Community Participation in the Delivery of Municipal Council Services in Zambia – A Case Study of Choma District

[1]Arthur Chisanga,[2]Aaron Wiza Siwale,[3]Tinkler Saul Simbeye & [4]Steven Daka

[1,3,4]Faculty of Nursing and Midwifery, Lusaka Apex Medical University, Lusaka, Zambia

[2]School of Humanities and social Sciences, The University of Zambia, Lusaka. Zambia.

ABSTRACT

This study sought to explore the nature and extent of community participation in the service delivery by Choma Municipal Council, focusing on the role of community involvement in enhancing local authority services. A mixed method research design, combining qualitative and quantitative methods, was used to investigate the perspectives and experiences of both community members and key informants. The findings show that community members are involved in planning and decision-making processes (70.3%) and implementation (23.4%), with limited engagement in the evaluation process. Legal and policy frameworks, including the Zambia National Decentralization Policy and local by-laws, support community participation. However, 89.8% of respondents feel that these frameworks are insufficient. The study reveals that community participation positively impacts service delivery, aiding local councils in understanding community needs and fostering effective feedback mechanisms. Factors hindering community participation include lack of knowledge and opportunities, lack of interest, and inadequate funding. Recommendations for enhancing community participation include supporting active representation of community members, capacity building for community leaders, promoting transparency and accountability, fostering partnerships with NGOs and civil society organizations, and utilizing radio programs for community sensitization and engagement.

Keywords: Community Participation, Delivery, Municipal Council Services, Zambia

INTRODUCTION

This investigation was set to establish the level of community participation in the delivery of services by Choma Municipal Council. This study focused on the key issues identifying with the origination of community participation as a device for upgrading service delivery by the local authorities in the community. The significance of public participation in all periods of the council strategic planning and many other local initiatives cannot be overemphasized. In order for local municipalities to fight poverty, inequality and unemployment within the local communities, specific strategies need to be formulated. Community involvement as a useful tool can be used to address the specific needs of the local people in any municipality in the country (Govender & Reddy, 2011:41). Chapter one thus presents the background to the study, statement of the problem, study objectives, research questions and significance of the study.

Background of the Study

Community participation in the delivery of services to the public is increasingly pursued in the quest to enhance execution of government functions. In many societies enhancing public service has continued to be a major target that has drawn the attention of many scholars in public administration and researchers in other field. Confronted with disappoints of centralization in administrative conveyance at grass root levels,

numerous administrations have resorted to decentralizing components of their responsibilities (Bardhan, 2002; Ahmad, et al., 2005; Robinson, 2007). According to Azfar, et al., (1999:1) "decentralization has involved 'the transfer of administrative, fiscal and political *powers and* functions of the central government to lower-level governments". Numerous States turning to decentralization, and the intensity of executing it a major worldwide phenomenon in policy implementation (Azfar, et al., 1999; Ahmad et al., 2005; Steiner, 2005). Ahmad, et al., (2005:1) observe that in the period betweem1980-2006 'more than 76 nations endeavored to move responsibilities of central government to local authorities.

Local governments world over have been marked as institutions charged with the responsibility of providing a variety of services which should cover the provision of political, economic and social services within certain geographical boundaries ranging from garbage collection, public transportation, electricity, water and sanitation, markets and bus station services, waste and solid management and disposal, urban and city planning, conducting of local government elections, issuance of trading licenses and provision of street lighting among others. To effectively and efficiently provide these services, there is need for wider and proper contribution of stakeholders' development agenda in the communities they serve. Some scholars have argued that community and Stakeholder participation is what gives legitimacy to any project or programme that is initiated and implemented and since a lot of people are involved, the project or programme is likely to be accepted by the community as their own and seen as serving their best interest. The community need to have a voice and make decisions in matters that directly affect them and it is therefore important that mechanisms that ensure their participation in service delivery implementation are put in place. Non-involvement of stakeholders may cause accountability and transparency issues that may lead to displeasure and illegitimacy of projects and programmes been provided by a local authority. This would impact negatively on service delivery because cooperation is missing. With this brief background, this paper will focus on stakeholder participation in service deliver in local government.

Even though the prior focal point of decentralization was on move of some assets and capacities to enhance administration arrangements, ongoing movements have been on the legislature's relationship with residents (Brinkerhoff, et al., 2007). The shift has been necessitated by what Hayden (2007:216) calls 'an assumption that development is the product of what citizens decide to do themselves to improve in order to enhance the quality of their livelihoods'. Putting people at the epicenter and strengthening the masses' involvement are considered key, citizens' empowerment and involvement are considered to be key in this process. According to Steiner (2005:6) "The potential of decentralization for higher popular participation through local elections and opportunities for people to get involved in public decision-making has played a key role in the drive towards decentralization". Many governments have made repeated calls for an increased concentration on majority rule administrations that emphasize values such as been open and answerable to the wider community, separation of powers, subsidiarity (Cheema, 2007). Decentralization in this specific circumstance is considered as a mechanism for achieving these values, by providing them with effective legal and administrative too at local government level where the community should mobilize to get involved in every decision that affect them'. Scholars like Robinson (2007:1) have also argued that such an institutional setting at grass root will carter more to the needs of the locals. It will note their views when planning kind of services to be provided, amounts of money needed including most efficient way of effective service delivery. This however needs structures that have the political space and capacity to make decisions and at the same time effect the same decisions. It is thus for this reason that decentralization reforms have been championed, promoted and favored globally (Blunt and Turner, 2007).

Statement of The Problem

Despite advocacy for community involvement in decentralized service delivery, existing evidence on the resulting impact of decentralization is mixed at best in many countries that have adopted the idea. Current existing literature has looked at how decentralization enhances participation particularly focusing on

emerging mechanisms for participation at the local government level. Nevertheless, few studies have examined the direct impact of community participation on decentralized service delivery outcomes especially in the developing countries like Zambia. Some Scholars have pointed out that insufficient participation of the community in matter relating to service delivery is a serious hindrance impeding on sustainability of projects that are aimed at improving the lives of local people living various municipalities. As a consequence, local municipalities are still experiencing challenges in the provision of services to the local people.

In the case of Zambia, a key aspect of local government reforms starting in 2002 has been to enhance local service delivery by, among other means, institutionalizing citizen's voice and participation in decision making at the sub-national level. The government adopted the national decentralization policy in 2002 as a mechanism for enhancing citizen participation in local governance (Ministry of Local Government (MoLG, 2002). This came against a background of poor performance in service provision, huge debt burdens, and severe misappropriation of resources in local authorities (LAs). In Zambia, it has also been observed that community participation in the delivery of services by the local authorities is very minimal despite the policy and institutional framework that currently exists. Poor service delivery by the local councils still exists and this problem has been attributed to lack of community and stakeholders engagement in the delivery of services. Information that encourages stakeholder participation in service delivery implementation is not readily available or lacking hence stakeholders are not even aware that they are supposed to participate in local government affairs. Additionally, despite electing councillors to represent them in the council, most of the local people in the community are not aware that they are supposed to air their views to this elected official who should represent them. This deprives stakeholders from of their voice in decision making. This gap is what this study aimed to narrow down.

Research Objectives

The objectives of this study were sub-divided into the general and specific objectives:

General Objective

- To establish the nature and level of community participation in the delivery of services by Choma Local Municipal Council.

Specific Objectives

- To identify the levels of community participation in the delivery of services by Choma Municipal Council?

- To examine **the Institutional and legal framework put in place to promote** community participation in the provision of services by Choma Municipal Council.
- To establish factors that hinder community participation in the delivery of service by Choma Municipal Council.
- To ascertain the influence of community participation the delivery of services by Choma Municipal Council.
- To recommend measures that should be put in place to promote meaningful community participation in the delivery of services by the local councils.

Research Questions

1. How has been the nature and level of community participation in the delivery of services by Choma Municipal Council?

2. What institutional and legal framework has Choma Municipal council put in place to promote community participation in the delivery of services?
3. What factors hinder community participation in the delivery of service by Choma Municipal Council?
4. How has community participation the delivery of services by Choma Municipal Council?
5. What measures should be put in place to promote meaningful community participation in the delivery of services by Choma Municipal Council?

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study lies in the fact that it will inform policy design and implementation processes within Choma District Municipality and other aspects of government generally, on how community participation can be used as a tool for enhancing service delivery to the local people. Moreover, since this is an academic research, researchers who are active in the field of community participation and are interested in efficient service delivery at the local government level, are more likely benefit from the wealth of results that will be generated through this study. It is interesting to note that the Zambian government and other stakeholders have become increasingly

concerned about the quality of service delivery, whenever government is implementing programmes. Proper and quality implementation of the community participation process, in turn, may enhance the quality of service delivery to the local communities. This would in turn contribute to the promotion of sustainable development through long-term and consistent provision of quality services to the masses.

Furthermore, the findings of this study may help in the identification of areas that require

improvement with regard to the implementation of community participation programmes. Again, the conclusions that will be drawn might shed more light on how best to develop the local capacity and ignite the commitment, as well as how to assist management in their quest to effectively promote community participation in the process of service delivery the municipalities. The study would also help in developing appropriate strategies for good and effective community engagement. This study would also make appropriate recommendations and means through which the weaknesses in the promotion of participation within the municipalities could be filled.

The original significance of this study is that it is aimed at enriching the current existing body of knowledge on community and stakeholder participation as an instrument for improving service delivery. The significance and potential contribution of this study can be summarized as follows:

1. To highlight the role of local municipalities, promote community and stakeholder participation thereby bridging the gap between theory and practice.
2. To identify the type of knowledge as well skills needed to facilitate meaningful community and stakeholder participation at the local government level.
3. To identify the key strategies that can be used to enhance and promote community and stakeholder participation in the delivery of services to the people residing in the local municipalities.
4. To contribute to an existing body of knowledge by providing an opportunity to other researchers to further theorize and explore different approaches and mechanisms for enhancing and promoting meaningful community and stakeholder participation in the provision of quality services to the community.

Definition of Concepts

In this study a lot of related concepts were identified and defined accordingly as follows:

Citizen Participation

Citizen participation, according to Devas and Grant (2003:309), is the "ways in which citizens exercise

influence and control over the decisions that affect them". Gaventa and Valderrama (1999:4 citing Cunill, 1997) refer to it as "the intervention of citizens with determined social interests in public activities". This can be done either directly or indirectly.

Direct participation refers to a situation where individuals or various forms of self-organization are actively involved in the decision-making processes on matters affecting relating to their welfare. Indirect participation is on the other hand is where citizens are enabled to express their preferences through their locally elected representatives. (KIPPRA, 2006).

