

Integrated Development Plan Implementation and the Enhancement of Service Delivery: Is There a Link?

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Abstract: South African municipalities are legislative-bound to develop and implement an Integrated Development Plans (IDPs). IDPs are strategic documents designed to address service delivery imbalances of the pre-democratic dispensation and promote integrated and politico-socio-economic welfare of the general citizenry. Services delivered by municipalities are therefore incorporated within the IDP of each municipality. The aim of this paper is to interrogate the relationship between IDP implementation and service delivery using four (4) selected municipalities found within the Limpopo Province, South Africa as unit of analysis. This is done through qualitative and quantitative research approaches to comprehensively understand some of the factors leading to poor IDP implementation and poor service delivery to communities within the jurisdiction of selected municipalities. A structured questionnaire and supplementary interviews were used to collect primary data. The sample of the study comprised of 68 employees from the selected municipalities during the year 2014. The paper therefore concludes that efficient and effective implementation of the IDP has a potency of accelerating service delivery levels thus curbing service delivery protests. Proposed recommendations can contribute to both the body of knowledge and an instrument for policy making decisions.

Keywords: Implementation, Integrated Development Plan, Municipalities, Service delivery

1. Introduction

The South African government has since the democratic dispensation been battling with rectifying service delivery challenges, poverty and unemployment as inflicted by the legacy of the apartheid regime (Mathebula, 2014; Mathebula, 2016; Ncanywa & Getye, 2016; Mathebula, Nkuna & Sebola, 2016). Local government as a sphere closer to the people was established in the year 1996 to deal with these challenges, particularly those of service delivery. The provision of services by municipalities has a framework in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996), policies and other pieces of legislation. Through these legislative frameworks, the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) was formulated and implemented in all municipalities across South Africa with the aim of enhancing service delivery challenges. However, it is in instances of 'effective' implementation and operationalisation that the IDP is able to yield the desired outcomes and fast-track the provision of services to communities. This article interrogates the extent of the implementation of the IDP in relation to service delivery in selected municipalities within the Mopani District Municipality, Limpopo Province (South Africa) with a view of identifying gaps in implementation. This paper is critical in that it identifies backlogs existent within the municipalities in relation to IDP implementation

and developing strategies that may assist in effectively managing the processes for the benefit of the citizenry in terms of service delivery. The following section of the paper briefly provides literature review on IDP and service delivery, with the view of positioning the results within the theoretical context under which it must be viewed.

2. Theoretical Overview

According to Craythorne (2006), (IDP) refers to a strategy aimed at the integrated development and management of the area of jurisdiction of the municipality concerned in terms of its powers and duties. Deriving from the provisions of the Development Facilitation Act (67 of 1995) together with the provisions of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996), Local Government: Municipal Systems Act (32 of 2000) for operational purposes define an IDP as a plan which has to be adopted by each municipal council within a prescribed period after the start of its election term. Such statutory definition is derived from the policy intentions of the White Paper on Local Government (1998), wherein the IDP is defined as a mechanism to enable prioritisation and integration in municipal planning processes, and strengthen links between the development and institutional planning processes. In the context of this paper, IDP refers to such processes

as alluded from both the theoretical landscape and statutory provision as applicable within municipalities found in Mopani District Municipality area with a view of exposing its implementation and consequences on service delivery.

The IDP was conceived by South African municipalities mainly as a tool to support coordinated implementation of the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) between the national, provincial and local government. Eventually, municipal services were incorporated into the IDPs and such has remained a prerequisite for all municipalities to ensure its operative functioning. IDPs serve as business plans of municipalities for a certain period of time (Madzivhandila & Asha, 2012), normally five years. Appropriate, efficient and effective implementation of the IDP in a municipal environment ensures acceleration of service delivery as expected of by citizens of a state. Basically, South African municipalities that are struggling to deliver services to their communities have a fundamental implementation challenge of the IDP as opposed to any other reasons as some may debate. Therefore, the IDP serve as a mechanism that replicates the municipal council's vision for the longstanding development of the municipality with special emphasis on its most critical development and transformation needs, to ensure an 'integrated and coordinated service delivery' to communities (Mathebula, Nkuna & Sebola, 2016). It is for this reason that the IDP is regarded as a tool to assist municipalities in achieving their developmental mandates and as a planning and implementation instrument to bring together the various functions of government departments and municipalities. However, the IDP in its implementation stage is a complex and sophisticated project which requires participation from various stakeholders. Stakeholders and or role-players in the IDP process have different roles in the formulation and implementation. According to the Department of Provincial and Local Government (2005), as it was previously known, provinces have an important role to play in contextualising national requirements and grounding them within the certainties and specificities of each province, and guiding municipalities in the development and implementation of IDPs and programmes for sustainable development. Having briefly conceptualised and shown the importance of IDPs, in relation to implementation and service delivery, the following section of the paper outlines the research methodology and approach used to execute the study and gather data from the respondents.

