Youth Policies, Participation and Community Engagements

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Abstract

The United Nations (UN) has characterised the youth as embodying the hope for the future and the aspiration of all societies. As such, the youth are encouraged to participate in municipal development programmes, activities and elections. This can be done amongst others through local youth councils. The youth council is an organisation of the youth with the aim to promote and protect the interest of the youth. They also represent the youth in governance of municipality. In South Africa, Department of Social Development White Paper for Social Welfare defines youth as all those between the ages of 16 and 30 years of age. The Correctional Services also refers to the youth as all those in the age range 14 to 25 years of age. The National Health Policy Guidelines focus on the adolescent and the youth as all those between 10 and 24 years of age. The African Youth Charter also defines youth as those between the ages of 15 years and 35 years and excludes the 14 year olds. The paper reviews the factors that hinder/promote youth participation in rural community activities, elections and projects in the Mafikeng Local Municipality (MLM). It also examine the role of the LYC in involving the youth in community activities in MLM. The study used open-ended questionnaires and interviews in gathering data. This method enabled the respondents to respond beyond the borders of the questionnaires.

Introduction

The predominant view on youth over the past 150 years has been of 'youth-as-trouble' with repeated moral panics[1]. The youthful period is also characterised as a period of 'storm-and-stress'. This period may translate into the fact that 'youth remains a major point of symbolic investment for society as a whole'[2]. Therefore, If the 'state of the youth' is seen as the signifier of the state of the nation', it is unsurprising that society is concerned about troublesome youth[3]. The storm-and-stress period defines situation where young people may find it difficult to adjust rapidly to biological changes and the social demands of developing an identity of the youth. Researchers such as Margaret, in her study in Samoa, advocated that although young people in Samoa experienced adolescence as a life phase, it was very difficult from the time of 'storm and stress'[4]. She defines storm and stress as the period of inconsistency and behavioural development of a youth which is believed to characterise the youth especially in the West (developed countries). In America, Wulff describe young Americans as characteristically spontaneous, energetic, exploratory, venturesome, vivacious, disrespectful, playful and erotic[5]. Therefore, various agencies and government bodies agitate the inclusion of the youth in community based activities and governance of local municipalities.

The United Nations (UN) has characterised the youth as embodying the hope for the future and the aspiration of all societies. As such, the youth are encouraged to participate in municipal and elections of their municipalities. This can be done

amongst others through local youth councils. The youth council is an organisation of the youth with the aim to promote and protect the interest of the youth. They also represent the youth in governance of local municipalities. The establishment of the youth council is seen as an appropriate step in involving the youth in the electoral processes in general. It also serves as the first step for youth participation in the local, municipal and ward governance. Hence, a vibrant youth council is one to be encouraged in any country to secure the country's future. Failure to recognise this may jeopardise the future of the political emancipation of the youth[1]. The youth can influence local government decisions by being active in Local Youth Councils (LYC). In many other countries in Europe, youth councils are strong and reliable organisations. Youth councils protect the interest of the local youth. They can revolt and cause problems if their demands are not met. Within the councils, individuals can demonstrate and express their opinions publicly. Their participation in decision making concerning young people curbs any confrontation with authorities that may arise either at the level of a school, Local Government, Provincial or National government. In most cases the objectives and tasks of youth structures are often unclear for both youth leaders and youth themselves within the structures of the municipality.

As a result youth involvement in community projects, electoral processes and governance of the municipality become frail and probably insignificant. The adverse effect of this reflects on the "gap" and "distance" in involving the youth in community activities and projects[6,7].

The paper examines youth participation in rural governance, elections and electoral process. Furthermore the study reviews youth polices in South Africa and the factors that hinder or promote youth participation in community activities, elections and projects. Major finding focused of the study was the attitude of the youth towards elections and electoral process. However, the study review the role of the LYC in involving the youth in community activities in Mafikeng Local Municipality (MLM).