Public participation

Public participation is defined as deliberate engagement of all citizens and communities in an activity which is goal oriented (Atkinson, 1992: 99). Herberlain (1976: 55) construes public participation as a "process of involving all organised and unorganized groups of citizens or citizen representatives on a particular issue". For Guire (2007: 89), public participation is "the process of involving private citizens in decision-making for matters that affect different spheres of life".

Service delivery

Service delivery entails the actual needs of the people or what members of the general public want the various government institutions to provide the citizens in terms of their priorities (Bayat & Meyer, 1994: 73). Service delivery also refers to the commitment of the government to address the needs of the general public in order to enhance their livelihood.

Local Government

According to Bekker (2011: 44), local government refers to a "decentralised, representative institution with general and specific powers devolved upon it by the central or provincial government, in respect of a restricted geographical area within a nation or state. Thus, local government is mostly concerned with a particular segment of society and provides services to a particular locality". Hence, Bell (1972: 34) notes that "local government is that sphere of government that directly serves the needs of communities at grassroots level".

Scope of the Study

This study will be limited to only Choma municipality situated in southern province of Zambia. Coma District has a population of 247, 860 with a growth rate of 2.8 (CSO, 2010). Particular attention will be given to the level and nature of community participation which is deliberately facilitated and stimulated by the Choma local municipality within the district.

Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented and discussed the background to the study, statement of the problem, research objectives and questions. It has also discussed the significance and scope of the study. In this chapter, all the relevant and related concepts have also been clearly defined.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Community participation as an important component of service delivery is not a new field of study. A lot of studies have been conducted on this subject matter. This chapter presents a thorough review of previous

research on the topic. Accordingly, Denscombe (2008:210) argues that studying previous research findings allows a researcher to decide where to place his study within a given specific context. A review of literature enables the researcher to decide on what to include and what not to include in his review. Thus a literature review is a "critical analysis of a segment of a published body of knowledge through summary, classification, and comparison of prior research studies, reviews of literature, and theoretical articles" (University of Wisconsin Writing Center, 2014). A literature review is also conducted in order to see how the current study relates to previous research in the field. This is what makes it possible for the researcher to identify and addresses gaps left by previous research.

The Importance of Public Participation

Several scholars have defined community participation differently. According to Oakley and Marsden (1987:17) have defined community participation as "a process by which citizens shoulder responsibility for their own welfare and acquire the necessary skills in order to participate to their own development". An important element of community participation is consultation with the recipients of the services being provided who in this case are the local communities. Community consultation includes very important aspects such as education, information sharing and negotiation. However, the ultimate goal of community participation is to ensure that the decision making process is enhanced through community consultation (Becker, 1997:155). When the public is allowed to directly participate in the processes of decision making within an organisation, this can be termed as community participation (Becker & Hollis, 1997:155). According to these scholars community participation enables the community to for instance identify the projects or programmes the people in the community want. It also requires holding community meetings and debates in order to discuss the identified needs among community members themselves. It further requires approving the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the adopted projects. According to Southal, (2003), "democracy is underpinned by public participation and as such it remains an important aspect for consideration when seeking to strengthen democracies (Scott, 2009)".

The implementation of the community participation strategies and processes is important for the democratization and promotion of social values. It is also important for effective and better planning and the ultimate fulfilment of people's needs in the community. It is also useful for educating particularly with regard to development programmes initiated by the government. This is likely to potentially influence their social or personal changes within the communities they live in, which can in turn be used to include the diverse public need and thus give the local people the right to get involved in decisions that will affect their living standards. By participating in the decision making process, the community will realize the significance of their involvement in deciding and setting the pace of their own future (Chadwick, 1971). According to Slocum and Thomas-Slayter (1995), "community participation is a means to convey individual and the society's personal interests and concerns with regard to the development plans, given that these planning activities would consequently affect the public generally and certain groups specifically."

Proponents of decentralization have argued that it enhances governance and local provision of public goods and services in so many ways (Azfar, et al., 1999; Ahmad, et al., 2005; Mwenda, 2010). Firstly, proximity or nearness to the local people at the grassroots level provides a better understanding of their needs and hence improves efficiency the process of resource allocation. Secondly, it promotes transparency and accountability through provision of vital information to local people in the community. Thirdly, it reduces institutional corruption in government by sharing authority over public goods and services to different actors who can give checks and balances on each other.

Furthermore, it improves the recovery of costs by ensuring the willingness of service recipients pay for the services which match their own needs and preferences. By enhancing the voice of the community in decision making processes, decentralization can promote and enhance equitable distribution of public good and services especially to marginalized local communities which are poor are lagging behind in terms of

development. Implied in these arguments is that the local government is close to the people and it in the best position to serve them accordingly. There are also mechanisms that enable citizens to demand for necessary accountability and proper information regarding their preferences and that the local authorities have the capacity to respond to these needs in an effective and timely manner. However, this is not always the case especially in developing countries like Zambia (Steiner, 2005).

Notwithstanding the above, there have been arguments against a decentralized model of delivering services to the general public. Some scholars have argued that there exist difficulties of policy coordination between the different levels of government which is likely to undermine development results (Azfar, Kähkönen and Meagher, 2001). Secondly, there is a likelihood of capture of the sub-national structures by the local elites especially when the level of awareness among citizen and collective action is low. Local elites may collude at the expense of the majority of the people by hindering efficient and quality service delivery (Cheema, 2007). Furthermore, Mwenda (2010:9 citing Barret, et al., 2007) has argued that "where the design and implementation is poor, decentralized service delivery would be entangled in the inefficiencies transferred from the central government such as 'inefficient utilization of resources and lack of accountability".

Finally, emanating in the face of poor accountability and enforcement mechanisms, a decentralized model of local service provision can result in 'greater levels of corruption and misappropriation of public resources' (ibid, p. 9). These challenges are particularly severe in weak and developing countries states which according to Hayden (2007:220) are "characterized by the prevalence of informal over formal rules and patronage over policy". In such states, Hayden (ibid, p.226) advices, "it makes sense to encourage a bottom-up or demand-driven approach to development that is based on creating policy and decision space for local actors". It is in light of these constraints, citizen participation in decentralized service delivery has been increasingly favored in order to pave way for full community involvement in this process.

Citizen Participation in Decentralized Service Delivery

Community participation, according to Devas and Grant (2003:309), is the "ways in which citizens exercise influence and control over the decisions that affect them". Community participation can both be a means and an end too effective decentralization of public service provision p(Kenya Institute of Public Policy Research and Analysis (KIPPRA) (2006). It is a goal, when it creates opportunities for community engagement by taking government closer to the people at the grassroots level (Robinson, 2007). In that case interaction among members of the community, and government is expected to be enhanced as the result of the proximity of government institutions to the local people. On the other hand, it is a means to effective decentralization of public services when the local people through collective action provide input into the demand side regarding their service needs and preferences as well as the necessary pressure of making sure that charged with the responsibility of delivering quality services to the local people do so accordingly.

Community participation has come to the focal point of decentralization policy reforms as a result of what Cheema and Rondinelli (2007:1) term, "the transition from government decentralization to decentralized governance". Supported by both political and economic pressures and conditionalities by international development partners, governments in developing countries have incorporated the principles of good governance in their decentralization efforts. Accordingly, it has been argued that successful decentralization is one that leaves room for increased community participation in the policy cycle involving the processes of planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. It enables the strengthening of local people's capacity in decision making by 'providing greater access to local political participation' (Singh, 2007).

Mechanisms for Citizen Participation

Mechanisms are the means of channels through the specific objectives are achieved. Mechanisms of community participation are categorized into voice and vote (Kauzya, 2007). Vote is the means through

which members of the community elect their representatives at the sub-national level. The process of decentralization facilitates this by putting in place appropriate structures that enable citizens to exercise their voting rights with limited or no interference from the government' (*ibid,* p. 76). Voting can limit participation as it is only interpreted as elections in this case which in many countries occur once in every three or five years. Participation in terms of voice is where citizens are given the power and space to influence the process of making, implementing, monitoring and evaluating decisions that affect their socio-political-economic wellbeing and to demand accountability from the leadership at the local level' (*ibid,* p. 78).

According to Kauzya (2007:170), the voice is facilitated by decentralization "when there is a transfer of power and authority for making socio-politico-economic decisions from the central government to local government and communities'. On a similar note, Cheema (2007, p.170) has argued that, "citizens are more likely to actively participate in the local political process where local government is perceived to be sufficiently autonomous in making political decisions affecting them". Theory also suggests that the benefits of public participation are maximized when both vote and voice mechanisms are institutionalized through decentralized structures (Azfar, et al., 1999).

Some of the commonly used mechanisms for enhancing community participation (Azfar, et al., 1999, 2004) are discussed in details below as follows:

(a) Elections are a primary mechanism through which members of the community express needs and policy preferences. This is achieved when they are given the right as well as space to vote for the candidate (political party) that offers the promise which corresponds with their expectations. Nevertheless, electoral practice has shown that promises made during elections are kept rarely by politicians in many countries. Furthermore, few political party manifestos express clear policy ideas that they intend to initiate and implement once in office.

(b) Surveys are also be used by local governments to establish the expectations and satisfaction of the general public with the services delivered by local authorities. The surveys have to do with sampling of participants. When they are poorly conducted, the opinions may not be entirely representative of the public's needs and preferences and may result into ineffective and inappropriate policy decisions.

(c) Town meetings, debates/public hearings/hotlines can as well be utilized to provide a direct platform on which members of the general public can articulate issues pertaining to their needs, preferences, disappointments, disagreements and other demands regarding the question of how best service delivery can be improved or enhanced.

(d) Direct community engagement in the provision of services can take the shape of implementation and management committees. It also encompasses citizen's contribution in kind such as provisions of raw materials, expertise, labor and financial resources in the process of service provision.

(e) Exit also referred to as "voting with your feet". According to Azfar, et al. (1999:18) "this is where the citizens can either move to another jurisdiction that is more responsive to their needs or simply switch the service provider". This means that there must be an alternative which depend on the nature of service delivery (ibid). For example, in health and education, the public can decide to shift private providers of both education and health services. Nevertheless, this alternative not available when it comes to regulatory services where government is the only provider of the service.

(f) Participatory planning and budgeting is where citizens are invited t participate on formal platforms on which plans and budgets regarding service delivery are drawn and made. This however largely depends on the willingness of the sub-national or local government to create such a platform and to seek organize the

citizens to participate on such platforms. In this case community awareness and capacity becomes a key factor in this mechanism of community involvement.