3. Methodology and Approach

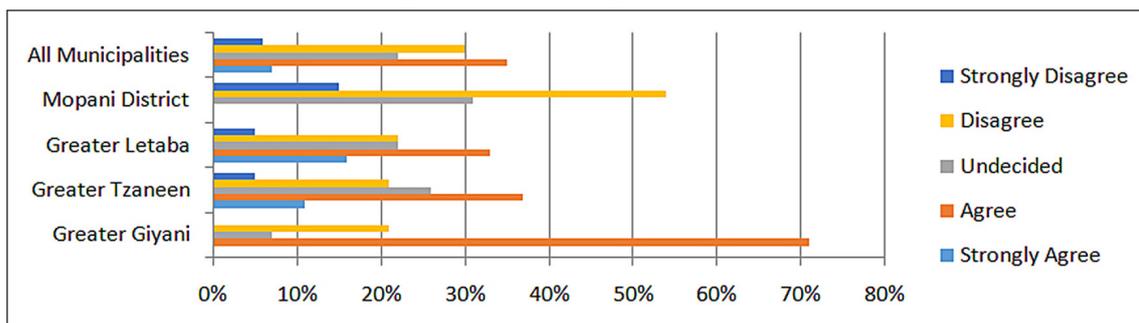
A combination of both qualitative and quantitative research approaches were adopted. Structured questionnaires comprising of Likert Rate scales (Strongly agree, Agree, Neutral, Strongly disagree and Disagree) were administered while 10 supplementary unstructured interviews were conducted as follow-ups to the answers provided in the questionnaires. To ensure validity of the results as presented in this paper, questionnaires were first piloted. Ethical clearance to conduct the study was issued by the University of Limpopo and thus ensuring that ethical considerations as they pertain to research are respected and upheld. Due to the nature and scope of the study, a biased and purposive sampling technique was deemed necessary to select participants. This was so because respondents had pre-knowledge on the implementation of the IDP and the status of service delivery in their respective municipalities. As the study was conducted in four (4) municipalities (Greater Giyani Local Municipality, Greater Tzaneen Local Municipality, Greater Letaba Local Municipality and Mopani District Municipality), 80 participants (20 from each municipality) were selected from a combined population of all the municipalities. However, only 68 questionnaires were returned and considered for the purposes of conducting data analysis. The following section provides for data presentation and analysis as collected through the approach explained above.

4. Findings and Discussion

4.1 Integrated Development Plan Implementation

Appropriate implementation of the IDP serves as a basis in which service delivery can be improved in municipalities (Mathebula, 2016; Mathebula, Nkuna & Sebola, 2016). Failure to properly, efficiently and effectively implement the IDP could mean that services incorporated within are not delivered to communities. The study probed the implementation of the IDP with a view of establishing the implications it has on the potential of municipalities to deliver services. Literature suggests that employees who understand the vision, mission, and deliverable objectives are likely to ensure their implementation (Hohnen & Potts, 2007; International Facility Management Association, 2009). It is for this reason that the study commenced by interrogating the municipal employee's understanding of the IDP. The results are therefore summarised below.

Figure 1: Knowledge of the IDP



Source: Author

4.2 Municipal Employee's Knowledge of the IDP

Service delivery can be improved in municipal areas when the IDP is well comprehended and understood by all the employees of a municipality. Because the IDP serves as a business plan (Madzivhandila & Asha, 2012) and a strategic instrument (Maphunye & Mafunisa, 2008), the objectives and services to be delivered must be inculcated in all municipal activities through management planning processes. In this section, respondents were asked as to whether they understand what the IDPs of their respective municipalities are all about.

