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Western Highveld Regional Municipalities

Rural areas were ignored in the preparation for local government elections. The Local Government Transition Act failed to make provisions for rural areas. The structure that was finally specified was a mirror image of provisions for urban areas; it was implemented virtually overnight without taking into account the exceptional history of urban areas and their transitional structures.

(Galvin, M. 1999)

The South African historical milieu of local government reveals that this phenomenon has always been viewed as an appended structure belonging to the central government. Wessels (1994:16) views this model of governance as "*a Napoleonic model of integration, emphasises the roles of central and local government as parts of the single state*". In this model most functions are performed by the central government. The current dispensation in South Africa, prefers an "*autonomous model that regards the central and the local spheres of government as relatively separated*" (Wessels, 1994:16), with the local tier adopting a promotive or developmental role. Such a role includes the advancement of communities, creation of wealth and the provision of services.

Within in the framework of the principles of development, the functioning of municipalities in the Western Highveld Region of Mpumalanga Province, is described according to the findings of this investigation. The study area, a rural fringe, stands among South Africa's rural areas whose population was "*estimated in the year 2000 at 14,2 million people who are mostly African and overwhelmingly poor*" (Bekker & Mawhood, 1991:50). Fast (1998:307) has observed that "*one of the challenges in [these] rural areas is the establishment of viable municipalities*" to ensure that rural areas are also brought into the mainstream of development.

Following a brief overview of the survey, identified community needs and expectations, community participation in projects and their availability will be reported

on. The satisfaction level of the communities in the Region will be measured vis-à-vis the delivery by the municipalities of the Region. This penultimate chapter links to other chapters to endorse the assumption that peripheral spaces are in dire straits and need intervention.

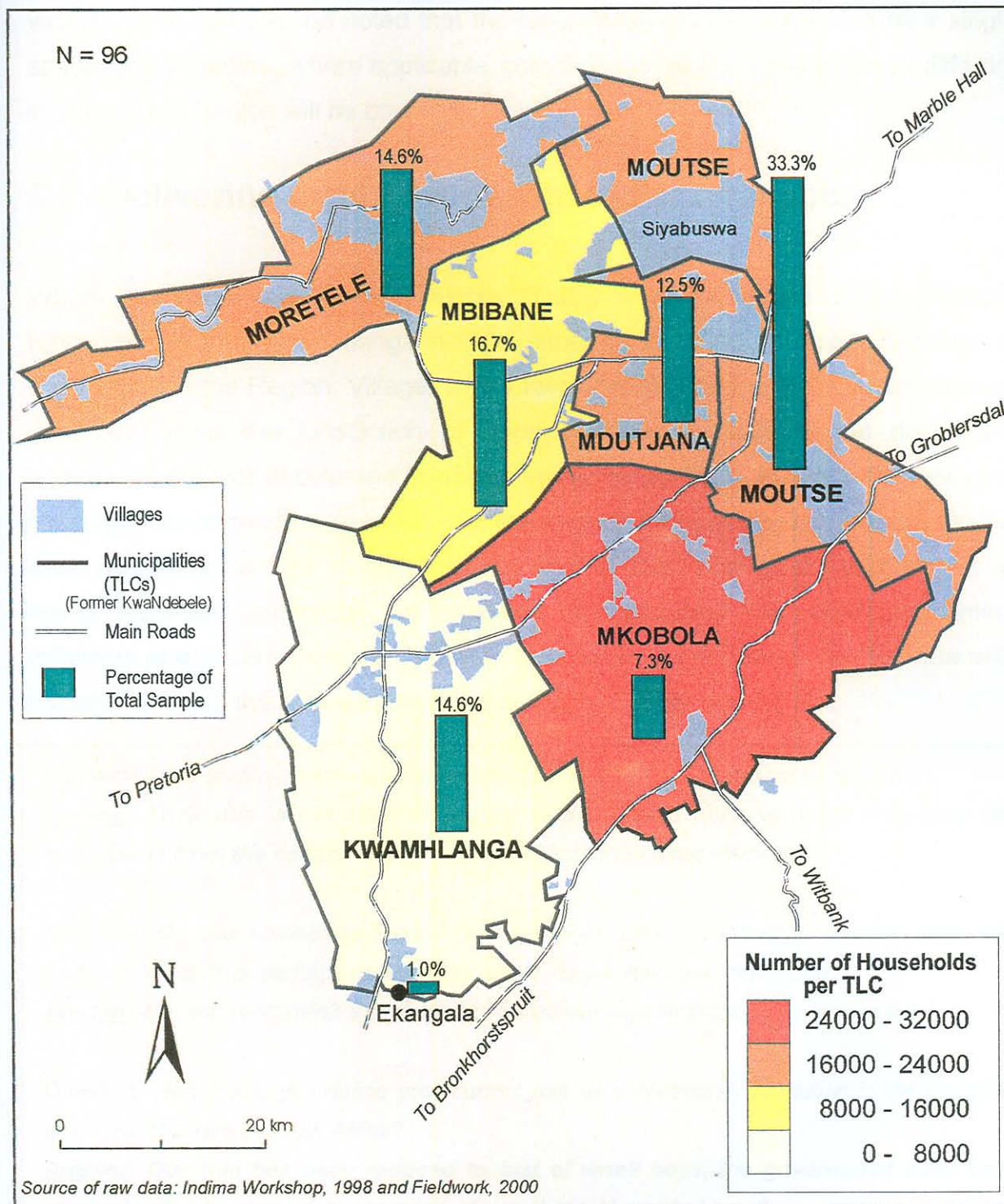
5.1. The respondents

The report is a product of interviews, on site observations, notes from meetings and workshops, minutes from different local authorities' meetings and, more especially from the questionnaires dispensed to a number of stakeholders and role players. It was indicated earlier (Chapter 3) that the questionnaire to the RDCs is regarded as the primary source of data for the study.