(g) Monitoring and Evaluation is the last, yet significant opportunity for community participation. The local people in the community can participate in provision of services in order to ensure that services are delivered according to the plans and that resources are utilized for the purpose which they are intended. This presupposes that the members of the community have correct information about the project or service being delivered. In evaluation the members of the community can participate in the whole project or service review process to determine whether or not it is achieving the intended objectives.

Existing evidence of the influence of citizen participation on decentralized service delivery

In discussing the impact of citizen participation on decentralized delivery of services it is worth noting two key important points. Firstly, there are other factors that may be equally influential hence attributing the local service delivery outcomes on citizen participation alone becomes a challenging task. Further, Cheema and Rondinelli (2007:9) argues that "the relationship between citizen participation and decentralization is conditioned by complex political, historical, social, and economic factors' which differ in magnitude and importance from country to country". These other factors may include the political and legal framework, existing local leadership, financial aspects of decentralization, transparency of government actions, the effectiveness of the civil society, social structure and the capacity of the local governments.

Secondly, despite the international support for citizen participation in decentralized delivery of service to the public, there is insufficient of evidence on the resulting impact on service delivery to the public. According to Robinson (2007:7) argues that "a major problem with available empirical literature is that there is no systematic or comparative evidence on whether increased citizen participation in decentralized local governance generates better outputs in provision of education, health, drinking water and sanitation services". Where data is available it is from single countries and sector mostly outside Africa and is anecdotal and temporarily country specific and highly localized hence rendering the generalization of these findings problematic' (*ibid,* p.7). That said, a number of relevant studies are reviewed in this study. For example, Isham and Kahkonen, 1999) conducted a study on demand-responsiveness of decentralized water service delivery in Central Java, Indonesia. In this study they found that only the services provided are only likely to match the preferences and needs of the users if the users are involved in service design and selection. In this study the researchers established that informed participation made the households more willing when paying for more expensive technologies than the local leadership would have initially chosen for them.

In another study conducted in Colombia, Fiszbein (1997) found that community participation ignited the demands for effective local governments and also opened the opportunities for building and enhancing the capacity of the local citizens. In a similar study conducted in Italy about Italian regional governments (Putnam, 1993 cited in Azfar, et al.*,* 1999:15) found that "governments that were more open to constituent pressure, managed and delivered services more efficiently". Devas and Grant (2003) in their study in Kenya also concluded that there was a shift in expenditure priorities in local authorities in Kenya due to the involvement of citizens in decision making process. A key internationally recognized classical and successful case of local involvemnt is that of participatory budgeting and auditing in the southern city of Porto Allegre in Brazil (Cheema, 2007).

According to Cheema (2007:182), "beginning in 1989 when the Brazilian Workers Party (PT) won the municipal elections, local assemblies have been organized to propose, debate and decide on 'allocations and spending of the municipal investment budget". As a consequence, the number of households that have gained access to water services had risen by 18% while the municipal sewage system had expanded by 39% and the number of children enrolled in public schools also had doubled). These observed outcomes were

found to have increased the trust of the local people in local government and inspired them to pay taxes resulting into a 50% rise in local government revenues. Van Speier (2009:157) in his review of Ian Bruce's book, *The Porto Alegre Alternative: Direct Democracy in Action* has argued that "participation energized citizen involvement and especially of the poor and demonstrated the positive effects that government-supported citizen participation can have on urban planning".

Michels (2012) also conducted a study on "*Citizen Participation in Local Policy Making: Design and Democracy* in developed countries and found that a positive relationship in 11 cases of participatory governance and five of the deliberative forums". In this study it was established that citizen participation had a clear impact on policy through the participatory approach than compared to deliberative forums. Notable in these studies is that the influential potentiality of citizen participation is can only be realized when other enabling factors are adequately addressed. These enabling factors are discussed below as follows.

Factors affecting citizens' influence on decentralized delivery of services

According to Robinson (2007:13) such conditions include "a combination of 'political, institutional, financial and technical factors". Azfar, et al*.,* (1999:4) has argued that on the overall "the performance of decentralized service delivery depends on the design of decentralization and the institutional arrangements that govern its implementation". It also depends partly on the level of civil society effectiveness and on specific aspects of the social structure within the local government jurisdiction' (Azfar, et al*.*, 1999:19). The capacity of the citizens to participate in the delivery of services is also another important factor. For example, the level of education, their socio-economic status and their networks are all equally important factors in determining whose voice is heard and what decisions get implemented (John, 2009). Another important aspect is provision of information. In this regard the quality, accuracy and accessibility of information is also of paramount importance when it comes to ensuring an effective influence of community participation on service delivery.

In a similar study Devas and Grant (2003:315) made the same conclusion in their study on citizen participation in local government both Kenya and Uganda. They further concluded in this study that "information needs to be shared widely and strategically". Other factors that they found to be critical to effective service delivery included "committed local leadership, external pressure from the civil society organizations, central government and development partners". These findings are also similar and in agreement with the findings of Yang and Pandey (2011:889) who in their study concluded that "public management factors matter in citizen participation". They found that key aspects of public management which include the level of red tape, support of elected officials, hierarchical authority and transformational leadership were very significant in determining the influence of citizen participation on the delivery of services to the local people. Particularly they found that that red tapism and hierarchical authority were negatively related with citizen participation outcomes. Positive outcome of citizen participation outcomes are positively related with elected official support, transformational leadership of the chief executive officers, and, the participant capability, competence and level of representativeness. The above mentioned variables in this study were found to be very significant even when "participant competence, representativeness, and involvement mechanisms were controlled for". It hence occurs that effective citizen participation is a factor of the identified interrelated variables.

A similar conclusion was reached and underscored in Bay's (2011) study on "*Citizen Participation and Social Service Delivery in Nicaragua"* where it found and concluded "Municipal political configurations, the local balance of partisan power, legacies of conflict and cooperation, local leadership and the availability of subsidies determine who participates, how they participate and the quality of and access to social service delivery under participatory governance". These identified factors point to the need for deliberate action to promote interaction between the government and the citizens in the decision making process. Bay citing (Avritzer, 2009) has argued that that participation is only likely to work where the government and citizens

agree on the mode of service delivery. It is only in such an environment that the needs and preferences of the citizens are likely to be taken seriously.

Findings in another case study focusing on the tourism industry in Mexico demonstrated that "the residents felt excluded since such efforts (involvement in tourism businesses) required substantial foreign investment which eliminates them from active participation in the industry (Sautter & Leisen, 1999:323-324". In this study it was established that the local people were excluded from the tourism businesses because of the local government gave priority to foreign investors compared to the local people. Nevertheless, even though the preceding reviewed studies have demonstrated that local in countries like Indonesia and Mexico have come with mechanisms for citizen participation, both cases at the same time revealed the fact that local community were indirectly excluded from full involvement in the decision making process because of certain restrictions put in place by the local governments. In fact, in many countries particularly developing countries, legal structures do not promote or encourage the participation of the local people in the affairs that affect them (Akama, 2002).

With regard to question of whether the inclusion of citizens for instance in administrative decision making will result into to a more efficient and effective system for public service delivery, existing evidence on the participation-performance nexus have shown mixed evidence and have been confined to individual or country specific cases (Landre & Knuth, 1993; Moynihan, 2003). Various scholars have widely recognized that there are several administrative costs associated with community participation (Simonsen & Feldman, 2008). Nevertheless, other scholars have argued that citizen participation is time consuming and can slow down the pace of decision making since the citizens are expected to be informed, and initially expected to be educated in order for them to participate effectively in administrative processes. According to Irvin and Stansbury (2004) ''the per-decision cost of citizen participation groups is arguably more expensive than the decision making done by a single administrator with the appropriate expertise and experience". There are also concerns about the loss of control over the process and that actively involved citizens might represent individual interests at the expense of public interests (Ebdon & Franklin, 2004; Heikkila & Issett, 2007).

Woodley (1999:302) has also documented a negative impact of an inappropriate and unequal citizen participation due to the prioritization of stakeholders with vested interest. Plainly speaking the power of involvement is limitedly enabled to the remaining stakeholders which have vested, interests which led to local community members' dissatisfaction towards proposed development projects which led to failure in the attainment of the local community's support.

A study conducted by Timothy (1999) found a negative impact between local community involvement and improved service delivery in Yogyakarta. In this study it was established local community were not clearly informed about their rights to participate in the provision of public (Keogh, 1990). As a result, the local community had not participated in the decision making process of initiated development projects and the ultimate power to decide was in the hands of government. Nerveless, from the government's perspective, it was found that, the local community chose not to pay any attention in the provision of services since they were not involved in the process (Murphy, 1988). Furthermore, in this study it was concluded that the state did not expect any form of citizen participation due to the following reasons: the local community's lack of knowledge and understanding about the significance of community participation and particularly in the decision making process at the local government level, inadequate resources in terms of money, human resources, information and limited revenue allocations from the budget (Timothy, 1999).

Studies that have were conducted in both India and Turkey have also shown that the legal units have placed a barrier between the local community and the local governments (Tosun, 1998). For example, in Brazil it was found that, the local community and other stakeholders had no access to the consultation process regarding the efficient delivery of services to the local community (Few, 2000). Tosun (1998) in his study established that a centralized administration model failed to prioritize the involvement of the local

community in the development planning process in Turkey. According to Cuthill (2002:87), this problem should not "exist if the administrators understand that the aim (of citizen participation) is not to replace one 'power' with another 'power'; but rather to develop collaborative processes based on trust, cooperation and respect between citizens and the local government".

Similarly, a study by Neshkova et al. (2012) on the impact of citizen participation on the performance of public programs. The findings of this study revealed that citizen participation had a significant impact in terms of enhancing performance of public programmes. However, it was also established in this study that they are administrative costs associated with citizen participation. This study also found that the involvement of member of the public or community does not only contribute to increased awareness in terms of knowledge and understanding on importance of citizens' involvement in government affairs, but also has an associated social value attached to the performance of public programs. In this study it was further established that public organizations are likely to be more efficient and effective if they involve the public to take part in their decision-making processes thereby taking advantage of the practical and knowledge and practical advice public participation brings. By integrating citizen participation into the actual and usual business of government, public officials can serve the main objectives of their institutions better. These finding therefore demonstrate that that citizen participation has significant practical value and supports the long-standing efforts of scholars and practitioners in ensuring that those affected by public policies can as well participate meaningfully and significantly in the process of public formulation and implementation.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

According to Buccus *et al*. (2007:3), "in order for improved service delivery and development to happen, public participation is essential". Community Participation is also required to strengthen the decision making as well as the democratic process thereby making government more efficient and effective in responding to the needs of the general public where the provision of public goods and service is concerned. Arnstein (1969:216) postulates that "the idea of citizen participation is a little like eating spinach: no one is against it in principle because it is good for you." The process of citizen participation is supposed to be a two-way process, including both the supply and demand approaches. In the case of local authorities, the Municipalities, with resources at their disposal, should involve the local community in planning for the allocation of these resources to various community programmes and projects, for instance, housing, and cabbage collection, provision of street lighting, electrification and maintenance of roads.