Figure 1 above indicates that there is no aggregate outright frequency in relation to the employee's knowledge and understanding of the IDP as an instrument for effective service delivery. However, the trends in Greater Giyani Local Municipality indicate to some extent the employee's understanding of the IDP. For example, the municipality recorded 71% agree and 7% undecided. Generally, a total of all municipalities recorded a total of 7% strongly agree, 35% agree, 22% undecided, 30% disagree and 6% strongly disagree. Based on Figure 1 and the information above, it can be concluded that the respondents in this study do not have 'intensive' understanding and knowledge of the IDP as a tool for accelerated service delivery. For example, Greater Tzaneen Local Municipality recorded 11% strongly agree, 37% agree, 26% undecided, 21% disagree and 5% strongly disagree while Greater Letaba Local Municipality recorded 16% strongly agree, 33% agree, 22% undecided, 22% disagree and 5% strongly disagree. Mopani District Municipality recorded a total of 31% undecided, 54% disagree and 15% strongly disagree. It can thus be concluded that respondents only possess basic knowledge of the IDP and thus fail to implement its objectives into deliverables. In a supplementary interview, one of the employees attached to Human Resource Development (HRD) at the Greater Giyani Local Municipality indicated that:

'I only know that there is a document called the IDP, but what it is for is unclear. The document is just passed through our division for some inputs which are normally the repetition of the previous IDPs.'

It was interesting to learn that one member of the spatial planning at Mopani District Municipality acknowledged the importance of the IDP and its imperative significance on improving service delivery. The respondent stated that:

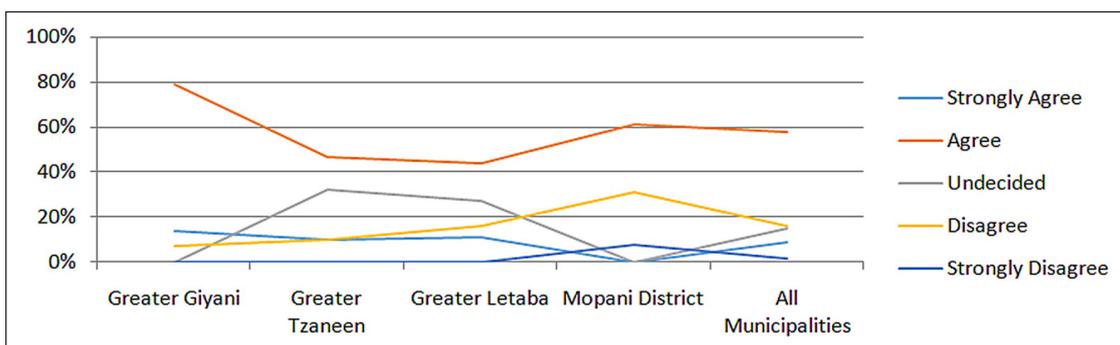
'A strategic document as important as the IDP should not only be the business of senior management employees but also to all municipal employees including the cleaners and other general employees if its strategic objectives are to be turned into services.'

Knowledge and understanding of the IDP is very crucial if service deliverables incorporated within it are to be achieved or at least delivered to municipal communities. With the analysis provided above, it is clear that employees cannot efficiently and effectively implement the contents of a plan they do not understand. Hence, low levels of satisfaction in terms of service delivery in the sampled municipalities.