Respondents from all the municipalities of the Region participated in the survey (Figure 5.1). These are the RDCs that assist the local government structures in identifying the development needs of the communities. Note should be taken of Moutse which shows a high rate of participation in the survey, this is as a result of the enthusiasm shown by RDCs of the area in development issues as a result of the underdevelopment of their localities. Ekangala as it will be noted in the report, is a small TLC with only three villages. The low number of Ekangala is in relation to other TLCs not in relation to the Ekangala municipality. The respondents were asked in a questionnaire to indicate the level of their organisation, to define their role and to indicate how they got involved in the role they were playing (Appendix 3A, question 1.7, 1.8 & 1.11 and 1.12). In as far as question 1.7 is concerned, 99% indicated that they were a local structure, with 1% indicating that they were a subregional structure, co-ordinating a number of local RDCs. All respondents, saw their primary role as attending to the development matters of their constituencies. Also, most of them, 78%, indicated that they were mandated by their communities to participate in development matters. The remaining 22% were either invited by the local authorities or volunteered. As mandated community based structures, these RDCs would consult their communities in all matters related to development. This is also true to this survey. The survey should be seen not as a product of few individuals but a culmination of inputs from the communities of the Region. The focus of this chapter is to record findings related to the important issue as to whether the mandate given to

the rural local authorities in the Western Highveld Region was effectively implemented and utilised to meet the expectations of the communities they serve. As

Figure 5.1: Percentage Respondents by Municipality, Western Highveld Region, Mpumalanga



already indicated, the report will cover findings from interviews conducted with several institutional organisations and individuals, results from observations

(meetings and workshops attended during the investigation) and those from questionnaires sent to the different TLCs in the study area. In general, five areas of interest will be reported: community needs of the Region; people's attitudes and satisfaction with the role of the TLCs; development interventions in relation to the needs of the Region; and, finally, community participation in the development of their villages. It should also be noted that the report analyses the study area as a single spatial unit. However, where applicable, comparisons between and amongst different entities of the Region will be drawn.

5.2. Delivering local government to the rural poor

When the Transitional Local Councils (TLCs) were introduced in the Western Highveld Region of Mpumalanga in 1994, either chiefs or indunas controlled most of the villages in the Region. Villages in the KwaNdebele and the Moretele areas were generally under the jurisdiction of Tribal Authorities, relics of the dismantled homelands of KwaNdebele and Bophuthatswana respectively. In effect, the new rural municipalities began to take on another role — a new role of providing services to the local population, a task never previously part of their local affairs portfolio. In so doing, traditional authorities felt sidelined and excluded from local government initiatives and governance. The situation referred to is reflected in the interview with the councillors of the KwaManala Tribal Authority¹⁹. They were asked:

Question: *Honourable members, what do you think is the role of municipal councillors?*

Answer: *Their role is not clear to us, as we are seated here, we have a number of complaints from the community about councillors they have elected.*

Question: *Do you sometimes have formal meetings with councillors to discuss areas of common interests or perhaps community complaints you have just mentioned?*

Answer: *No, we don't think that they recognise our significance. They ignore us.*

Question: *How would you define your current role as a community institution in the present structural changes in South Africa?*

Answer: *Our role has been reduced to that of small boys, the government does not recognise us, they say we were part of apartheid. Nevertheless, there are thousands of people who still need our services.*

¹⁹ Interview held on August 20, 1999 at the KwaManala Traditional Authority's Offices in Mbibana.

Question: *What are those services you render?*

Answer: *We resolve family problems, people report crime to us, we assist people in acquiring property development sites, we recommend people for loans. Our task is great. We do these without any remuneration. The budget we used to get from the KwaNdebele government for the performance of these functions has been withdrawn by the present government. How do we sustain ourselves?*

This *status quo* where there is a *de jure* local government on one hand and a *de facto*, however popular, traditional leadership on the other, has impacted on the direct delivery of services. Besides this observation, there is a cultural dimension that also impacts on the working relations between different cultural groups. A typical example was discovered during field work, where a chief in Nokaneng, a village in Moretele municipal area, refused water pipe-laying simply because the councillor who was involved in the project was Ndebele and the chief could not afford to jeopardise his reputation by being addressed by a Ndebele (councillor) as he (chief) was Tswana. These were the typical perceptions and attitudes from the institutions of traditional leadership at the time of the coming into being of the new structures of local government.

5.3. Regional needs

The Western Highveld Region, encompassing the seven municipal areas, is located in the periphery of development (Chapter 1:25), a situation that places it as a historically disadvantaged area. It is also a stated goal of this study to understand the socio-economic needs of the Region from a historic and contemporary perspective. The needs analysis that follows presents the minimum requirements that the respondents viewed as essential.

These needs were established through a questionnaire (Appendix 3A) dispensed to all the RDCs, some civic organisations and CBOs in the Region. Twelve needs (Appendix 3A Question 2) were presented to the respondents who were requested to indicate those that they regarded as most essential in their locality. The list included schools, clinics, water, sanitation, houses, electricity, roads, storm water drainage, sewerage, emergency and rescue services, welfare centres and recreational facilities. On analysis, it was discovered that all TLCs (100%; N = 7) needed all these

commodities. In addition, land transport services and telecommunications were identified as other essential needs. The respondents were at the same time asked to rank their specific needs in order of priority. This was done so as to determine whether all TLCs had the same needs. Table 5.1 shows prioritisation made by the respondents from different municipalities.