According to the African Charter for Popular Participation in Development and Transformation (ACPPDT) of 1990, as cited in Theron (2009:15), "people are empowered to co-create structures and co-design policies and programmes which serve the broad interests of all citizens, through citizen participation". It should also be mentioned that it is this direct involvement of students which contributes effectively to equitable distribution of programme benefits among community members.

In the Zambian context, community participation is most associated with local authorities and their mandate to plan and manage development activities in the community together with the local people (Ababio, 2004; Moseti, 2010; Madzivhandila & Asha, 2012). By so doing, the members of the community can become effective participants as well as beneficiaries from shared decisions (Nsingo & Kuye, 2005).

Furthermore, Moseti (2010) posits that "participation ensures the development of a common understanding about the matters within the local community between all role players". In this way community participation assists in closing the gaps that exists between the different role players. The direct inclusion of local of local people in the development programmes of their community has for this reason become key aspect of democracy in the modern society (Madzivhandila & Asha, 2012). Nevertheless, in Zambia, the situation is somewhat complicated by lack of strong and forceful civil society structures, lack of effective citizen's

participation in the implementation and delivery of services. For meaningful citizen participation to be attained it is important for the government to ensure that a significant amount of resources are allocated to sub-national level of government (Madzivhandila & Asha, 2012).

According to Arnstein (2003) when discussing the notion of community participation, we should not only consider active versus passive participation but also participation versus non-participation. He further postulates that that there is a continuum on which community participation could be mapped. This continuum runs from manipulation to control of citizens (Arnstein, 2003:246). According to Arnstein (1969:208), "the draft framework of public participation is the ladder which suggests that one can choose one step at a time**".** His ladder of public participation is diagrammatically presented below as follows":

Figure 2.1: Public participation Ladder (Arnstein, 1969:208).

Citizen power

This aspect of participation entails that the local communities, through various and specific units, take decisions in order to ensure that their local authority fulfils its responsibility in the provision of quality services. For instance, if the rate of crime in the community is so high in the locality, members of the community can form an anti-crime unit or committee responsible for patrolling the locality to make sure that the local people are safe and well protected. Furthermore, the local community can approach the local Municipal Council to and adopt a resolution to enforce security and safety of the community by providing extra police force or hiring the security from a security company to provide 24-hour patrol services in the local community.

Delegated power

In the case of a local government institution, the local government Act is expected to empower the local authorities to make decisions on how operations of the local council should be undertaken. Given the amount of work under their arms, the local council can delegate some of these powers to various committees and other community organisations at the ward level, especially on issues that require community participation. This can assist in closing the gap between the local government institutions and the local people in the community that they expected to serve. Some of the powers that could be delegated may include ward-based planning, war room meetings and many other ward-based initiatives.

Partnership

Local municipal councils can further jointly work together with the local communities in order to promote good governance through Integrated Development Planning processes (IDP). In this case the local authorities can approve programmes and projects that are agreed upon during public community hearing

processes and meetings. This partnership can also continue during the implementation of the IDP where ward councilors are regularly required to report to their respective wards on the progress made so far on the adopted integrated development plan. Members of the local community can also attend Council meetings for them to observe and gain an understanding as well as insight about the progress made in the execution of IDP.

Placation

The word 'placation' is derived from the term 'placate' which simply means to pacify or console. The local council should make sincere efforts in order to keep the local community satisfied and happy by effectively responding to suggestions presented by the local community. One way of through which this could be achieved is by coming up with a suggestion box at the reception office of the municipal offices and local community centers. In this way it will be much easier for members of the community to allow the community to write and post their suggestions on how the municipality could better operate. The local authorities in this regard should ensure that suggestions coming from the local community are well addressed in a manner that is within the boundaries of the law and that may not deviate from its major functions.

Consultation

When it comes to consultation the local communities should be given chance to make suggestions regarding the types of projects and programmes that should be implemented using limited resources at the disposal of municipal councils. The local community should also be informed about the financial resources allocated by the local council and should be consulted or at least get regular updates on the implementation process of their own ideas through the Integrated Development Plan. Local community consultation should be put as the first step in the IDP. This should be done in order to ensure that the municipal councils plan for development in accordance with the will of the local people at the grassroots level in the community.

Informing

The local municipality has the responsibility to provide adequate and accurate information to the local community. Such information can be provided through local council stakeholders meetings and reports.

Therapy

This simply entails that local authority will not make decisions that negatively affect the local people lives without consulting them. The municipality should inform the local community about what will happen in their locality.

Manipulation

When the local community, the municipality 'pretends' to consult and involve the local community in order to legitimize the process without actual consultation taking place. For instance, the local council might say that they did consult the local community and they agreed but what has actually taken place was that people were only told that an event is taking place.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The increasing need for community participation in the delivery of services by the local authority deserves a closer look in local governance and development. This is particularly important because there is insufficient empirical evidence to support the theoretical based positive impacts attributed to community participation in

the delivery of services. To investigate this, this study assumes that citizen participation influences the delivery of services by impacting its determinants which include efficient allocation of resources, accountability, equity and quality of service delivery, and cost recovery (Azfar, et al., 1999; Von Braun and Grote, 2002). As shown in Figure 2.2 below community participation is taken as an independent variable that influences the determinants or characteristics of a decentralized service delivery local governance system. Below is a diagrammatic representation of the conceptual framework which will be adopted in this study.
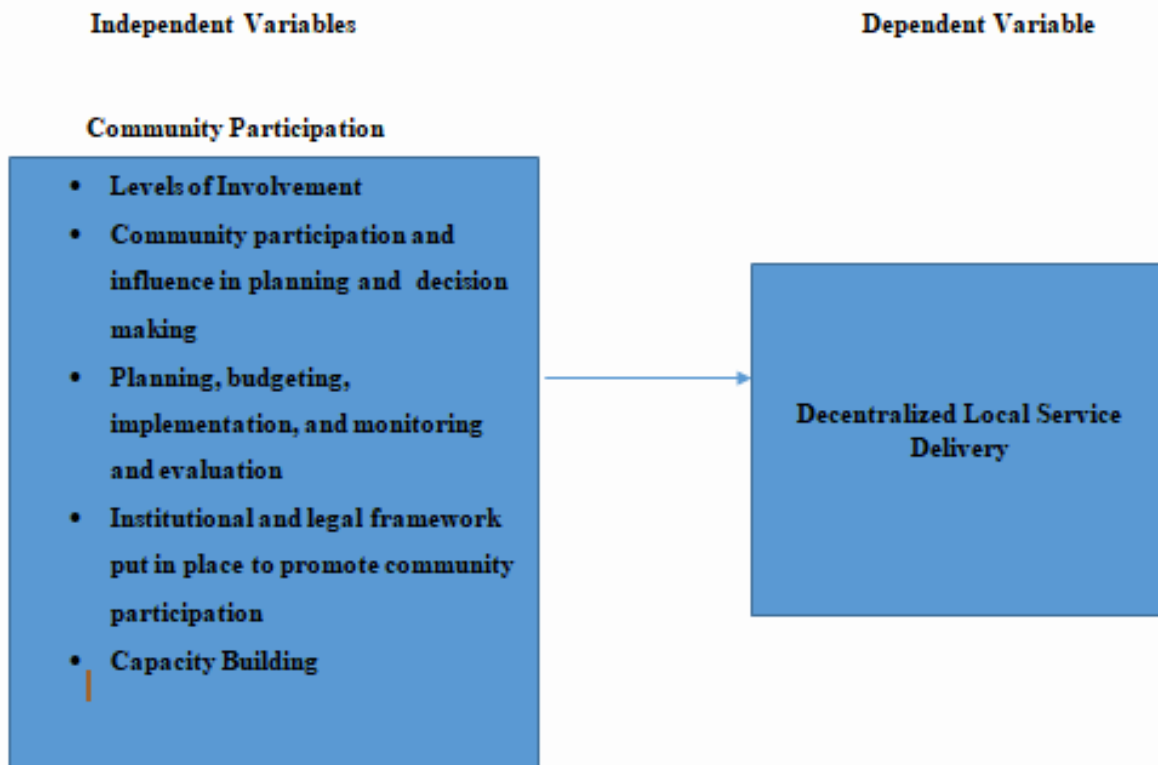
Figure 2.2

In this study, community participation as an independent variable, is operationalized in terms of the mechanisms through which the community have direct contact with a decentralized service delivery system. In this study it narrows on one mechanism of voice relating to the stages of service delivery, that is, planning, budgeting, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation. The dependent variable in this study is decentralized service delivery and it is operationalized by indicators such as allocative efficiency, equity and quality of services, accountability and cost recovery. These are picked as key indicators of whether service delivery has improved or not, in line with the common objectives of decentralization. In this study these indicators are conceptualized as follows: –

Allocative efficiency

Allocative efficiency refers to the extent to which the services delivered to the community matches their preferences. Allocative efficiency is measured by the extent to which the needs of the local community are needs are reflected in the decisions and final products and services provided by the local authorities.

It is envisaged that through community participation local authorities are likely to a better awareness regarding the preferences of the local community and that this can help them provide varied services

depending on the demands of the community (Azfar, et al., 1999:2).

Accountability and Reduction of Corruption

In this study, accountability is defined as the practice where service delivery agents are open and are responsible for their decisions. In this study, accountability is conceptualized as the extent to which local authorities give account to the local community on how much financial resources are at their disposal and how they intent to utilise these resources in the provision of services. On the other hand reduction of corruption is conceptualised as the extent to which misappropriation of public resources is minimized or reduced. In this study accountability is also looked at as the extent to which transparency is exhibited in the manner which public resources are expended or utilized.

According to Devas and Grant (2003) when community participation enhanced community participation strengthens accountability. Thus the local people are supposed to have access to accurate information about local government services. This indicator will be measured by looking at records of information and access to information on local government.