4.3 IDP Implementation Improves Service Delivery

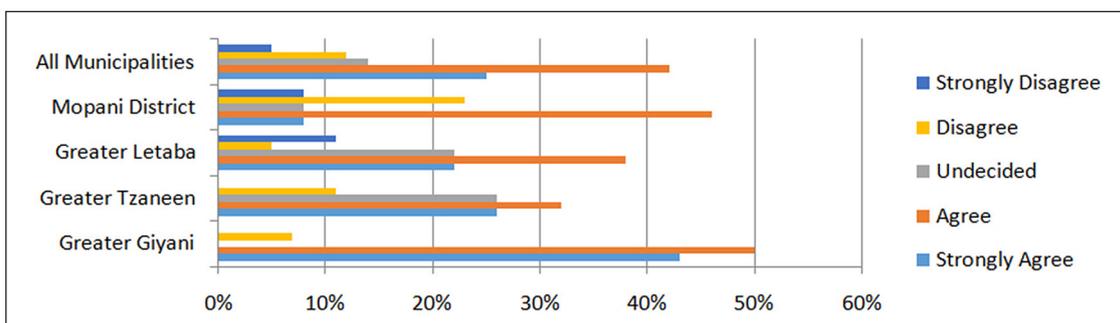
Empirical studies conducted (Ngubane, 2005; Skosana, 2007; Dzulisa, 2013) revealed that enhanced service delivery in municipalities is critical and the IDP serve as a catalyst for efficient and effective planning processes that result into deliverables. Clearly, there is an undisputable link between the IDP and service delivery. This is so because objectives of the IDP become services to communities once they are carried out. All municipal services to be delivered are incorporated within the IDP and thus it serves as a

Figure 2: IDP Implementation Improves Service Delivery



Source: Author

Figure 3: Successful Implementation of the IDP



Source: Author

management planning tool for enhancing service delivery. However, short-term deliverables can be reviewed during the IDP review process thus affecting the delivery of other municipal services. This paper probed the improvement of service delivery through the use and implementation of the IDP.

Figure 2 above indicates that there is a general agreement that the IDP has the potential to improve service delivery. This is evidenced by all municipalities recording 9% strongly agree and 58% agreeing that indeed effective implementation of the IDP and deliverables enhance service delivery. The frequencies however varied from municipality to municipality. For example, Greater Giyani Local Municipality had high frequencies of strongly agree and agree as it recorded 14% and 79% respectively. Although there might be a general agreement that the IDP has the potential to improve service delivery, other respondents have shown a different view with some of them undecided while others disagreed. For instance, Greater Tzaneen Local Municipality recorded 32% undecided and 10% disagree, while Greater Letaba Local Municipality recorded 27% undecided and 16% disagree. The high rates of responses being undecided can sometimes be attributed to people not wanting to disclose the state of municipal service

delivery or not entirely sure whether the improvements can be attributed to the use of the IDP. Literature (see Mathebula, 2014) suggest some of the service delivery challenges confronting South African municipalities which are also not alien to municipalities selected as a case study in this paper. If municipal residents are not satisfied about the state of service delivery, they usually protest to the local authorities demanding better services (Morudu & Halsall, 2017). Such instances can only be negated through the implementation of IDPs and consequently improved service delivery (Institute for Security Studies, 2009).

4.4 Municipalities are Successful in Implementing the IDP

The success of the IDP as literature has shown will mean the improvement of service delivery as all and most services incorporated within it will be delivered to communities. According to Phago (2009), appropriate implementation of the IDP in a municipal environment ensures acceleration of service delivery. This paper probed the successful implementation of the IDP in the selected municipalities. The aim was to solicit data on the successful implementation as it relates to the acceleration of municipal services.

Figure 3 on the previous page indicates that there is a general consensus on the successful apposite implementation of the IDP and its potential to enhance service delivery. Generally, the total for all municipalities recorded 25% strongly agree, 42% agree, 14% undecided, 12% disagree and 5% strongly disagree. However, there is an anomaly in the findings where some respondents are of the view that the IDP has not been successfully implemented in their municipalities. For example, Mopani District Municipality recorded totals of 8% strongly agree, 46% agree, 8% undecided, 23% disagree and 8% strongly disagree. Based on Figure 3 and the information above, it can be ascertained that although the implementation of the IDP is successful in local municipalities, the district municipality is still lagging behind. This finding may be alluded to the fact that South African district municipalities are responsible for executing larger projects such as water provision. This is a major concern as this will also dent the potential for local municipalities to effectively deliver other basic services.