From the distribution offered by the table, it is apparent that all TLCs ranked their needs in a regular pattern that indicates that municipalities have similar needs. This is not surprising as the Region belongs to the former homelands of Bophuthatswana and KwaNdebele, the legacy of historical neglect is thus evidenced by this prioritisation. Water, roads, health services, sewerage and electricity stand as the top five priorities of the TLCs. There are, however, differences as can be observed from Moretele and Moutse on educational facilities. Respondents from Moretele and Moutse (Table 5.1) have included education facilities as top priorities for the two TLCs. This contrasts with other TLCs who are former KwaNdebele entities. While there was a general neglect of the Region, Moretele and Moutse are the most backward. Plate 2 in chapter 1, is evidence of a new development addressing educational needs in Moutse.

Another difference can be observed in Mdutjana. Respondents from Mdutjana (Table 5.1) indicate that roads are the first priority as compared to water. The reason for this situation is that Siyabuswa, which was a capital of former KwaNdebele, is situated in Mdutjana. Its historical presence in this area has made it possible for all the 21 villages in Mdutjana to benefit from water reticulation initiated by the homeland administration. Having observed the individual municipal picture, the data was condensed so as to acquire an overall regional picture (Table 5.2). Table 5.2 indicates that most respondents ranked water and roads as indeed major issues needing attention (67% and 61% respectively). Health services (37%) and electricity (29%) were also seen as regional priorities. Sewerage, education, emergencies and postal services were recognised as important whereas housing, safety and security, welfare, correctional services and land were deemed less critical issues.

A comparative analysis of the results obtained from the questionnaire and those obtained during workshops conducted by *Indima Managerial Services*²⁰ and which were attended by the researcher, reveals that municipal services, referred to in Table 5.1 rank high in the list of priorities of the Region. During the workshops that were convened by Indima, throughout the Region, delegates (Appendices 5A-6B) were requested to indicate the biggest problem that they encountered in their localities (Table 5.3). Problems were given to participants to respond to in order of priority. It was discovered that all delegates from all TLCs recorded municipal services as the prime problem meaning that they were in need of these services.

Table 5.2: Regional needs according to priority

Rank	Amenity	Sample size (N=96)	Value in %
1	Water	(n=68)	67
2	Roads	(n=83)	61
3	Health services	(n=79)	37
4	Electricity	(n=56)	29
5	Sewerage	(n=56)	19
6	Education	(n=70)	16
7	Emergencies	(n=67)	14
8	Postal services	(n=67)	12
9	Housing	(n=56)	8
10	Safety and security	(n=67)	7
11	Welfare services	(n=65)	6
12	Correctional service	(n=50)	2

Source: SMM/2001

To illustrate how the workshops arrived at this conclusion, a case of Mdutjana can be used. The Mdutjana IDP/LDO workshop (Table 5.3) indicates that 79.7% of the delegates representing 22 486 households (not necessarily with their mandate) ranked municipal services as the prime problem. Eight percent (8.1%) of the same

²⁰ A company of consultants commissioned by Mpumalanga Provincial Government to conduct IDPs and LDOs in the Region.

Table 5.1: Priority needs according to different Municipalities in the Region

Mkobola			Mbibane			Moutse			Moretele			Mdujiana			Ekangala			Kwamhlanga		
Rank	Amenity	(n) Value	Rank	Amenity	(n) Value	Rank	Amenity	(n) Value	Rank	Amenity	(n) Value	Rank	Amenity	(n) Value	Rank	Amenity	(n) Value	Rank	Amenity	(n) Value
1	Water	8/9	1	Water	16/16	1	Water	32/35	1	Water	14/14	1	Roads	15/15	1	Water	1/1	1	Water	12/12
2	Roads	8/9	2	Roads	16/16	2	Roads	31/35	2	Roads	14/14	2	Water	15/15	2	Roads	1/1	2	Roads	12/12
3	Clinics	8/9	3	Clinics	16/16	3	Clinics	30/35	3	Clinics	14/14	3	Clinics	10/15	3	Clinics	1/1	3	Clinics	12/12
4	Electricity	7/9	4	Electricity	15/16	4	Electricity	27/35	4	Education	14/14	4	Electricity	9/15	4	Electricity	1/1	4	Electricity	10/12
5	Sewerage	6/9	5	Sewerage	15/16	5	Sewerage	28/35	5	Electricity	13/14	5	Sewerage	8/15	5	Sewerage	1/1	5	Sewerage	10/12
6	Education	6/9	6	Education	14/16	6	Education	21/35	6	Sewerage	13/14	6	Education	7/15	6	Education	1/1	6	Education	10/12
7	Emergencies	6/9	7	Emergencies	13/16	7	Emergencies	20/35	7	Emergencies	9/14	7	Emergencies	6/15	7	Emergencies	1/1	7	Emergencies	7/12
8	Postal service	6/9	8	Postal service	13/16	8	Postal Service	32/35	8	Postal service	8/14	8	Postal service	5/15	8	Postal service	0/1	8	Postal service	8/12
9	Houses	5/9	9	Houses	13/16	9	Houses	14/35	9	Houses	6/14	9	Houses	4/15	9	Houses	0/1	9	Houses	7/12
10	Safety/security	5/9	10	Safety/security	10/16	10	Safety/Security	15/35	10	Safety/security	6/14	10	Safety/security	4/15	10	Safety/security	0/1	10	Safety/Security	6/12
11	Welfare	4/9	11	Welfare	6/16	11	Welfare	11/35	11	Welfare	6/14	11	Welfare	4/15	11	Welfare	0/1	11	Welfare	6/12
12	Prisons	3/9	12	Prisons	6/16	12	Prisons	10/35	12	Prisons	5/14	12	Prisons	4/15	12	Prisons	0/1	12	Prisons	6/12
13	Land	3/9	13	Land	4/16	13	Land	8/35	13	Land	5/14	13	Land	4/15	13	Land	0/1	13	Land	4/12