Equity

Equity has to do with provision and delivery of services to the most need people in the community or society. This entails targeting the needy and marginalised people in the community. In this regard members of the community are expected to contribute depending on their ability but resources are allocated to them according to their specific needs. Although According to Azfar, et al., (1999), local initiative (participation) coupled with equalization in the allocation of resources to the community can solve the problem of inequity. In this study, equity will be measured by looking at the extent to which the voice, needs and preferences of the local marginalized people in the community are reflected and incorporated in the decision making process of the local authorities.

Cost Recovery

In this study cost recovery will be measured by looking at the extent to which the services provided by the local authorities are able to meet own costs. This can be achieved through sharing of costs and service charges. Nevertheless, recipients of services should be willing to pay for the services (Azfar, et al., 1999:3). In addition, cost recovery can be effective in an environment where the voices of the local people in the community are head and where there is transparency and accountability with regard to the cost of services.

Quality

In this study, the quality will be measured by looking at the extent the services by the local authorities' meet the specific needs of the local community in the municipality. Quality in this study will be measured by comparing the satisfaction rating of community members with regard to the service provided to them by the local community.

Summary of Literature Review

This chapter reviewed relevant literature with regard to community involvement in the delivery of services by the local authorities. Through community involvement, members of the community acquire ownership and skills which are necessary for collective action. Nevertheless, the gap that exists in the reviewed literature is that most of the studies did not quantify the resources mobilized, the nature and level of community engagement in decision process. The reviewed literature also enabled has also demonstrated that the involvement of the community in service delivery is very important for various reasons. It therefore

envisaged that the findings of this study will raise awareness and contribute to an existing body of knowledge with regard to the broad field of community or citizen participation. In addition, the findings of this study are likely to fill the gap in existing literature with regard to specific areas of community participation and service delivery by the local authorities. According to Nyalunga (2006), the success of any progressive democracy depends on the full involvement or participation of the local community in the sphere of local government. In this study is assumed that cooperative communication is important in ensuring that the voices and needs of the people in the local community are head.

METHODS AND MATERIALS

Introduction

This chapter discusses the research methodology that was used in this study. It discussed the research design, study setting and target population. The methods of data collection and analysis that was used by the researcher to arrive at answers to the research question posed in this study have also been discussed in this chapter. Additionally, this chapter discussed the ethical consideration which the researcher will take into account in this study.

Research Design

In this study, the researcher adopted a mixed method research design involving a triangulation of both qualitative and quantitative research methods. Triangulation it enables the researcher to expand on research methods in order to ensure and enhance diversity. This researcher to have an enriched understanding of the research problem under investigation (Hanson, 1995).

The adoption of qualitative research method in this study is appropriate because it allowed the researcher to collect information on the status of community participation in the provision of service by Choma Municipal Council. The qualitative method was adopted in this study to explore and describe the participants' experiences of the community participation approaches employed in the different wards within Choma Municipality. The triangulation of findings from both the qualitative and quantitative methods, when interpreted well can ensure validity of findings.

In the qualitative phase of this study, the researcher explored the element of interest, relationships, attitudes, behaviour, and experiences. Through this method, the researcher relied on interviews in order to understand why community and stakeholder participation conducted and how community participation is implemented by Choma municipal council. On the other hand, a structured questionnaire comprising both closed and open-ended questions was also used to collected information from randomly selected residents of Choma Municipal Council.

Study Population

The study population refers to group of people from whom the researcher intends to draw conclusions from. According to Du Ploy (2009: 108) "the term population does not refer only to people, but can also be applied to any aggregate of individuals, groups, organisations, or social artifacts/objects." Friend (2004: 52) defines population as "the total collection of all units of analysis about which the researcher wishes to draw specific conclusions". From the definitions above the population of the study include, individuals, groups, organisations, events and human product as well as the conditions to which they are largely exposed.

The target population in this study was Choma municipal council in Choma District of southern province. Choma District has a total population of 247, 860 with a 2.8 growth rate. The participants in this study included the following: ward representatives, municipal managers, constituency administrators, council

secretary and councilors.

Sampling

In this study, the selected sample included community development workers, ward representatives, IDP managers, constituency administrators, traditional leaders, civic associations, business organisations, and political office-bearers. This study will use purposive sampling techniques (i.e. non-probability sampling). According to Babbie (2010: 32), a purposive sampling technique makes a study more credible. Purposive sampling involves collecting a sample composed of subjects deliberately selected (on purpose) by researchers. According to Babbie (2010: 56) the following guidelines should be followed when determining the sample size: For a sample population (N<50), there is no point in sampling. It is recommended that the entire population should be included in the sample.

- If the population size 100, 75% should be included in the sample.
- If the population size is 500, 50% should be included in the sample.
- If the population size is 1,000, 35% should be included in the sample.

The sample size for this study included 128 respondents. The sample included participants responsible for coordinating council activities related within Choma Municipal Council. These comprised community development workers, Ward Committee members, constituency administrators, business people, ward councilors and members of the comminity.

Data Collection Techniques

According to Johnson (2000:49), "data collection refers to the process of preparing for and collecting data/information relating to the study". Data refers to any form of information which is recorded, observation, or facts. The aim of data collection in this study was get information which enabled the researcher to draw valid conclusions and disseminate information on to others. In this study, the following instruments of data collection were used:

- interviews
- questionnaires
- documents

Data Analysis Methods

According to Leedy and Ormord (2005: 136)**, '**Data analysis is defined as the process of placing observations in numerical form and grouping them according to their thematic characteristics in order to draw meaning from them (Turner, 1975: 84)**'.** In this study, the researcher utilized both qualitative and quantitative methods of data analysis that is quantitative data analysis for quantitative data and qualitative data analysis for qualitative data. On one hand, data collected through questionnaires was analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS 16.0 Version) and excel. The researcher then presented the analyzed information in form of tables, frequency distribution graphs and pie charts. On the other hand, the data which was obtained through interviews was analyzed using thematic content analysis. The researcher transcribed all the responses which be obtained through interviews with key informants and presented this data in narrative form after transcription.

Ethical Considerations

In this study, in order to achieve and maintain a high level of ethical standards and respect of participants' rights, all respondents were given the choice to either participate or not to participate. At the beginning of the study the researcher ensured that all potential participants were reminded that their participation in the

study was voluntary and they were free to withdraw without any without any consequences. The researcher also explained the main aim and objectives of this study to all the participant before administering a questionnaire and conducting interviews. All research participants were also asked to complete and sign a consent form warranting their participation in the study. The researcher also ensured that the privacy and confidentiality protocols were strictly adhered to. The researcher was very committed to adhering to all ethical protocols prescribed by the University of Lusaka. Permission to conduct and record interviews was also sought. Ethics enables the researcher to establish what is proper and improper in the process of conducting his study.

Chapter Summary

Conclusively, this chapter has discussed at length the research methodology that was used in this study to arrive at the key answers to the researcher questions posed in chapter one of this r research dissertation. The methods of data collection and analysis that were used by the researcher in this study have also been discussed. Additionally, this chapter has discussed all the ethical consideration which the researcher took account in this study.

RESULTS

This chapter presents the findings of the study based on the research objectives and research questions contained in chapter one of this dissertation.

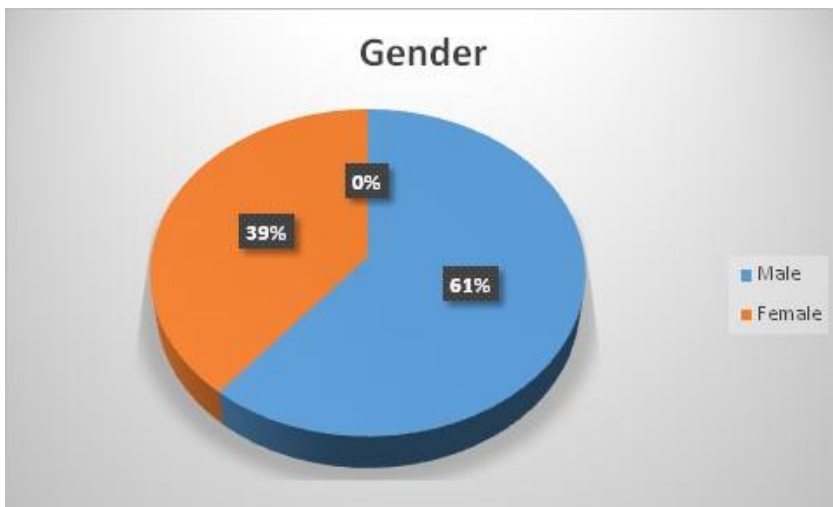**Figure 4.1. Gender distribution of the respondents**

Figure 4.1 shows gender distribution among the respondents who participated in this study, 61% were male and 39% female respectively.

Figure 4.2. Age distribution of the respondents

Age	Frequency	Percentage
Under-20 years	0	0
21-30 years	40	31.2%
31-40 years	60	47%
41-50 years	17	13.3%
51-60 years	11	8.5%
Total	128	100%

Figure 4.2. About 31.2% of these respondents were between the ages of 21-30 years, and 47% were 31-40 years, 13.3% between 41-50years. The research also indicated that there were about 8.5% of the respondents who were in the age range 51-60 years. This indicated that majority of the respondents fall in the youth age bracket. It is an indicator that majority of the respondents are within the age bracket where they have capacity to play essential roles when it comes to community participation.