4.5 Challenges Confronting the Municipality in the Implementation Process

There are numerous challenges inhibiting municipalities to successfully implement the IDP and subsequently enhance service delivery (cf Figure 3). The paper probed some of the common challenges confronting municipalities to hasten the delivery of services and particularly basic services through the implementation of the IDP, and identified challenges related to financial, structural and organisational, support, infrastructure and expert support.

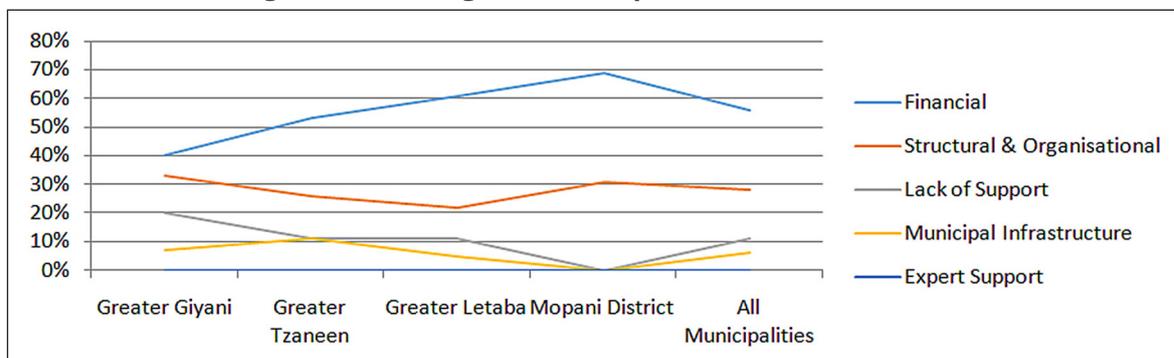
Figure 4 indicates that municipalities in this study have major financial backlogs. Generally, all municipalities recorded a total of 56% financial challenges, 28% structural and organisational challenges, 11%

expert support. Expert support refers to advisory and research institutions including universities. The IDP would not be able to thrive and deliver services in municipalities that are embattled by financial constraints. Furthermore, financial resources are crucial in supporting the delivery of service objectives as incorporated through the IDP. Mopani District Municipality recorded the highest percentage (69%) on financial challenges as a major backlog inhibiting the implementation of the IDP. Financial challenges do not only hinder the implementation of the IDP. On a data collection visit to the Mopani District Municipality (29 January 2015), municipal officials were not in their offices as they had to attend a meeting in Tzaneen concerning the non-payment and late payment of their salaries. This is a clear indication that municipalities are embattled in financial backlogs and this has negative consequences in the delivery of services. However, there is consensus among municipalities that the state of municipal infrastructure is satisfying. This can work in favour of the speedy delivery of services.

4.6 External Stakeholders Support in Relation to the Development and Implementation of the IDP

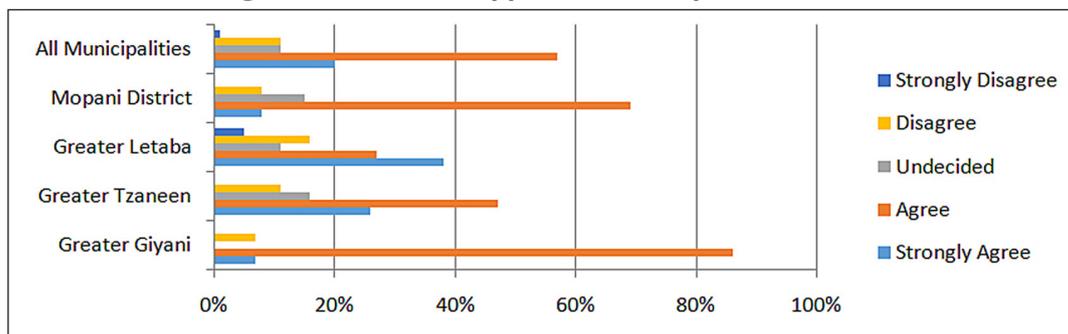
External support in the development, formulation and implementation of the IDP refers to support other than that of the stakeholders of the IDP process. Soliciting different views particularly in the implementation of the IDP is imperative in ensuring that different dimensions on how IDPs are implemented elsewhere in South African municipalities are taken into consideration. However, a majority of South African municipalities are heavily reliant on the services of external service providers to undertake the formulation and implementation of IDPs. This paper probed the involvement and support of