Source: SSM/2001

Table 5.3: Western Highveld Region: Biggest problem (Needs)

TLC	Mkobola	Mbibane	Moutse	Moretele	Kwa- mhlanga	Mdutjana	Ekangala	Total
Households	26 623	12 122	23 547	16 662	8 257	22 486	39 902	149 599
Problem in %	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Municipal Services ²¹	72.9	67.5	86.8	74.3	62.5	79.8	67.8	74.4
Employment	77.9	77.0	81.0	74.3	69.3	87.2	67.5	76.2
Medical services	36.6	47.9	33.9	37.5	31.8	41.5	42.8	39.0
Education amenities	34.1	35.7	43.9	46.2	24.9	40.1	46.2	40.8
Proper housing	29.4	17.0	13.9	11.1	35.3	8.1	24.7	19.6
Shopping facilities	10.9	33.9	24.9	33.2	23.9	14.6	16.3	20.5
Security/crime	24.7	11.9	8.6	10.0	40.4	20.7	20.2	18.0
Transport	13.6	10.9	6.9	12.7	11.9	7.9	13.1	11.2
Source: Indima Workshop, 1998								

delegates felt that housing was not a problem. Comparing the two variables it was concluded that municipal services were a great need as compared to housing which was regarded as not that essential. The workshops defined municipal services as given in Table 5.1. Realising that municipal services were the essential needs, participants were further requested to rank their needs in order of priority (Table 5.1).

The result was that, in all cases, water, roads and health services stood out as primary needs. The results in Table 5.1 only relate to Moretele, Mdotjana, Mbibana and KwaMhlanga. Details were avoided as the Indima data is used for comparative purposes only. The percentages in Table 5.3 as in Table 5.4 indicate the number of delegates who ranked the services in order of priority. This supports the empirical survey done for the study – the top five priorities correspond with the needs expressed by stakeholders in the questionnaire and interviews.

In interviews conducted with several role-players and stakeholders in the Region, there is an overwhelming corroboration with the results of the questionnaires where water, roads and health services are regarded as top priorities of the Region. Asked about the priorities in his municipality, the mayor²² of Mdotjana responded:

²¹ Defined in the workshops as roads and storm water drainage, water supply, sanitation, waste disposal and electricity.

²² Interview with the mayor of Mdotjana, Councillor Alfred Malefo 12 August 1999.

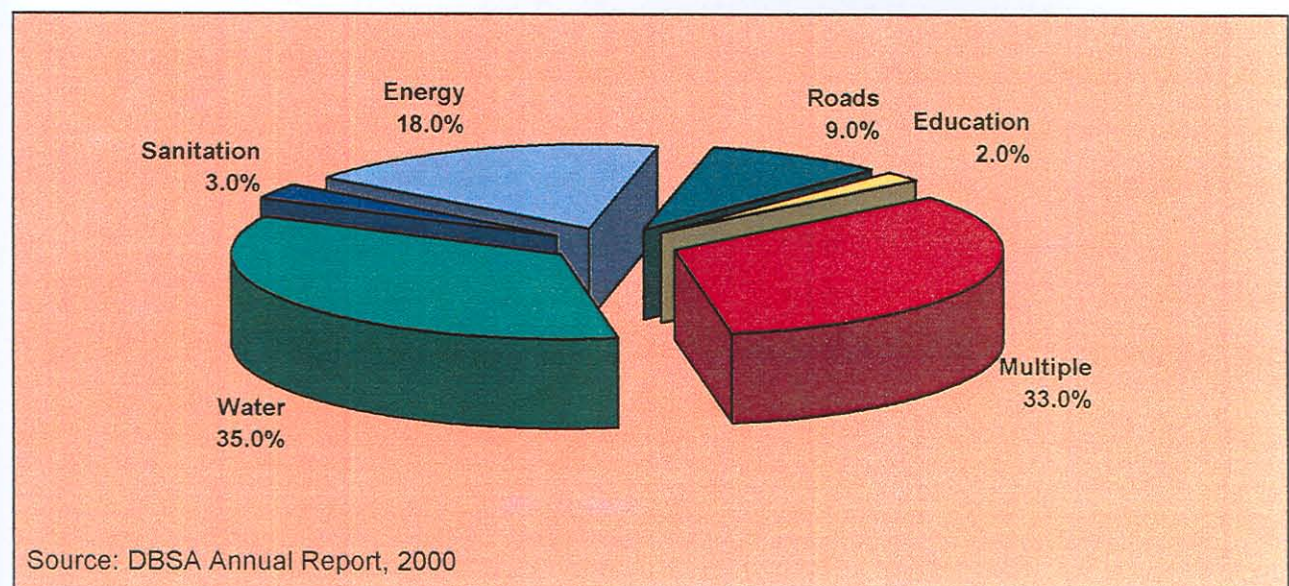
In 1996, March we had a meeting where priorities were made and then, water was the first priority, followed by sewerage reticulation, storm water drainage including roads and health facilities. We then started by implementing water projects, that was our first focus and as I am talking were are busy trying to meet RDP standard in all villages.