Figure 4.3 Distribution of the respondent's marital status
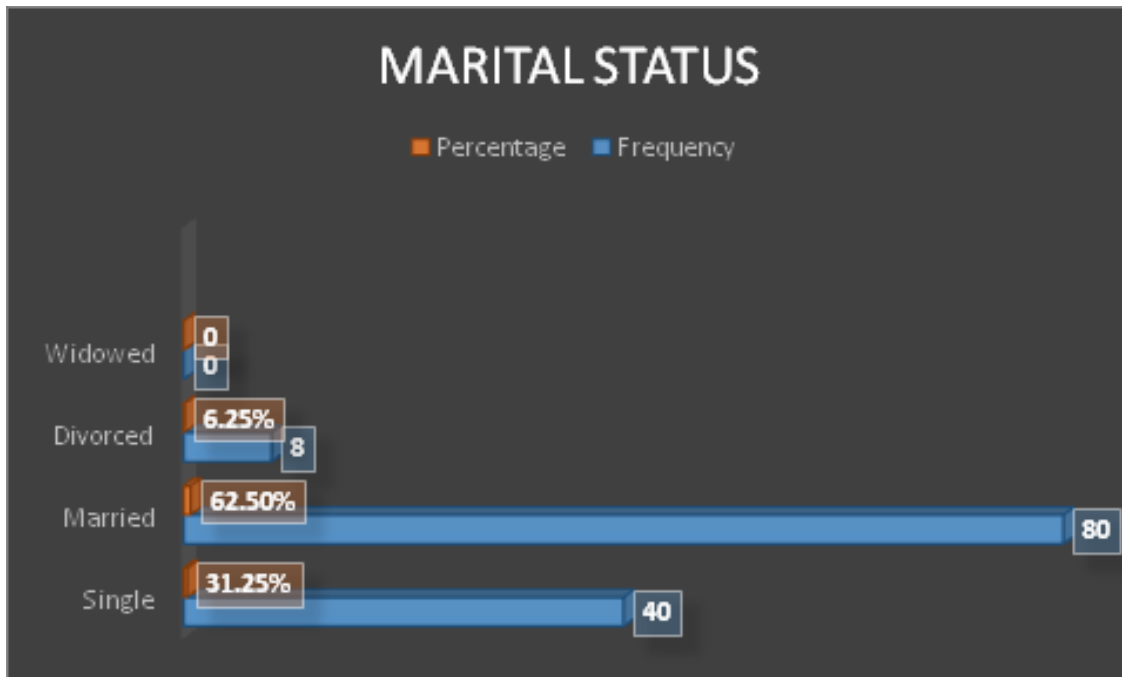
The research in figure 4.3, Indicated that there were 31.25% respondents who were single, 62.5% married and 6.25% have divorced. This is a social indicator that most respondents to the study were married.

Figure 4.4 Respondents academic qualification

Academic qualification	Frequency	Percentage
Primary	0	0
Secondary	30	23.4%
Diploma	40	31.25%
Degree	50	39.1%
Post graduate	8	6.25%
Total	128	100%

Figure 4.4, indicated that 23.4% were secondary education, 31.25% had college education (diploma) and 39.1% with university education (degree), while 6.25% had post graduate degree (master's degree) respectively.

Section B: Levels of community participation

Figure 4.5. (a) Community involvement in the provision of services by Choma Municipal Council
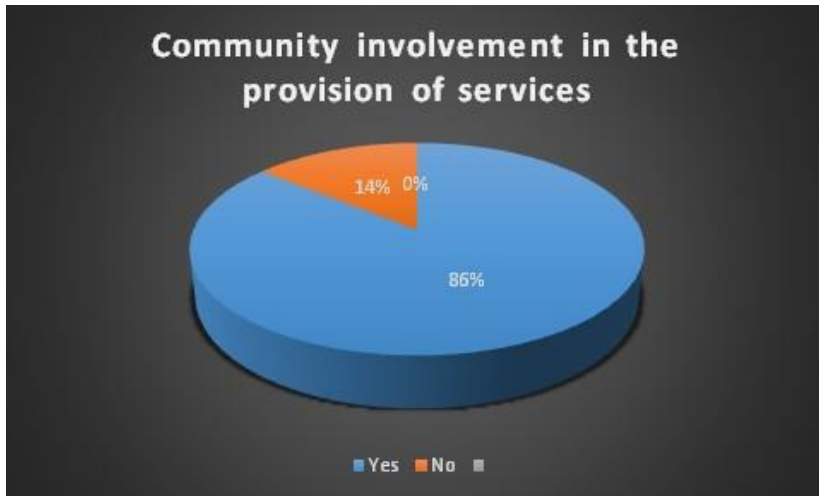

Figure 4.5 shows that majority of the respondents representing 86% indicated that members of the community were actively involved in the provision of services by Choma Municipal.

Figure 4.5 (b) Community involvement in the provision of services by Choma Municipal Council

Figure 4.6 shows that majority of the respondents representing 70.3% indicated that community members in Choma were involved in the planning and decision making process, 23.4% were involved at implementation stage and only few community members were involved in the evaluation process.

With regard to community involvement in service delivery, some key informants agreed that that the local community is involved in planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of social service delivery. The key areas of involvement include annual budgeting, ward preparation of development committees in all the 25 wards, partnerships in road, cabbage collection, and maintenance works of markets, streets and drainage systems. The key informants mentioned that the community representative are also involved in the monitoring and review process of these services. The communities are also involvement through the established health neighbourhood committees and market committees in some cases. The communities are also involvement in the development of integrated development plans.

One key informant stated that there is 100% stakeholder involvement in when it comes to determining how services should be provided to the local municipality. Some key informants interviewed in this study

mentioned that in real terms delivery to the community should be driven by the demand coming from the community with regard to the type of services that they want the council to deliver to them. As result the community can only participate by providing information to the local council about the type of services they need. Members of the community are also involved whenever the council has some work with civil society organisations and Non-Governmental Organisations in the district such as Action Aid. Nevertheless, some key informants argued that the communities are not greatly involved in determining how the service are to be provided. This is so because in most cases, the councillors who are supposed to represent the people in their respective wards are not consulted but rather informed after the decisions have been made.
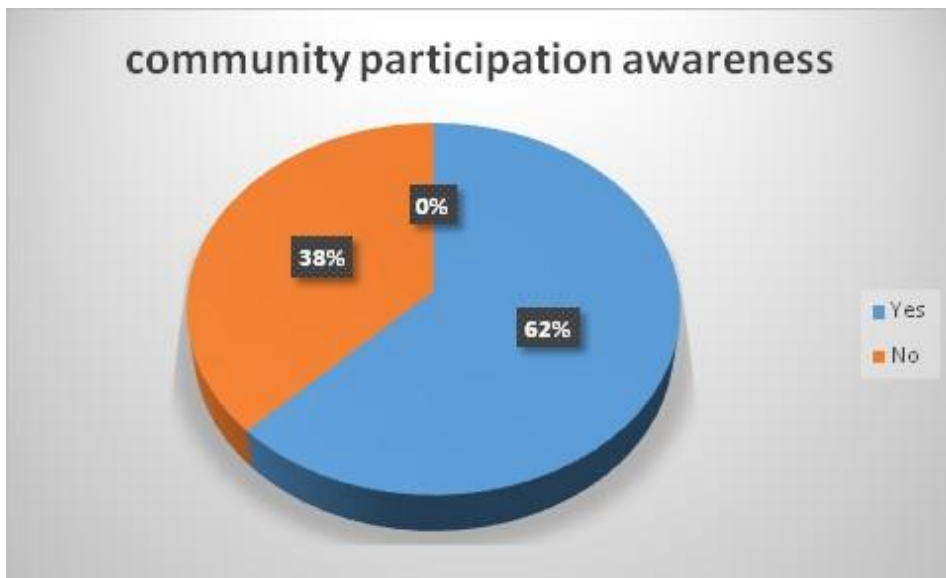
Figure 4.6. Community participation awareness

Figure 4.7.The study indicated that majority 62% of the respondents were aware of legal and institution frame work that supports community participation in the provision of services by Municipal council while 38% lacked such awareness.

The Legal and Institutional Mechanisms Promoting Community Participation in the Provision of Services by the Choma Municipal Council

The legal and policy frameworks that are used promote the involvement of the community in the delivery of services by Choma Municipal Council include the Zambia National Decentralisation Policy, by-laws and council policies, the constitution of Zambia, decentralisation implementation plan and the keep Zambia Green and Clean policy. The council has also established 22 Ward Development Committees in both Mbabala and Choma Central Constituencies and it works with the local communities through these same Ward Development Committees. The council is also guided by the Local Government Act No. 2 of 2019 on the need to use WDCs in the process of community engagement. Choma Municipal Council also has the public relations office through which members of the community air their views to the councils. The council is also guided by the Market and Bus Stations Act which provides for Market Committee and some marketeers are allowed to sit on the council boards.

Figure 4.7. Effectiveness of the Existing Legal and Policy Institutional Framework in Promotion of community participation

Promotion of community participation	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	13	10.2%

No	115	89.8%
Total	128	100%

The study revealed that 89.8% of the respondents indicated that legal and institution framework was not sufficient in the promotion of community participation in the delivery of services by the local councils. There were only 10.2% who noted that legal and institution framework was sufficient in the promotion of community participation in the delivery of services by local councils.

Figure 4.8. Effects of community participation

Effects of community participation	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	98	78.4%
No	30	21.6%
Total	128	100%

Figure 4.9 revealed that 78.4% of the respondents attested that community participation had an effect in the delivery of services by local councils while 21.6% of the respondents did not agree to the statement respectively.

Figure 4.9. Influence of community participation

Influence of community participation	Frequency	Percentage
Greater extent	96	75%
Less extent	32	25%
Does not affect the quality of service provision	0	0
Total	128	100%

The study revealed 75% of the respondents indicated that community participation had influenced the quality of services provided by the local authorities to a greater extent while 25% indicated that community participation had influenced the quality of services provided by the local authorities to a less extent respectively.

According to the key informants interviewed in this study, through community participation, the local council is able to know the type of services which are needed by the local community. This helps the local council in terms of planning so that the right type of services and good are provided to the local community in the right amount and quality. Community participation in the delivery of services helps the local council to remain in check. It also helps the council to respond effectively to the actual needs of the local community. Through community engagement, the local council is also able to receive effective feedback from the members of the community on the quality of services delivered. By dictating what type of services should be provided by the local council, the community ensures that the local council and the ward councilors puts in the best performance to avoid complains from the community.

In addition, the community sometimes engages Member of Parliament and the local government ministers about the failures of the local councils with regard to service provision. This in turn makes the local council to account for their failure to the central government, thereby improving service delivery in their local municipalities. Furthermore, when the local communities are involved in the delivery of services, the quality of services delivered is positively affected because there is a feeling and sense of ownership.

For example, garbage and refuse reduces since members of the community are also part of the Keep Zambia

Clean Campaign.

Figure 4.10 Factors affecting community participation

Factors affecting community participation	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	115	89.8%
No	13	10.2%
Total	128	100%

The study revealed that 89.8% respondents agreed that they were a lot of factors that had affected community participation in the delivery of services by the local council while 10.2% did not indicate any factors. Nevertheless, some of the factors that had affected community participation in the delivery of services by the local council were unawareness of developmental projects, lack of information in the community, lack of community participation, lack of knowledge in council operations, language barrier and political interference in matters concerning the community.

Several other factors which affect community participation in the delivery of service by the Choma Municipal Council were cited by the key informants interviewed. Some of these factors include the following:

Lack of Knowledge and opportunities by the Community due to lack of sensitization with regard to how they could participate in the provision of services. The main reason cited for this was lack of sufficient time to sensitize the community on the need for them to participate in service delivery programmes. Some members of the community have at times shown lack of interest if there is nothing to gain from their participation. Some key informants argued that poor or low levels of funding hinders community participation. Other key informants mentioned that there is also non operationalization of ward development committees.