The concept of participation and the youth definition: In South Africa, the Department of Social Development White Paper for Social Welfare defines youth as all those between the ages of 16 and 30 years of age[8]. The Correctional Services also refers to the youth as all those in the age range 14 to 25 years of age[9]. The National Health Policy Guidelines focus on the adolescent and the youth as all those between 10 and 24 years of age[10]. The African Youth Charter also define youth as those between the ages of 15 years and 35 years and excludes the 14 year olds[11]. Without dispute, South Africa's definition is broader than the narrower definition of AU. But the bone of contention in the definition of South Africa is that at 30 to 35 years olds in South Africa are already established husbands and wife. As such inclusion of the age 30 to 35byears attempt to undermine the importance of the definition of youth.

Concept of Youth Participation: Youth participation in the community projects and activities refers to the involvement of the youth in responsible and challenging political positions that may meet genuine needs of any local municipality[12]. With regards to local elections, youth participation can be influenced by various variables such as the family and intergenerational relationships, socioeconomic background, education, place of residence, peer pressure and mentorship[13]. This participatory attitude influence and creates opportunities for unification of the local youth for the planning of the municipality's political operations and integration of the youth in decision-making of the local municipality. According to the UN, attitude could be described either as positive or negative. The African National Congress (ANC) explains that one of the factors that have enhanced youth participation in the electoral processes of local Municipalities is the positive approach of the youth[14]. One objective of community development is having positive minded youth who are self-motivated to participate in building the community and engage in programmes of self–improvement. Youth are seen as assets in the electoral processes, failure to incorporate them in the local and national planning processes by some governments have had terrible implications on governance and sustained human development[15]. Therefore, their participation in local municipal activities such as electoral processes and governance should not be overlooked.

The youth in a learning process should be mobilized and nurtured to take group initiatives in participatory democracy. Moreover, positive approach of the youth in local electoral processes provides the community with human capital that can be mobilized to meet local needs[16]. Furthermore, participation in

social groups fosters a feeling of connectedness and belonging. It helps young people to develop a sense of identity that encompasses effective service delivery in any municipality. Therefore, social groups need to be encouraged to develop a sense of identity so that a well-planned and documented youth programmes can become successful when implemented. It promotes youth development goals and creates an enabling environment where young people are empowered and support to identify their needs and choice of activity instead of offering specific types of activities[17]. By this sense of identity and empowerment, they are encouraged to participate in the political processes within the municipalities. Youth positive approach towards local electoral processes, the local youth councils, youth-led media, youth advisory boards, youth organizing and other youth development activities are the best avenues to encourage and integrate the youth into governance and political sphere of the municipalities[18]. Other avenues include traditional activities such as youth conferences, consulting on public policy, involvement in community coalitions, involving youth in organizational decision-making and school-based service learning[19]. This is likened to the youth positive attitude in Nigeria.

In the case of Nigeria, various attributes are associated with the youth. This was rightly put by Former Nigerian President, General Obasanjo in a foreword on the Nigeria's National Youth Policy and Strategic Action Plan of 2001[20]. He pointed out that "Youths are the foundation of the society; their energy, inventiveness; character and orientation define the pace of development and the security of a nation. Through their creative talents and labour power, a nation makes giant strides in economic development and socio-political attainments. In their dreams and hopes, a nation founds her motivation; on their energies, she builds her vitality and purpose. And because of their dreams and aspirations, the future of a nation is assured." By implication, youth constitute a significant size of the population of a country. Their presence and participation in all segments of society preserves the peace and unity of the nation. Therefore, the ability, strength and contribution of the youth to the nation in electoral processes must not be under-estimated. In Europe the youth influence local government decisions by being active in Local Youth Councils (LYC). Youth councils are strong and reliable democratization. Youth councils protect the interest of the local youth. They can revolt and cause problems if their demands are not met. Within the councils, individuals can demonstrate and express their opinions publicly. Their participation in decision making concerning young people curbs any confrontation with authorities that may arise either at the level of a school, Local Government, Provincial or National. With specific reference to Mafikeng Local Municipality, the local youth council has been active in mediating between the local Municipality and the youth.