Table 5.4: Selected Indima delegates' infrastructure priority needs ranking

PRIORITIES		Mbibane	Mdutjana	Moretele	KwaMhlanga
		%	%	%	%
1	Roads and stormwater drainage	23.8	28.7	22.4	18.0
2	Water supply	37.0	18.0	12.2	16.0
3	Sanitation	19.3	23.0	25.1	15.5
4	Waste disposal	10.0	16.6	27.1	12.0
5	Electricity	9.4	13.1	11.4	7.0

Source: Indima Workshop & SMM/1998

Figure 5.2: National Loan Approvals by Development Bank of Southern Africa per sector, 1999/2000



5.3.1. Water

Water provision is a national problem in South Africa due to its rainfall regime and general climatic conditions. Capital intensive schemes have to be instituted to address the problem. The Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA) is an institution engaged in initiating, financing and managing a variety of development projects, providing loans for such projects, mainly in disadvantaged areas. The chairman of the DBSA, Mr Jay Naidoo articulates the institution's role by asserting

that the Bank's mission is *"to mobilise resources for development, to provide funding and to harness the DBSA's development expertise to maximise development impact"*²³. It is interesting to note that in 2000, 38% of its approved loan allocations went to local government institutions: TLCs (18%), Transitional Metropolitan Councils (15%) and District Councils (5%) (DBSA Report, 2000:4). Worthy also of note (Figure 5.2) is that 35% of the loans were given for the provision of water in the country. This is an indication that the provision of water is still a priority in most areas of the country. Its provision in the Western Highveld Region is even more critical.

Potable water in KwaNdebele, the main source of water in the Region, is supplied from two main sources: In the North, from the *Mkhombo* dam and purified at the Weltevreden Purification Works. In the South, from the Bronkhortspruit Dam and purified at the Bronkhortspruit Purification Works. The Bronkhortspruit Dam supplies the southern parts of the Region. These include the municipalities of KwaMhlanga, Ekangala and some parts of Mkobola. Under the former homeland administration of KwaNdebele, the Weltevreden Purification Works used to supply Mdutjana, Mbibana and some parts of Mkobola. The inclusion of the former Bophuthatswana districts of Moutse and Moretele or Mathanjana, which were even then critically under-supplied, has put pressure on the Weltevreden Plant. At present it is supposed to supply more than 74 817 households representing 54% of the total households of the Region. Table 5.3 portrays regional household sizes. This situation entails that those villages that were formerly supplied by this plant no longer receive sufficient water. Without statistical information on dam volumes too, this is pure conjecture!

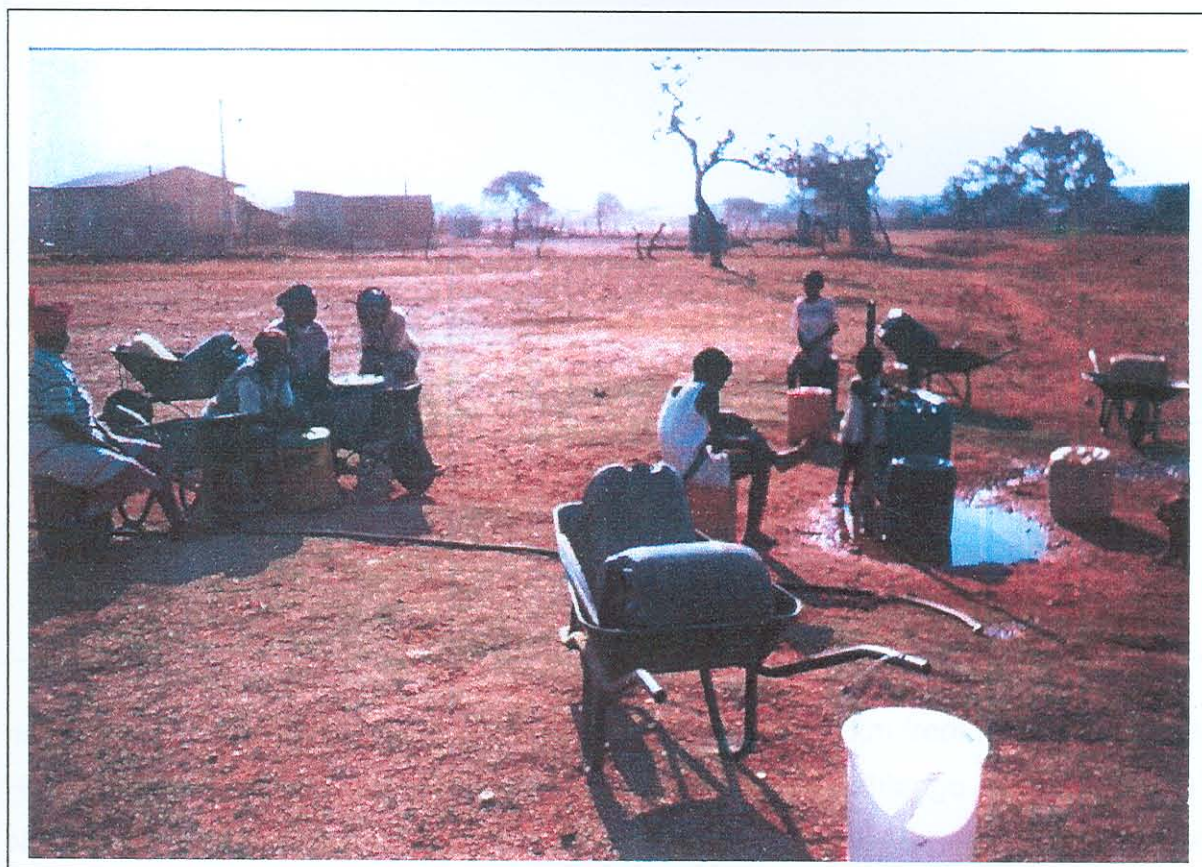
According to the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry (DWAF) neither of these dams is able to supply enough water to meet the full demand of the Region. Prof. Kader Asmal, the then minister of DWAF, agreed in his address at the launch of KwaNdebele-Moutse-Moretele Augmentation Project (1998, January 16), that *"in recent years the Region has experienced critical water shortages in most villages, settlements and towns. Where the total reliable water supply available to the Region has not been sufficient to meet the water demands of the population. The water distribution system in the Region is not adequate to provide people with the minimum water supply as provided by the RDP and thus needs to be upgraded"*. The

²³ Address at the Opening Session of the South African Local Government Association Annual General Meeting, April 5, 2001.