Distance was also cited as one of the factors that affect community participation in the provision of services by the local council. Some members of the community live in far and distant places and this affects their ability to participate fully in council meetings and other event organized by the local authority. Community involvement in politics is also another factor which affects their participation in the delivery of services by the local council. With regard to this, there is also a perceived feeling that when members of the community participate in council meetings and other arrangements, they are helping the ruling party in government.

Measures that should be put in place to enhance community participation by Choma Municipal council in the delivery of services

With regard to the strategies that should be adopted to promote community participation in the delivery of services by the local council, some of the key informants interviewed suggested that the council should support active representation of community members in council meetings and development of development plans. The local council should also promote capacity building for community leaders responsible for running the affairs of the community through Ward Development Committees in order for them to participate fully in decision making and planning for community activities and services.

The other measures that should be put in place to enhance community participation is to improve on information dissemination and community sensitization on the importance of their active involvement in decentralized delivery of services by the local authorities. Additionally, putting up suggestion boxes on council premises as one way of tabling out the problems faced by the community.

Furthermore, some the key informants interviewed in this study recommended that civic leaders should

regularly conduct feedback meetings with the electorates so that they are fully aware of what is currently happening in the council. The local council can also be working hand in hand with the local NGOs and civil society organization through WDCs as opposed to doing business in the community without the representatives of the community.

Other key informants interviewed recommended that the local council can also promote community participation through radio programmes that are aimed at eliciting community support and participation in the provision of services by the local authority. Through the same regular radio programmes members of the community can also be encouraged to call in and community their concern to the local authority.

In addition, community participation can also be promoted through the establishment of effective public private partnerships with the members of the community and local NGOs. Community participation can also be promoted and enhanced through joint planning, implementation and monitoring of community projects. This can actually be done through quarterly review of council performance in the provision of services to the community with the members of the community themselves. There is also need for full decentralisation of some Council operations to sub centers such as Batoka, Mbabala, Masuku and Macha.

The local council should also promote an open door policy which promotes transparency and accountability. The local council should also help in building the capacity of community leaders so that could realize the benefits of their participation in building their own communities.

The local council should also come with community sensitization programmes in order to help members of the community realize the need for their active participation in consultative meetings that may be called upon by the local authority.

The local council should institutionalize their strategic plans and ensure that annual work plans are developed in line with what the community wants. The council should also promote town hall meetings so as to engage members of the community on matters relating to the provision of services.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This chapter discusses the main findings of this study in relations with the research objectives and existing research findings in the reviewed literature as well as the theoretical framework which was adopted in this study.

Level of Community Involvement in decentralized Service Delivery by the Local Council

With regard to the level of community involvement in decentralized Service Delivery by the Local Council, the findings of this study shows that majority of the respondents representing 70.3% indicated that community members in Choma were involved in the planning and decision making process, 23.4% were involved at implementation stage and only few community members were involved in the evaluation process. With regard to community involvement in service delivery, some key informants agreed that that the local community is involved in planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of social service delivery. The key areas of involvement include annual budgeting, ward preparation of development committees in all the 25 wards, partnerships in road, cabbage collection, and maintenance works of markets, streets and drainage systems. The key informants mentioned that the community representative are also involved in the monitoring and review process of these services. The communities are also involvement through the established health neighborhood committees and market committees in some cases. The communities are also involvement in the development of integrated development plans.

One key informant stated that there is 100% stakeholder involvement in when it comes to determining how

services should be provided to the local municipality. Some key informants interviewed in this study mentioned that in real terms delivery to the community should be driven by the demand coming from the community with regard to the type of services that they want the council to deliver to them. As result the community can only participate by providing information to the local council about the type of services they need. The findings support the findings by Michels (2012) who also conducted a study on "*Citizen Participation in Local Policy Making: Design and Democracy* in developed countries and found that a positive relationship in 11 cases of participatory governance and five of the deliberative forums". In this study it was established that citizen participation had a clear impact on policy through the participatory approach than compared to deliberative forums. Notable in these studies is that the influential potentiality of citizen participation is can only be realized when other enabling factors are adequately addressed

Effectiveness of the Legal and Institutional Framework in Promoting Community Participation in Service Delivery

In this study it was revealed that the legal and policy frameworks that are used promote the involvement of the community in the delivery of services by Choma Municipal Council include the Zambia National Decentralization Policy, by-laws and council policies, the constitution of Zambia, decentralization implementation plan and the keep Zambia Green and Clean policy. The council has also established 22 Ward Development Committees in both Mbabala and Choma Central Constituencies and it works with the local communities through these same Ward Development Committees. The council is also guided by the Local Government Act No. 2 of 2019 on the need to use WDCs in the process of community engagement. In the case of a local government institution, the local government Act is expected to empower the local authorities to make decisions on how operations of the local council should be undertaken. Given the amount of work under their arms, the local council can delegate some of these powers to various committees and other community organizations at the ward level, especially on issues that require community participation. This can assist in closing the gap between the local government institutions and the local people in the community that they expected to serve. Some of the powers that could be delegated may include ward-based planning, war room meetings and many other ward-based initiatives (Arnstein, 2003).

Nevertheless, 89.8% of the respondents indicated that legal and institution framework was not sufficient in the promotion of community participation in the delivery of services by the local councils. There were only 10.2% who noted that legal and institution framework was sufficient in the promotion of community participation in the delivery of services by local councils. The findings of this study are similar to the findings of previous researchers such as Robinson (2007:13) who in a similar study in Kenya found that "a combination of 'political, institutional, financial and technical factors".

Accordingly, Azfar, et al*., (1999:4) has argued that on the overall "the performance of decentralized service delivery depends on the design of decentralization and the institutional arrangements that govern its implementation". It also depends partly on the level of civil society effectiveness and on specific aspects of the social structure within the local government jurisdiction' (Azfar, et al., 1999:19). In their study, they found that key aspects of public management which include the level of red tape, support of elected officials, hierarchical authority and transformational leadership were very significant in determining the influence of citizen participation on the delivery of services to the local people.

Particularly they found that that red tapism and hierarchical authority were negatively related with citizen participation outcomes.Positive outcome of citizen participation outcomes are positively related with elected official support, transformational leadership of the chief executive officers, and, the participant capability, competence and level of representativeness. The above mentioned variables in this study were found to be very significant even when "participant competence, representativeness, and involvement mechanisms were controlled for". It hence occurs that effective citizen participation is a factor of the identified interrelated variables.

Impact of community participation on Service Delivery by the Local Council

Figure 4.9 revealed that 78.4% of the respondents attested that community participation had an effect in the delivery of services by local councils while 21.6% of the respondents did not agree to the statement respectively. Furthermore, according to the key informants interviewed in this study, through community participation, the local council is able to know the type of services which are needed by the local community. This helps the local council in terms of planning so that the right type of services and good are provided to the local community in the right amount and quality. Community participation in the delivery of services helps the local council to remain in check. It also helps the council to respond effectively to the actual needs of the local community. Through community engagement, the local council is also able to receive effective feedback from the members of the community on the quality of services delivered. By dictating what type of services should be provided by the local council, the community ensures that the local council and the ward councilors puts in the best performance to avoid complains from the community. These results thus building on existing research findings by Michels (2012) who also conducted a study on " *Citizen Participation in Local Policy Making: Design and Democracy* in developed countries and found that a positive relationship in 11 cases of participatory governance and five of the deliberative forums". In this study it was established that citizen participation had a clear impact on policy through the participatory approach than compared to deliberative forums. Notable in these studies is that the influential potentiality of citizen participation is can only be realized when other enabling factors are adequately addressed.

In addition, the community sometimes engages Member of Parliament and the local government ministers about the failures of the local councils with regard to service provision. This in turn makes the local council to account for their failure to the central government, thereby improving service delivery in their local municipalities. Furthermore, when the local communities are involved in the delivery of services, the quality of services delivered is positively affected because there is a feeling and sense of ownership. For example, garbage and refuse reduces since members of the community are also part of the Keep Zambia Clean Campaign. The findings of this study thus confirms and builds on existing research findings. For instance, in a study conducted by Neshkova et al. (2012) on the impact of citizen participation on the performance of public programs, it was also revealed that citizen participation had a significant impact in terms of enhancing performance of public programmes. However, it was also established in this study that they are administrative costs associated with citizen participation. This study also found that the involvement of member of the public or community does not only contribute to increased awareness in terms of knowledge and understanding on importance of citizens' involvement in government affairs, but also has an associated social value attached to the performance of public programs**.** In this study it was further established that public organisations are likely to be more efficient and effective if they involve the public to take part in their decision-making processes thereby taking advantage of the practical and knowledge and practical advice public participation brings. By integrating citizen participation into the actual and usual business of government, public officials can serve the main objectives of their institutions better. These finding therefore demonstrate that that citizen participation has significant practical value and supports the long-standing efforts of scholars and practitioners in ensuring that those affected by public policies can as well participate meaningfully and significantly in the process of public formulation and implementation.

Regarding the impact of community involvement in the delivery of services by the local council, the findings of this study further confirms previous research findings by Fiszbein (1997) who in study conducted in Colombia, found that community participation ignited the demands for effective local governments and also opened the opportunities for building and enhancing the capacity of the local citizens. In a similar study conducted in Italy about Italian regional governments (Putnam, 1993 cited in Azfar, et al., 1999:15) found that "governments that were more open to constituent pressure, managed and delivered services more efficiently". Devas and Grant (2003) in their study in Kenya also concluded that there was a shift in expenditure priorities in local authorities in Kenya due to the involvement of citizens in decision

making process. A key internationally recognized classical and successful case of local involvement is that of participatory budgeting and auditing in the southern city of Porto Allegre in Brazil (Cheema, 2007).