Youth participation in community programmes: The study is concerned with the youth participation in the electoral processes of the Mafikeng local municipality. In essence participation in

electoral processes and other community development programmes such as skill acquisition activities would involve virtually every member of the municipality both young and old of which the youth are the majority. Without adequate participation and involvement of the youth in the processes then the majority of the members of the municipality are not carried along in the development plans, governance of the municipality, economic and social integration in the municipality. This would possibly lead to more unemployment, widening of poverty trap, increases in crime, violence and other social ills such as drug abuse, sex and teenage pregnancy. But if the people are carried along, these problems would be curbed at least to a great extent. Therefore, members of the municipality with the youth as target group should be included in the development and governance processes, planning, decision-making, implementation, evaluation, monitoring of development programmes and other activities within the municipality aimed at improving the socio-economic, socio-political conditions of the municipality. Furthermore, the idea of getting the people involved through active participation for their own development at the community and municipal level should be the concern of the government. By participation, members of the municipality including the youth, develop capacities and initiate actions themselves for activities that would improve their living standards.

The Draft National Policy Framework (DNPF) for public participation published in November 2005, defines the concept of participation as an open, accountable process through which individuals and groups within selected communities can exchange views and influence decision making. It is also viewed as a democratic process of engaging people to decide, plan and play active part in the development and operation of services that affect the youth at the local Municipalities. Also their participation in the electoral processes, governance of the municipality and other activities such as community development programmes and social programmes would not only help in improving communication between the leadership and the community; it would improve the living standard of members of the municipality through economic development programmes. It would also improve the social life of the youth. It ensures equitable distribution of benefits such as skill programmes like car wash ventures, brick making, plumbing and other skill acquisition activities amongst the communities making up the municipality. These reasons ensure that inequality, poverty and unemployment in the municipality are reduced to the minimum.

Participation means breaking the monopoly of knowledge, in this case, involvement and participation of the youth in the local electoral processes, electoral and voting orientation amongst the youth[21]. Knowledge of the electoral processes, voting rights and civil obligations, motivate the youth to participate in governance and decisions-making that involves them in the municipality. This is agreed to by Hall, Gilleit and Tandon, who argue that participation is a catalyst that facilitates the process of freeing the creative forces of the impoverished and exploited of any

given society and enabling those forces to come to grips with the problem of underdevelopment[22]. Youth participation is not involvement in electoral processes alone it includes youth participation in decision-making, electioneering, governance and ability to influence decisions on issues that concern the youth so that their needs are met. The assessment of basic needs of the youth cannot be done in isolation of the youth. It has to emerge from within and involve the youth when it comes to electoral processes and decision-making of a local Municipality. Though the concept of participation has been argued to mean different things, as Levine and Weiner explained participation is a jargon word separate from any context and has been manipulated by vastly different groups of people to mean entirely different things[23]. With regard to the study, participation means the involvement of the youth in decision making and governance of the local municipality. It is the acknowledgement of the local youth knowledge as a means of socio-political and economic transformation in the municipality. Levine and Weiner state that in the new South Africa, participation must not merely become a legitimation process[23]. It should be an essential component of a broad political programme in which local knowledge becomes a driving force for social transformation.

However, participation could be either direct or through legitimate intermediate institutions or representatives such as youth councils. Emphasis made on the representative democracy does not necessarily mean that the concerns of the most vulnerable young people in the society are taken into consideration during decision making. Civil society refers to that sphere of voluntary association and informal networks in which individuals and groups engage in activities of public consequence. Ayco simplifies the concept of civil society as a voluntary association of different kinds[24]. This includes churches, neighbourhood organizations, cooperatives, fraternal and social organizations, charities, unions, parties, social movements, interest groups and families. Nonetheless, participative governance in South Africa has been a top-down. It is a top-down strategy because decisions regarding youth participation at the municipality level are undertaken at the National level. These top-down decisions are sometimes very unresponsive or even hostile to challenges that the youth[25]. As Tisdall and Davis suggest, youth Councils should be seen as 'promotional' bodies, with the principles of activism, negotiation and dialogue that includes 'representative' bodies[26].