Department instituted a study on how to augment water supply to the Region. It was concluded that pumping water from the Usuthu-Vaal River Government Water Scheme to the Bronkhortspruit Dam would be the best option to augment the water supply.

The KwaNdebele-Moutse-Moretele Water Supply Augmentation Project amounting to R185 million and co-funded by the Japanese Overseas Economic Co-operation Funds was initiated in 1996. The initial phase of the Project was completed in 1998. It produced a 20 000 m³ Reservoir at Ekangala and a 35 km steel pipe from Ekangala reservoir to a new 11 000 m³ reservoir at Enkeldoornoog B. Despite this intervention, scenes as seen in Plate 6 bear testimony to a continued shortage of water in the Region.

Plate 6: Scenes of the water crisis in the Region



5.3.2. Roads

Second to or equal to water, roads are a scarce commodity in the Region (Tables 5.1 and 5.2). Road networks are an important infrastructural resource and are vital to the

movement of goods and people to and from any area. When Adolf Hitler rose to power in Germany in 1939, the first project that he embarked upon in advancing the development of the Bavarian State, was the building of roads, the so-called *autobahns*. This historical reality proved to be one of the strategic strengths of the German nation.

Roads in the Region are in bad shape (Plate 7). There are only few provincial roads that are tarred although efforts are being made to rectify this situation. The major

Plate 7: Road conditions in the Region



tarred roads in the Region are Moloto-Marble Hall road (77km from Moloto to Marble Hall), KwaMhlanga-Siyabuswa road (65km from KwaMhlanga to Siyabuswa), Ntwane-Moteti road (43km) from Moteti to Ntwane), Pankop-Marapyane road (78km from Pankop to Marapyane). Other roads are the Loding-Siyabuswa road (43km), Matjhirini-Thabana-Siyabuswa road (25km) and recently (2000), Matjhirini-Siyabuswa (11Km)²⁴. Although it was not possible to acquire accurate data on untarred roads from the Mpumalanga Department of Public Works and Roads, it was established

²⁴ Data on road distances were acquired from Fieldwork measurements using the vehicle's odometer.

that 86% of roads and streets that are a responsibility of the municipalities in the Region, were untarred. In Mdutjana out of 21 villages that are part of this municipality, only Siyabuswa has its bus routes tarred. In the Mkobola municipality, out of 15 localities only Kwaggafontein, Tweefontein F, G, H and K have major bus routes tarred. In Moretele all roads are untarred except the Pankop-Marapyane provincial road that passes through a number of villages. In Mbibane, only Vaalbank, Almansdrift B and C are connected by one tarred bus route. In Moutse, as in Moretele, most of the roads are untarred except streets in Elandsdoorn, which was proclaimed as a township by the former Transvaal Administration. As a result of this status, it enjoyed some road development. Ekangala municipality, which has only three villages, is perhaps the most advanced municipality of the Region. Its superior status is influenced historically by the fact that the residents of Ekangala, most of whom originate from the East Rand and are 'refugees' of the mid-1970's education unrest, resisted incorporation into KwaNdebele. Although later, they became part of KwaNdebele. During their years of resistance against incorporation, the Transvaal Provincial Administration (TPA) intervened and assisted in providing general infrastructure. Again, its proximity to Bronkhortspruit, a well-to-do town surrounded by a number of industries at Ekandustria contributed to this status. Ekangala Township has all its major bus routes and streets tarred, although there are some sections of the Township that are still untarred. In general, the Region's road conditions are unacceptable. In winter they are dusty, and become dongas of mud and storm water in summer!

5.3.3. Health facilities

The Region's population of 3 003 327 is served by three hospitals. Mametlhake Hospital in Moretele, Philadelphia Hospital in Moutse and Kwamhlanga Hospital in Kwamhlanga. Village-based clinics are found predominantly in the KwaNdebele municipalities i.e. KwaMhlanga, Ekangala, Mkobola, Mbibane and Mdutjana. In Moutse and Moretele, which are historically the most disadvantaged areas in the Region, there is a virtual dependence on the two hospitals: Philadelphia Hospital in the case of Moutse and Mametlhake Hospital in the case of Moretele. Although the KwaNdebele municipalities appear to have these health facilities, most of the village-based clinics are only open for patients from 08h00 to 16h00. They also do not

attend to maternity cases — which are rife in these villages — and serious casualties.

A recent phenomenon is the availability of makeshift clinics in the newly established informal and formal settlements of the Region, as can be seen in Moloto on Plate 8.

Plate 8: Makeshift clinic in Moloto, the only source of primary health



The functionality of these clinics could not be well established. When the researcher visited about three of these in the KwaMhlanga and Mkobola TLCs, their staff could not be found. Impromptu discussions with the gardeners and gatekeepers at the centres, revealed that there no permanent staff are employed. Only volunteers attend to family planning matters, insect bites, minor burns and vomiting disorders. Most of these clinics are donations from foreign government embassies. This perhaps accounts for the lack of paid staff members as there is no government intervention. In a small way, they do address some health demands.