Figure 4: Challenges in the Implementation of the IDP



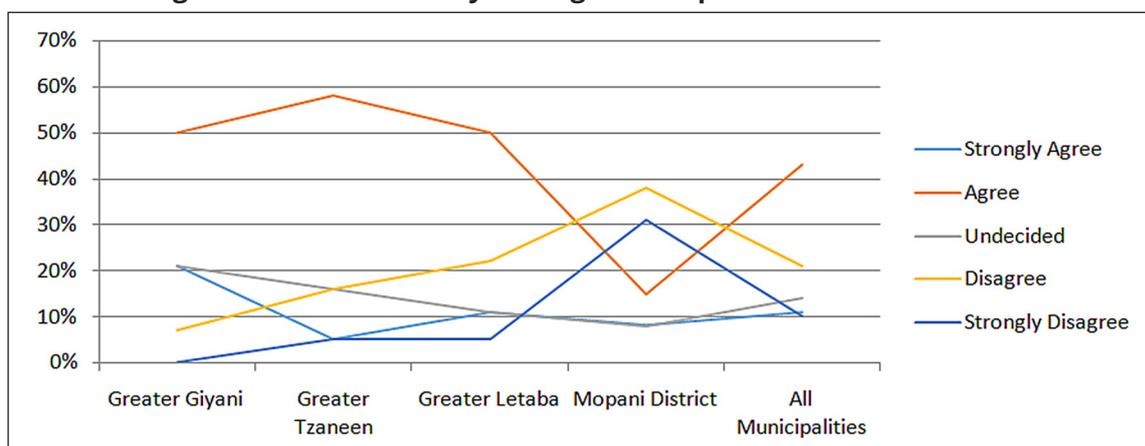
Source: Author

Figure 5: External Support in IDP Implementation



Source: Author

Figure 6: Service Delivery Through the Implementation of the IDP



Source: Author

external stakeholders in the development and implementation of the IDP.

Figure 5 above indicates that there is a general agreement that municipalities receive external support in the development and implementation of the IDP. All municipalities recorded a total of 20% strongly agree, 57% agree, 11% undecided, 11% disagree and 1% strongly disagree. The findings however are not outright where there is some imbalance between the frequencies. For example, Greater Letaba Local Municipality recorded a total of 38% strongly agree, 27% agree, 11% undecided, 16% disagree and 5% strongly disagree. On the basis of the information indicated above, it can be ascertained that municipalities receive external support in the development and the implementation of the IDP. Service delivery can IDP improve through the inputs of external stakeholders. However, the utilisation of external service providers such as consultants in the development and implementation of the IDP can have adverse effects on the service delivery because the needs of communities will not be taken into account thus negating the principles of

management planning. According to Litman (2013), those principles are comprehensiveness, efficiency, inclusiveness, informative, integration, logic and transparency. This points out to the fact that the municipal community concerned must have a voice in every decision making process of the IDP including implementation if services are to be delivered according to their developmental needs.

4.7 Implementation of Services Incorporated Within the IDP

Municipalities have service delivery objectives that are incorporated within the IDP which serve as a planning tool for accelerating the delivery of such services. Every time that a municipality is to deliver services to communities, reference should be made to the IDP which serves as a guideline and a business plan of the municipality (Phago, 2009). The success of the IDP as a delivery machinery would be on the basis in which it is able to deliver all the services incorporated in it. This paper probed the implementation and the delivery of services incorporated in the IDP to test it as a mechanism that serves to improve service delivery.

Figure 6 on the previous page indicates that municipalities are delivering services to communities through the use of the IDP with a total of all municipalities recording 11% strongly agree, 43% agree, 14% undecided, 21% disagree and 10% strongly disagree. There is an anomaly in the findings which proves that although local municipalities are delivering services to communities through the IDP Mopani District Municipality is still behind. For example, the Municipality recorded totals of 8% strongly agree, 15% agree, 8% undecided, 38% disagree and 31% strongly disagree. This finding clearly indicates that the district municipality is dismally failing to implement and deliver services as incorporated in the IDP. It can thus be concluded that the Mopani District Municipality lacks capacity to use the IDP to deliver services and address service delivery backlogs confronting the district such as water shortages.