Achievement of genuine participation is difficult because local elite monopolise power and are often hostile to widespread participation. A combination of class, race, gender, age and education often backed up by tradition are the factors that prevent meaningful youth participation in electoral processes[21]. However, youth participation in electoral processes, decision-making and governance of the local Municipality can be influenced by a number of factors such as the family and intergenerational relationships, socio-economic background, and education, place of residence, peer pressure and mentorship.

These factors would assist to motivate the youth to involve in electoral and other community activities of the Municipality. Cornwall points out that it is only through participation in the electoral processes that the youth can develop skills, build competencies, form aspirations, gain confidence and attain valuable resources[12]. This reaffirms the view that the youth participation in electoral process, voting system and governance in most cases is a product and strategy of sustainable human development of the local Municipality youth. Flowing from above, the advocacy for youth involvement in all aspects of political life at international, national, provincial and local is of great essence that needs to be cherished.

Media for Youth Participation: Speaking at the 2007 Youth Day former President Thabo Mbeki, remarked "each succeeding generation faces the responsibility to carefully study social conditions, accordingly to set its own agenda, so that it can contribute to a better human condition. According to the Former President, current generation of youth owes it to history to protect and champion the ideals of social justice and an abiding culture of human rights, just and equitable social order"[27]. This can be done by allowing the youth to offer their perspectives on world issues, to have them serve as members of local advisory boards, become peer mentors, and lead development programmes, non-profit organizations and small businesses. However, what is most important is that in all these cases, attention is paid to the quality of the participation to ensure that young people are not just symbolic figures, but that they are meaningfully engaged in ways that strengthen problem-solving, decision-making and leadership skills. This prepares and engages the youth to actively build both a better present and brighter future. Key factors that support youth involvement include: a supportive family background and mentors or role models, involvement in cooperative activities, cultivation of intrinsic interest, awareness of moral and political issues, and traits such as moral sensitivity and optimism[28]. Other factors are the roles of adult support, a youth-friendly environment, and the completion of meaningful tasks, the learning and utilization of new skills as key supports which could be done through the local youth councils[29].

Furthermore, a youth council is the medium through which the youth can participate in the local electoral processes. The goal of the council is to enable the youth to have a say in the resolutions made by the local government. Nonetheless, the youth participation in local electoral processes enhances their understanding about electioneering and making good choices and to freely express their civil right during voting exercises. In the Local Municipality, the paradox of the youth participation in the electoral processes is resolved in a tautological manner by simply assuming that individuals get utility out of participating in the political electoral processes[30]. This explains the view that considering time, money, resources and energy that are devoted in campaigns before and after local elections, it is important to educate the youth on the issues of electoral processes. This can be done through the local youth councils, the IEC, schools, the

media, families and churches about their civil and political responsibilities. That can easily be done through formulated youth policies.

Youth policy framework in South Africa: For better understanding of the youth responsibilities several legislative and policy frameworks have been published by the South African government. The aim and objective of publication of these policy documents are aimed at explaining the government steps to integrate the youth into government programmes. These documents are highlighted below:

White Paper for Social Welfare (1997), places major emphasis on the needs and challenges of the youth especially their participation in the electoral processes of the local municipality. It also provides specific interventions to be used to ensure their full participation in local governance, their empowerment as well as the youth development both in rural and urban communities. This was the first government policy document that would articulate the need to professionalise youth council and their participation in the electoral processes of the local municipality.

National Youth Policy of 2007 was developed in 1997 but was not adopted as at 1997 when the initial idea was formed. NYP focused largely to inform Government of Cabinet's decision to endorse and adopt the National Youth Development Policy Framework (NYDPF). It also gave direction on action needed to be taken by the provincial and the Nation at large to meet the challenges faced by the country's youth at local and municipal level[31].