An interview with a social worker that works with most of the health centres in the Region is very revealing:

Question: *Mr. Phokoane, in your work as a social worker you sometimes take your clients, particularly the disabled and the aged, to the clinics and hospitals, how would you describe the conditions in these health centres?*

Answer: *Generally very abhorrent. You experience a shortage of doctors; most of the clinics are manned by the nursing sisters who are overstretched, as they face hordes and hordes of patients each day. Doctors visit clinics once a week generally for teeth extraction, therefore clinics do not solve most of my problems. I usually take my clients to hospital. I only come to the clinic to check if my client does take his or her medical prescription regularly. Sometimes my clients regress, as they can't get their supplies from the clinic because of the shortage of drugs.*

Question: *Hospitals?*

Answer: *They differ. Philadelphia is better as it hospitalises most of the Region's patients. Mametlhake and KwaMhlanga are generally referral hospitals although they keep maternal and patients with minor injuries, they generally refer in most instances their special cases to GaRankuwa and Kalafong hospitals in Gauteng, mind you Philadelphia also does that. So, in general, the Region has a serious shortage of medical institutions. For example, we have a problem with our psychiatric clients. It is either Weskoppies in Pretoria or Groothoek in the Northern Province. Very interesting isn't it?*

This health situation in the Region constitutes a serious need that both the local and the District municipalities need to address in earnest.

5.4. Local government intervention

As is the case in all parts of the country TLCs were established in the Western Highveld Region in 1995. As defined by the LGTA, their role was to provide municipal services listed in Schedule 2 of the Act. This was to be done in such a way that the needs of the communities they serve could be addressed.

Various TLC structures form the local government infrastructure of the Region (Table 5.5). Each TLC is divided into wards: a ward in most cases is a combination of several villages. A ward councillor, who is directly elected by the voters during an election, represents each ward on the Council. The Council also consists of party representatives who occupy their council seats according to their party's performance in an election. In the Region, most of the councillors are representatives of the African National Congress (ANC), which holds the majority of seats in both the

Mpumalanga Provincial Legislature and the national government. This implies that it is expected of these councillors to be advocates of radical change in the Region. It is also required of them to advance the transformation programme in a more vigorous way, at least, this is what their disadvantaged communities expect from them. As they are discharging their governance mandate, councillors are expected to involve communities in their work. This is in line with the RDP's principle that characterises transformation as *a people driven process*. The RDP document states that *"development is not about the delivery of goods to a passive citizenry. It is about active involvement and growing empowerment"* (ANC, RDP, 1993:5).

Table 5.5: Local government in the Region

TLC	Offices	Wards	Total villages	Party Reps	Council
Mkobola	Kwaggafontein	5	25	ANC=30	30
Mdutjana	Siyabuswa	6	21	ANC=28	30
Moretele	Mamethake	5	22	ANC=30	30
Moutse	Kgobokwane	7	42	ANC=30	30
Mbibana	Vaalbank	6	17	ANC=30	28
Kwamhlanga	Kwamhlanga	4	9	ANC=30	30
Ekgangala	Ekgangala	2	3	ANC=16	16
Region Total	7	35	138	192	194

Source: Adapted from the Highveld District Council Document on Statistics, SSM/2001

5.4.1. Local government delivery efforts

An audit of development projects available in the Region was compiled for this study (Figure 5.3) and measured against the identified primary needs of the Region. If the principal needs of the Region are water, roads and health services as already identified, are development projects or plans in place that are addressing the identified needs? Respondents were requested to indicate if there were development projects in their locality (Appendix 3A, Section 4.1) and also to list those projects that were in operation (Figure 5.3). according to Appendix 3A, Section 4.2. Road construction, electrification, water pipe laying, telecommunication installations, sewer reticulation, clinic construction, post office, construction, vendor cubicle construction are projects that were identified. This became the criterion of the research together with some interviews to determine the provision of services, which in turn measures local government intervention.

As far as the question (Appendix 3A, Section 4.1) is concerned, with the exception of Ekangala, which is a TLC with only three villages and was formerly well looked after, all TLCs display a poor record of availability of development projects. In the Mkobola TLC, of the 9 respondents, 57.1% indicated that there were no development projects in their area. In Mbibane 53% of 16 respondents affirmed that there were development projects in their areas. 71.8% out of 35 respondents from Moutse indicated absence of projects. Moretele recorded 42% availability out of 14 respondents. KwaMhlanga recorded 50% each way while Mdutjana shows 78.6% lack of development out of 14 respondents.