4.8 Gaps in the IDP and Service Delivery

At times, municipalities experience phenomenal gaps in the IDP and its implementation in relation to service delivery. The paper probed the IDP and the gaps that exist in the implementation and how it impacts on service delivery. This could be done by probing the sub-themes and determining the phenomenal gaps, the IDP and how it addresses service delivery challenges, the state of municipal service delivery, the implementation of service incorporated in the IDP (Mathebula, 2016).

4.9 Phenomenal Gaps Existent in the Implementation of the IDP

Municipalities at times fail to implement IDPs and deliver all the services incorporated within due to challenges not foreseen during the formulation and

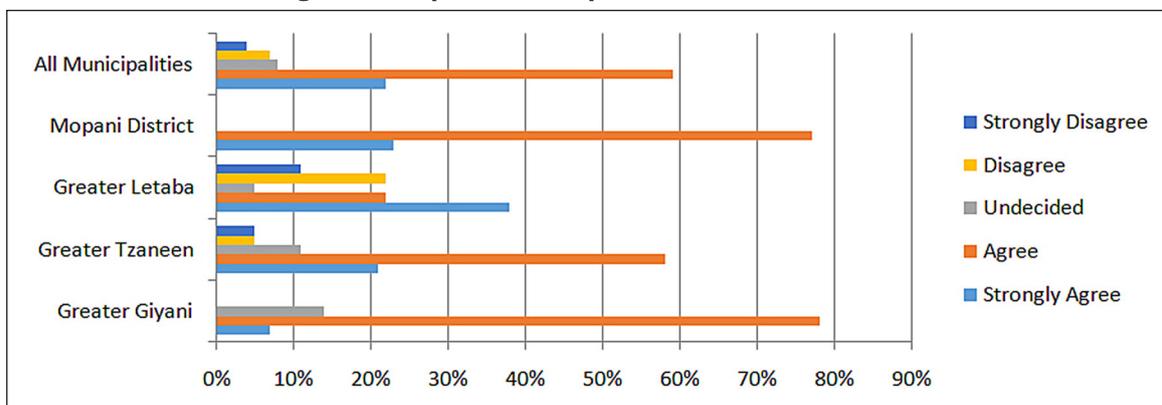
integrated development planning process. These gaps and challenges prevent the delivery and the acceleration of municipal services thus failing the IDP implementation. Although these gaps were not identified by the respondents at the time of data collection, the paper probed their impact in the implementation of the IDP.

Figure 7 indicates that there are phenomenal gaps that exist in the implementation of the IDP, thus affecting the capacity of municipalities in enhancing service delivery. Generally, all municipalities recorded a total of 22% strongly agree, 59% agree, 8% undecided, 7% disagree and 5% strongly disagree. Greater Letaba Local Municipality showed a slightly different trend and recorded 38% strongly agree, 22% agree, 5% undecided, 22% disagree and 11% strongly disagree. This finding might be because the municipality does not experience major phenomenal gaps in the implementation of the IDP and its relation to service delivery enhancement when compared with other municipalities. It can therefore be concluded that phenomenal gaps in the implementation of the IDPs in municipalities affect the state of service delivery and the attempt to hasten it. This however, can be taken further in trying to identify the phenomenal gaps so that the implementation can be managed taking into consideration the challenges existing (see Figure 4).