National Youth Development Policy Framework of 2002 was adopted for the period of five years 2002 – 2007. This policy document provides the background for the Government's youth action arguing for an integrated, holistic youth development strategy. It further articulates the values of equity, diversity, redress, responsiveness to the needs and perspective of the youth, and an orientation that is sustainable, participatory, inclusive, gender sensitive, accessible and transparent[32]. NYDPF is to integrate a holistic and sustainable youth participation in local electoral processes and governance of the Municipality[32]. To address the consciousness of the historical imbalances, current imbalances and current realities, to build a non-sexist, non-racist, democratic South Africa where youth and local youth council can enjoy and contribute to their full potential in the social, economic and political spheres of life but also recognise and develop their responsibilities to build a better life for all[32].

The NYDPF was established to address the major needs, challenges, and opportunities of young men and women, accommodating provincial variations and specific issues. It serves as a means of unifying all sectors of the society in the development of all young people. Arguably, apartheid era did more harm than good especially to the youth. However, it did

not only violate the rights and opportunities of young people through its repressive and racially oriented system of coercion, it also denied the youth of their basic needs. The adoption of NYP becomes an important milestone since the history of South African, youth aspirations, needs and conditions of young women and men are formally recognized and articulated through a major policy initiative. Through the introduction of NYC the youth all over South Africa now have equal right to participate actively in the electoral processes of their municipalities as well as participate in governance, discussions and workshops that allow them to share their situations, visions, needs and responses.

National Youth Policy of 2008 was adopted for the years 2008 – 2013. This policy document focuses on the foundation of both policy and programmatic interventions implemented for young people between 1994 and 2007. It further states that the participation of the youth in the electoral processes of the local municipality through the youth council must be streamlined to the government's approach to addressing poverty and underdevelopment, crime, young people's school drop-out-rate, as well as a mechanism for the promotion of social adjustment, social cohesion, and economic emancipation attained through comprehensive, integrated, cross-sectoral and sustainable policies and programmes that seek to bring about tangible improvements in the quality of their lives[33].

National Youth Economic Empowerment Strategy and Implementation Framework of 2009 was a policy document adopted for the years 2009 – 2019; with sub-theme mainstreaming the youth in South Africa. It is reviewed after three years, five years and the tenth year; hence it is a ten year plan policy document. The document is built upon the foundations and recommendations laid by the policy of 2002[32];

recommendations such as setting aside procurement quotas for the youth-owned and managed enterprises; encouraging provincial and local government authorities to formulate youth economic empowerment strategies; ensure youth representation in National Small Business Council (NSBAC) and other similar bodies; scale up financial support and services to youth enterprises; build stronger partnerships with private sector and banks; develop monitoring, evaluation and reporting systems to be used for youth economic empowerment[34].

National Youth Commission (NYC) has a responsibility to develop principles, guidelines and make recommendations to government regarding the implementation of an integrated National Youth Policy (NYP). The commission is also charged with the responsibility of co-ordinating, directing and monitoring the implementation of such principles and guidelines as a matter of priority and promoting a uniformity of approach by all organs of state including provincial government to matters involving the youth voting age, voter registration and other electoral legislations in South Africa.

Methodology

Youth participation in community projects is important for socio-political stability of Mafikeng Local Municipality (MLM). South Africa has three tiers of government: national, provincial and local governments. Among these tiers, local government is the least resourced. Yet local municipalities are charged to deliver the most basic services to the local people. The impact is that it limits the performances of the local municipalities which in turn affect youth participation in community projects and activities. The study also found that factors such as "Race", to great extent affected the rate of participation in the electoral processes of the municipality.

Table-1: Differences in participation, attitude and constraints in electoral processes among different respondents.

