mention all different livelihood assets available to your household:

- a) Natural (e.g. livestock grazing, water, forests, land, game)
- b) Physical (e.g. water points, electricity, transport and communication – telephone, fences, houses, production equipment and means)
- c) Social (e.g. household networks, church, CBO, relationship with NLM, member of a group)
- d) Human (e.g. skills and knowledge, health, education, work experience)
- e) Financial (e.g. income from remittance, pensions, wages, savings and credits)

6) What is the estimated total cash income of your household earnings per month? (Include cash from salary, pension, remittances, income from business)
(Tick a category)

	Income category	Response
1	R 0 – 500	0
2	R 501 - 1000	0
3	R 1001 – 5000	1
4	R 5001 – 10 000	1
5	R 10 001 – 20 000	4
6	R More than R 50 000.	1

7) What are the sources of your income? Tick these items where relevant:

	Type of assets used	Sources of income before LED interventions by Nkomazi LM	Current sources of income	Has your income from this kind of asset increased since the interventions?	Has your income from this kind of asset decreased since the interventions?	Not Applicable
7.1	Livestock - goats					
7.2	Livestock - sheep					
7.3	Livestock – cattle					
7.4	Livestock – pigs					
7.5	Livestock - chickens					
7.6	Employment / job					
7.7	Crops & vegetable					
7.8	Tourism - Tour guiding					
7.9	Tourism - accommodation					
7.10	Tourism - catering					
7.11	Plants harvested from veld					
7.12	Minerals					
7.13	Social grants					
7.14	Remittances					

7.15	Making and selling crafts					
7.16	Business – trading					
7.17	Business - manufacturing					
7.18	Old age pensions					
7.19	Bank savings - interest					
7.20	Credit/borrowing					
7.21	Others (specify)					

8) Do you believe that the households participating in the LED programmes of the municipality have benefited from this exercise? Consider the following issues (livelihood assets):

- a) **Natural assets:** Have they increased their access to grazing land, wildlife, plants, water, minerals and other environmental resources, etc.? Is this access sustainable?
- b) **Physical assets:** Have they increased their access to roads, houses, windmills or tap water, fences, electricity and communication, production means, etc.?
- c) **Financial assets:** Have the community members benefited from new financial resources, e.g. income?
- d) **Social assets:** Has the community come together more effectively? Have local networks been strengthened?
- e) **Human assets:** Have communities developed better skills and work experience because of the LED interventions? Have their education and health improved?

9) What should be done to improve the community's asset base, income streams and food security?

10) Do you think the LED interventions can play an important role in improving the community's asset base and food security? Which community members are likely to gain, and which may lose?

11) In your opinion, should the project's principles be adjusted, to promote the project to be self-reliant without or with minimal government support? If so, how? If not, why?

12) Do you think the SMEs that are selected for LED interventions have benefited in terms of food security considering the following two dimensions (food availability and accessibility)?

- a) Food availability: Have they increased their domestic production, export capacity, food stock? Please elaborate?
- b) Food accessibility: Have they reduced poverty, increased purchasing power, income, transport and market infrastructure? Please elaborate?

13) Any addition or comment?

APPENDIX 5: INFORMED CONSENT FORM – SMMES QUESTIONNAIRE

You are invited to participate in a research study titled Service delivery: an elusive target- a case study of Nkomazi local municipality. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you are either a beneficiary of the municipal LED interventions or are a member of the SME community in Nkomazi. If you decide to participate, we will ask several closed questions and open questions regarding our research topic. This whole interview will be done in approximately one-hour time.

This research is part of an academic assessment for a PhD Degree. The information collected will be treated as highly confidential. The result from the study will be used for academic purposes and also be made available to the Nkomazi Local Municipality for decision-making purposes.

Your decision to whether or not to participate will not prejudice your future relation with the Municipality. If you decide to participate, you are free to discontinue participating at any time without prejudice.

If you have further questions regarding this study, please do not hesitate to contact the researcher N. Mahlalela through my e-mail address Nontobeko.khoza@gmail.com or mobile-phone number +2648123456789.

You are making a decision whether or not to participate. Your signature indicates that you have read the information provided above and have decided to participate voluntarily. You may withdraw at any time without penalty or loss of benefit to which you may be entitled after signing this form should you choose to discontinue participating in this study.

By signing here below you are making a decision to participate voluntarily.

I have read and/or receive adequate information regarding the nature of this study and understand what will be requested of me. I am aware of my right to withdraw at any point during the study with no penalty. I hereby consent to participate in this research study.

Participant's signature: _____ Date: _____