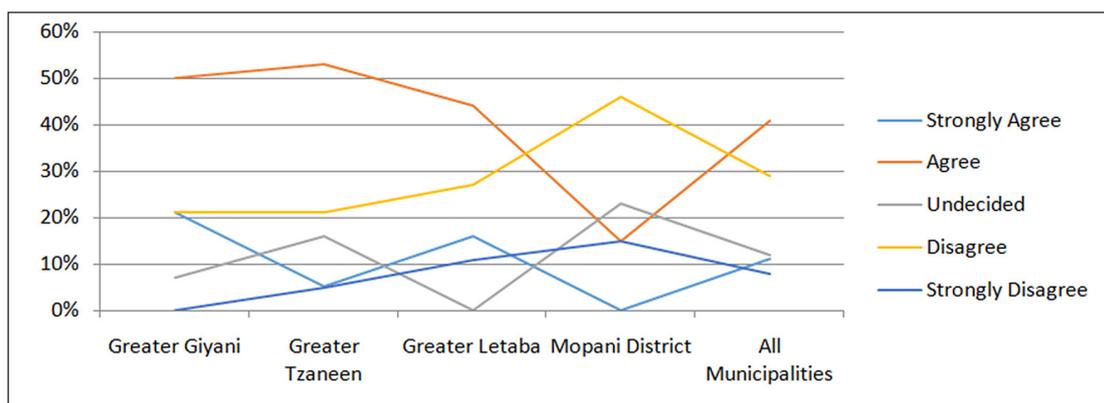
4.10 Accurate Implementation of Strategies and Objectives Outlined in the IDP

In terms of the IDPs of all the municipalities selected in this study, there are major service delivery backlogs particularly with regard to basic services such as refuse removal, water and sanitation. However, municipalities prioritise the delivery of such services

Figure 7: Gaps in the Implementation of the IDP



Source: Author

Figure 8: Accurate Implementation of the IDP

Source: Author

as they are mentioned as objectives to be delivered through the IDP which is also a strategic tool. After assessing the municipal existing situation, the municipality must formulate intervention strategies that will be used to address service delivery challenges identified in the analysis phase. This paper probed the precise implementation of strategies and objectives for addressing service delivery challenges in municipal communities.

Figure 8 above indicates that strategic objectives listed in the IDP as deliverables are accurately implemented and delivered to municipal communities with all municipalities recording a total of 11% strongly agree, 41% agree, 12% undecided, 29% disagree and 8% strongly disagree. However, the distribution of frequency across local municipalities indicates that there are respondents who are of the view that strategic objectives are not entirely accurately implemented for the purposes of correcting service delivery challenges. Responses from Mopani District Municipality represents a view that strategic objectives are not accurately implemented, thus the IDP fails to correct service delivery challenges. For instance, the municipality recorded a total of 0% strongly agree, 15% agree, 23% undecided, 46% disagree and 15% strongly disagree. It can therefore be concluded that failure to implement strategic objectives of the IDP have adverse effects on an attempt to address service delivery challenges within municipalities.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

The aim of this paper was to analyse the relationship between the IDP implementation and service delivery. The results found that most municipal employees do not have an understanding of the IDP and how it is implemented. Lack of knowledge

about the IDP by municipal employees can hinder the attempt to accelerate service delivery as the plan has to be adopted as a management planning tool with deliverable objectives to be carried out by all employees. To this end, the paper recommends training, workshops, and education about municipal planning tools to be offered to municipal officials. This will also ensure capacity-building and the improvement in implementing service deliverable consequently. Selected municipalities also have a challenge of engaging in management planning processes in the formulation and the implementation of the IDP. This has a tendency of resulting in the planning process with predetermined service delivery objectives other than those to be implemented in terms of the needs of the citizenry. The paper further found that financial, structural and organizational support in the implementation of the IDP are a major challenge for municipalities thus resulting in municipalities failing to implement all the services as incorporated in the IDP. To this end, the paper recommends that municipal finances be managed by qualified officials who will also be subjected to public accountability. Accountability structures in municipalities should also be punitive instead of corrective. It was also interesting to learn that the state of service delivery in municipalities is unsatisfactory while the IDP has not proven to be successful in that regard for the past five years of implementation. In this vein the paper recommends for the implementation of IDP that is subjected to strict compliance by other organs such as the South African Local Government Association (SALGA), whereby municipalities are restricted to outsourcing the IDP processes, particularly the implementation phase.

Unless there is appropriate implementation of the IDP, service delivery backlogs that exist in municipalities

will not be addressed. Findings in this study reveal that IDPs are not properly, efficiently and effectively implemented to carry out and deliver services as intended. The paper concludes that there is a need for top management in municipalities to take responsibility to institutionalize the culture of management planning in the implementation of the IDP in municipalities with a view of improving service delivery.

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