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	DUNCAN Test
Participation	Between Groups	54.034	3	18.011	4.538	.008	IEC 22.60[a] NYC 24.83[b] MPLY 25.10[b] Youth 25.35[b]
	Within Groups	166.683	42	3.969			
	Total	220.717	45				
Attitude	Between Groups	273.678	3	91.226	.774	.515	-
	Within Groups	4947.300	42	117.793			
	Total	5220.978	45				
Constraints	Between Groups	44.295	3	14.765	4.895	.005	IEC 16.10[a] Youth 16.35[a] NYC 18.17[b] MPLY 18.40[b]
	Within Groups	126.683	42	3.016			
	Total	170.978	45				

Df = degree of freedom; f = f-test statistics; sig = significance

The study used open-ended questionnaires and interviews in gathering data. Interviews were carried out through interactive and group discussions. Each group constituted 10 members. This method enabled the respondents to interact and respond to the questions posed to them beyond the borders of the questionnaires. The method also helped to ask more questions for better clarification. The population sampled were 200 respondents which included the Mafikeng Municipality youth development department, National youth commission in Mafikeng, the Independent Electoral Commission (with regards to the electoral issues) and the Mafikeng youth. A simple random sample was used in the study to ensure that all those with relevant information were not left out. It addressed the research problems of factors that hinder youth participation in community projects? In the case of election, who should educate the youth?

From Table-1, the weakness of the youth participation was evident. The differences in participation, attitude and constraint are also seen. Their level of participation was however, dependent on the constraint which was evident in the score involvement of the youth at (25.35). Significant levels of constraints (.005) and participation (.008) is positively related, therefore, it can be concluded that there is a positive relationship between youth participation and the constraints they face. This means that youth participation during the local electoral processes was dependent on their constraints, understanding and motivation by parents, teachers, the society and media against all odds such as poor education background, poverty and unemployment. The score was higher than the perceptions of the Municipality (25.10) the IEC (22.60) or the NYC (24.83). The effect is therefore represented as Y>MPLY>NYC>IEC. The implication is that, as much as the youth are encouraged at home by their parents and/or guidance, in schools by their teachers and/or educators, by friends and the media, their participation in the local electoral processes will be positive against any constraint. The study therefore agrees with IDEA which state that the youth participation can be influenced by various variables such as the family and intergenerational relationships, socioeconomic background, education, place of residence, peer pressure and mentorship[13]; and Cornwall argued that youth participation in the electoral processes is a way of involving the youth in responsible and challenging socio-political as well as economic actions that meet genuine needs of the young people[12].

Results and discussion

The General election of the year 2004 was historically important for the democratization of South Africa. It was a year that restored hope in the hearts and minds of South African youths. The year marked the democracy decade to the Nation and subsequently youth participation in the democratic and political processes. It was a year of reflection and planning. It signalled a year of reflection on the achievements and challenges on the election of April 1994 and planning strategies for consolidation of the democratic transition in the country. Since 1994, there have been eight transitional elections in South Africa of which the election of 2011 was the fourth local government election. An election culminates in the creation of a new government and how a government is formed is both fundamentally constitutional. Democracy inculcates an attitude of participatory election which is critical for the formation of local government and governance at local levels[35].

Furthermore, the MLM is surrounded with 103 villages scattered around the municipality. This is a great challenge to participation especially determining the parameter with which the youth from all these villages would get involved and participate in the decision making, governance and other community development programmes of the MLM considering economic cost and socio-political implications. The challenge as in most cases, one village would assume marginalised while other village is assumed favoured in terms of executing community projects, electoral representation, youth empowerment and other social benefits. Absences of local organisations in some villages pose great challenge to facilitate their participation in governance of the municipality. The power domination of local elites in some villages give them some edge in attracting projects and youth representation in the municipality decision-making board while some other villages have high rate of dependency on the government to provide anything and everything to their individual families and village. This dependency has rendered and exposed the thinking, reasoning and initiation of development plans of the youth in these villages vulnerable to alcohol, drug usage and crime.

The study found that the youth participated in the MLM electoral processes and such participation was active as in the case of political campaigns. The youth participated in the political and administrative processes. They affiliated with political parties of their choice and registered to vote. The youth who participated did not participate as a result of LYC activities or affiliation but were encouraged by various factors such as families, parents or guidance, teachers and/or educators, by friends, the media and Local Youth Council.