Factors affecting citizens' influence on decentralized delivery of services

The study revealed that 89.8% respondents agreed that they were a lot of factors that had affected community participation in the delivery of services by the local council while 10.2% did not indicate any factors. Several other factors which affect community participation in the delivery of service by the Choma Municipal Council were cited by the key informants interviewed. Some of these factors include the following:

Lack of Knowledge and opportunities by the Community due to lack of sensitization with regard to how they could participate in the provision of services. The main reason cited for this was lack of sufficient time to sensitize the community on the need for them to participate in service delivery programmes. Some members of the community have at times shown lack of interest if there is nothing to gain from their participation. Some key informants argued that poor or low levels of funding hinders community participation. These findings are similar with what pother researchers found in the past. For example, in a study conducted by Timothy (1999) found a negative impact between local community involvement and improved service delivery in Yogyakarta. In this study it was established local community were not clearly informed about their rights to participate in the provision of public (Keogh, 1990). As a result, the local community had not participated in the decision making process of initiated development projects and the ultimate power to decide was in the hands of government. Nerveless, from the government's perspective, it was found that, the local community chose not to pay any attention in the provision of services since they were not involved in the process (Murphy, 1988). Furthermore, in this study it was concluded that the state did not expect any form of citizen participation due to the following reasons: the local community's lack of knowledge and understanding about the significance of community participation and particularly in the decision making process at the local government level, inadequate resources in terms of money, human resources, information and limited revenue allocations from the budget (Timothy, 1999).

In this study it was also revealed that there is none operationalization of ward development committees. Community involvement in politics is also another factor which affects their participation in the delivery of services by the local council. With regard to this, there is also a perceived feeling that when members of the community participate in council meetings and other arrangements, they are helping the ruling party in government. Therefore, the findings of this study confirms the findings of previous studies conducted in different countries. For example, in a similar study Devas and Grant (2003:315) made the same conclusion in their study on citizen participation in local government both Kenya and Uganda. They further concluded in this study that "information needs to be shared widely and strategically". Other factors that they found to be critical to effective service delivery included "committed local leadership, external pressure from the civil society organizations, central government and development partners". These findings are also similar and in agreement with the findings of Yang and Pandey (2011:889) who in their study concluded that "public management factors matter in citizen participation".

The findings of this study are also in line with the findings of John (2009) who concluded that, the capacity of the citizens to participate in the delivery of services is also another important factor. For example, the level of education, their socio-economic status and their networks are all equally important factors in determining whose voice is heard and what decisions get implemented (John, 2009). Another important aspect is provision of information. In this regard the quality, accuracy and accessibility of information is also of paramount importance when it comes to ensuring an effective influence of community participation on service delivery.

The other factor that was found to impact negatively on the participation of the local community in

decentralized service delivery is their partisan politics. Many felt that by participating in the activities or programmes organized by the local council, they were simply helping the ruling party in power. A similar conclusion was reached and underscored in Bay's (2011) study on "*Citizen Participation and Social Service Delivery in Nicaragua*" where it found and concluded "Municipal political configurations, the local balance of partisan power, legacies of conflict and cooperation, local leadership and the availability of subsidies determine who participates, how they participate and the quality of and access to social service delivery under participatory governance". These identified factors point to the need for deliberate action to promote interaction between the government and the citizens in the decision making process. Bay citing (Avritzer, 2009) has also argued that that participation is only likely to work where the government and citizens agree on the mode of service delivery. It is only in such an environment that the needs and preferences of the citizens are likely to be taken seriously.

Measures that should be put in place to enhance community participation by Choma Municipal council in the delivery of services

With regard to the strategies that should be adopted to promote community participation in the delivery of services by the local council, some of the key informants interviewed suggested that the council should support active representation of community members in council meetings and development of development plans. The local council should also promote capacity building for community leaders responsible for running the affairs of the community through Ward Development Committees in order for them to participate fully in decision making and planning for community activities and services. When it comes to consultation the local communities should be given chance to make suggestions regarding the types of projects and programmes that should be implemented using limited resources at the disposal of municipal councils. The local community should also be informed about the financial resources allocated by the local council and should be consulted or at least get regular updates on the implementation process of their own ideas through the Integrated Development Plan. Local community consultation should be put as the first step in the IDP. This should be done in order to ensure that the municipal councils plans for development in accordance with the will of the local people at the grassroots level in the community (Arnstein, 2003).

Furthermore, some the key informants interviewed in this study recommended that civic leaders should regularly conduct feedback meetings with the electorates so that they are fully aware of what is currently happening in the council. The local council can also working hand in hand with the local NGOs and civil society organization through WDCs as opposed to doing business in the community without the representatives of the community. In addition, community participation can also be promoted through the establishment of effective public private partnerships with the members of the community and local NGOs. Community participation can also be promoted and enhanced through joint planning, implementation and monitoring of community projects. This can actually be done through quarterly review of council performance in the provision of services to the community with the members of the community themselves. Local municipal councils can further jointly work together with the local communities in order to promote good governance through Integrated Development Planning processes (IDP). In this case the local authorities can approve programmes and projects that are agreed upon during public community hearing processes and meetings. This partnership can also continue during the implementation of the IDP where ward councilors are regularly required to report to their respective wards on the progress made so far on the adopted integrated development plan. Members of the local community can also attend Council meetings for them to observe and gain an understanding as well as insight about the progress made in the execution of IDP (Arnstein, 2003).

The local council should also promote an open door policy which promotes transparency and accountability. The local council should also help in building the capacity of community leaders so that could realize the benefits of their participation in building their own communities. According to Devas and Grant (2003) when community participation enhanced community participation strengthens accountability. Thus the local

people are supposed to have access to accurate information about local government services. This indicator will be measured by looking at records of information and access to information on local government.

Other key informants interviewed recommended that the local council can also promote community participation through radio programmes that are aimed at eliciting community support and participation in the provision of services by the local authority. Through the same regular radio programmes members of the community can also be encouraged to call in and community their concern to the local authority. These findings thus support the argument by Moseti (2010) who posits that "participation ensures the development of a common understanding about the matters within the local community between all role players". In this way community participation assists in closing the gaps that exists between the different role players. Thus direct inclusion of local of local people in the development programmes of their community for this reason should be considered as a key aspect of democracy in the modern society (Madzivhandila & Asha, 2012).

CONCLUSION

This study was aimed at establishing the nature and level of community participation in the delivery of services by Choma Municipal Council. This study focuses on the key issues relating to the conception of community participation as a tool for enhancing service delivery by the local authorities in the community. In this study, the researcher adopted a mixed method research design involving a triangulation of both qualitative and quantitative research methods. In the qualitative phase of this study, the researcher explored the element of interest, relationships, attitudes, behaviour, and experiences. Through this method, the researcher relied on interviews in order to understand why community and stakeholder participation conducted and how community participation is implemented by Choma municipal council. On the other hand, a structured questionnaire comprising both closed and open-ended questions was also used to collected information from randomly selected residents of Choma Municipal Council.

With regard to the level of community involvement in decentralized Service Delivery by the Local Council, the findings of this study shows that majority of the respondents representing 70.3% indicated that community members in Choma were involved in the planning and decision making process, 23.4% were involved at implementation stage and only few community members were involved in the evaluation process. The local community is involved in planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of social service delivery. The key areas of involvement include annual budgeting, ward preparation of development committees in all the 25 wards, partnerships in road, cabbage collection, and maintenance works of markets, streets and drainage systems. The key informants mentioned that the community representative are also involved in the monitoring and review process of these services.

In this study it was also revealed that the legal and policy frameworks that are used promote the involvement of the community in the delivery of services by Choma Municipal Council include the Zambia National Decentralization Policy, by-laws and council policies, the constitution of Zambia, decentralization implementation plan and the keep Zambia Green and Clean policy. The council has also established 22 Ward Development Committees in both Mbabala and Choma Central Constituencies and it works with the local communities through these same Ward Development Committees. The council is also guided by the Local Government Act No. 2 of 2019 on the need to use WDCs in the process of community engagement. In the case of a local government institution, the local government Act is expected to empower the local authorities to make decisions on how operations of the local council should be undertaken. Nevertheless, 89.8% of the respondents indicated that legal and institution framework was not sufficient in the promotion of community participation in the delivery of services by the local councils. There were only 10.2% who noted that legal and institution framework was sufficient in the promotion of community participation in the delivery of services by local councils. Previous researchers have argued that on the overall the performance of decentralized service delivery depends on the design of decentralization and the institutional

arrangements that govern its implementation (Azfar, et al*.,* 1999:4).

With regard to the impact of community participation on decentralised service delivery, the majority respondents (78.4%) in this study agreed that community participation had an effect in the delivery of services by local councils while 21.6% of the respondents did not agree to the statement respectively. Furthermore, according to the key informants interviewed in this study, through community participation, the local council is able to know the type of services which are needed by the local community. This helps the local council in terms of planning so that the right type of services and good are provided to the local community in the right amount and quality. Community participation in the delivery of services helps the local council to remain in check. It also helps the council to respond effectively to the actual needs of the local community. Through community engagement, the local council is also able to receive effective feedback from the members of the community on the quality of services delivered.

In this study several factors which affects community participation in decentralised service delivery by the local council were identified and discussed at length. According to the findings of this study, factors which affect community participation in the delivery of service by the Choma Municipal Council were cited by the key informants interviewed. Some of these factors include the following: Lack of Knowledge and opportunities by the Community due to lack of sensitization with regard to how they could participate in the provision of services. The main reason cited for this was lack of sufficient time to sensitize the community on the need for them to participate in service delivery programmes. Some members of the community have at times shown lack of interest if there is nothing to gain from their participation.

Some key informants argued that poor or low levels of funding hinders community participation. These findings are similar with what other researchers found in the past. For example, in a study conducted by Timothy (1999) found a negative impact between local community involvement and improved service delivery in Yogyakarta. In this study it was established local community were not clearly informed about their rights to participate in the provision of public (Keogh, 1990). As a result, the local community had not participated in the decision making process of initiated development projects and the ultimate power to decide was in the hands of government.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the main findings of this study to enhance community participation in decentralized service delivery by the local councils, the following recommendation were made:

1. The local council should support active representation of community members in council meetings and development of development plans.
2. The local councils should promote and facilitate the capacity building for community leaders responsible for running the affairs of the community through Ward Development Committees in order for them to participate fully in decision making and planning for community activities and services.
3. The local community should also be informed about the financial resources allocated by the local council and should be consulted or at least get regular updates on the implementation process of their own ideas through the Integrated Development Plan.
4. Civic leaders should regularly conduct feedback meetings with the electorates so that they are fully aware of what is currently happening in the council.
5. The local councils should also start working hand in hand with the local NGOs and civil society organization
6. Community participation can also be promoted through the establishment of effective public private partnerships with the members of the community and local NGOs.
7. Community participation can also be promoted and enhanced through joint planning, implementation and monitoring of community projects between the local councils and members of the community through their own local representatives.

8. The local council should also promote an open door policy which promotes transparency and accountability.

9. The local council can also promote community participation through radio programmes that are aimed at sensitizing and eliciting community support and participation in the provision of services by the local authority.

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