Finally, the study found that poor educational background, poverty and unemployment in the municipality constituted challenge to youth participation. This is because unemployed youth lack income to keep up-to-date with political financial commitments, responsibilities and obligations as a result most of these youth indulge in crime rather than participation in electoral processes. Their inability to complete education constitutes a challenge to read, write and to gain employment. Also education of the people in the scattered villages of the municipality, pose a challenge since the educated few prefer to migrate to urban areas for green pastures.

Overcoming challenges to youth activities: Youth engagement and participation in community based activities are faced with variety of obstacles. The historical disconnect between positive

youth development and civic engagements are considered leading challenges[36]. There is also disjunction in adult perception and attitude towards the youth. What the adults think about the youth and what they actually do against the youth. Researchers argue that this disjunction could be as a result of social norms that encourage youth engagement, and the presence of strong norms that discourage youth and adult partnerships[37]. These disjunctions hinder progress toward full youth participation in the local electoral processes, development and sustainable livelihoods[18]. The disjunctions are categorized into three. Firstly, Government Policies and Practices refer to the current economic and social conditions in the country. It includes lack of quality education, lack of enabling macro policies that promote youth employment, lack of access and appropriate use of new technologies to support the youth. Secondly, Business and Private Practices which refers to lack of credit and other services to help the youth in generating self-employment. It includes lack of private sector partnerships to promote youth employment, lack of productive on-and-off farm employment. Thirdly, social conditions refers to discrimination against young people and more specifically, young women, lack of self-empowerment-generating opportunities. The first strategy to self-empowerment of young people is to recognize these constraints and point out the opportunities that each constraint presents. The next step is to identify initiatives designed to overcome these constraints, taking place within the Municipality[18]. These measures are to be taken because the youth holds the future aspiration of the society. Building infrastructures and providing basic services can offer better opportunities for the youth development, hence promote youth interest to participate more in the electoral processes of the local Municipality[38].

Conclusion

Based on the findings, the study concludes that youth participation in the electoral processes of MLM is confronted by various challenges such as poor educational background, unemployment and poverty. That the average youth of the MLM do not have a job hence the municipality initiated development programmes such as Comprehensive Rural Development Programmes (CRDP). Also, the car-wash schemes provide some hope of skill acquisition and employment to the youth. Therefore, involvement in Community Development Programmes (CDP), Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP), Community Works Programme (CWP), the car-wash scheme forms an important aspect of political process to get the youth participate in governance and in the local electoral processes. This prepares and engages the youth today to actively build both a better present and brighter future. Key factors that support youth involvement include: a supportive family background, mentors or role models, involvement in cooperative activities, cultivation of intrinsic interest, awareness of moral and political issues, and traits such as moral sensitivity and optimism. Other factors are the roles of adult support, a youth-friendly environment, the completion of meaningful

tasks, the learning and utilization of new skills as key supports which could be done through the local youth councils.

Furthermore, the study concludes that age differences disenfranchised the secondary youth which include the 16 years. This is because the 16 years old are eligible to undertake any legal contract on their own without the consent of parents or guidance. Since the municipality operates with the national youth policy framework, tackling grass-roots or municipal youth problems become a challenge in the long run. Combination of class, race, gender, age and education which is backed up by tradition prevent meaningful participation from occurring. Only through meaningful participation in community projects, municipality programmes as well as electoral local electoral processes that the youth can develop skills, build competencies, form aspirations, gain confidence and attain valuable resources. As such the youth need to develop positive attitude towards participation in the community activities and municipality projects. By this they can participate in decision-making in the municipality and community. The role of positive attitude in youth participation is meaningfully manipulated on policy formulation, legislation, strategies and programmes, carried out and executed by the municipality without the presence of the youth during decision-making. The manipulations and lack of youth policy at municipal and community level result in the youth's loss of interest and motivation to participate in community activities, municipal projects as well as elections. It constitutes to high rate of illiteracy and school drop-out. Therefore, positive attitude in the minds of the youth will result to positive thinking and a society free of violence, crime, teenage pregnancy, drug abuse, anti-social behaviours, school drop outs and family problems.

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