Figure 5.3: Regional distribution of capital projects

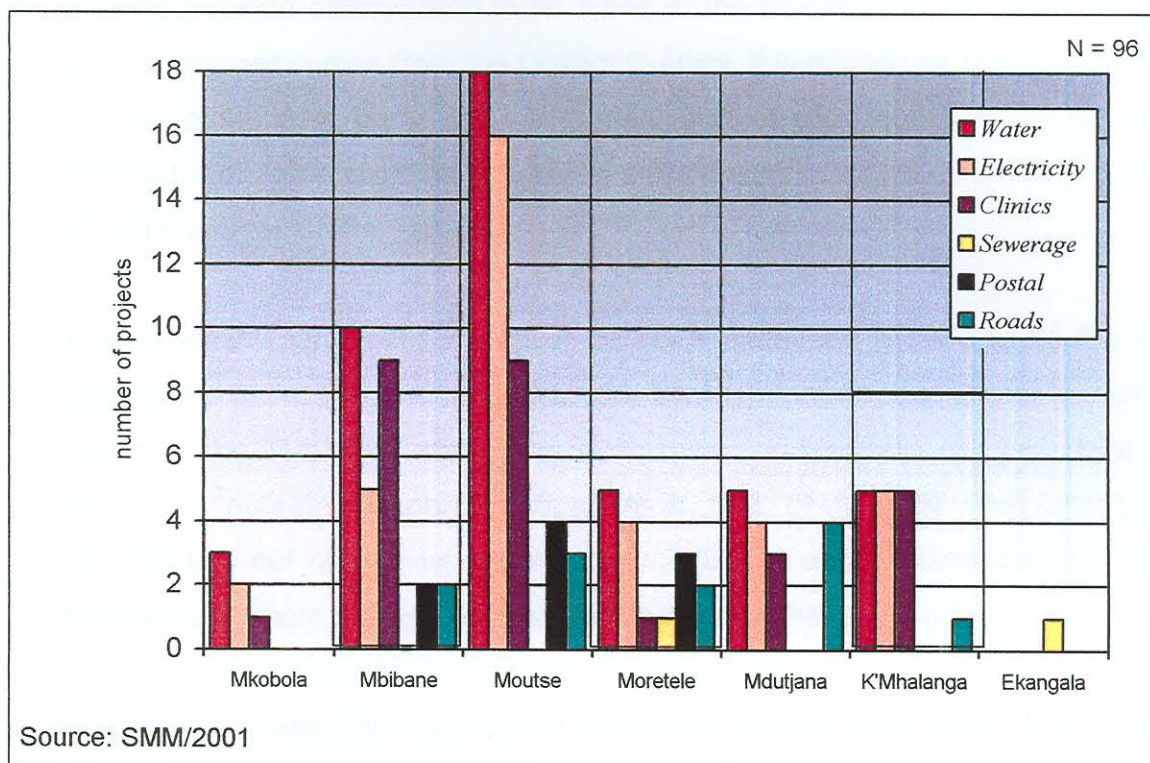


Figure 5.3 is a substantiation of the availability of the projects. It can be observed that projects associated with to the primary needs (water pipe laying, road construction and clinic construction are not well distributed in the different TLCs. A detailed analysis of this picture follows.

5.4.1.1 Roads

In almost all the TLCs there is little in the way of road construction. The situation appears to confirm a correlation between roads as a priority need and their relative absence as specific capital projects (Figure 5.3). Ekangala, which is relatively

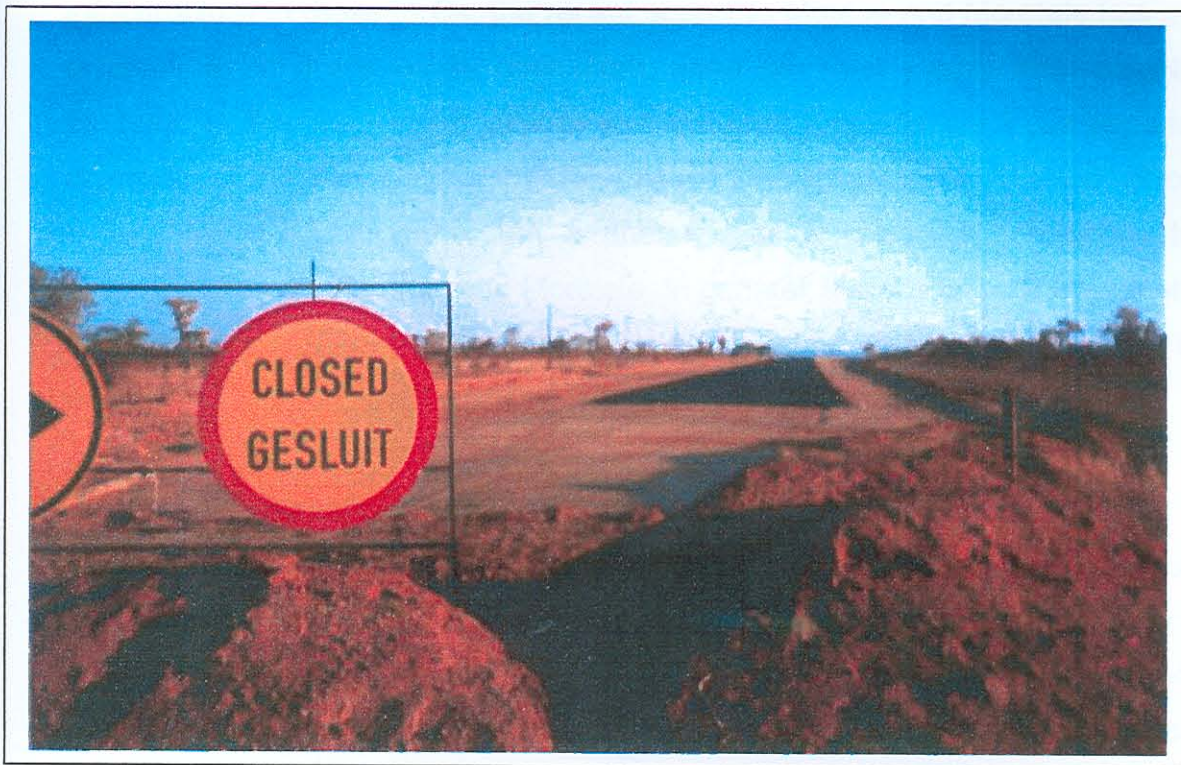
advanced when compared to the other TLCs, shows a nil return with regard to road construction since the area is well serviced with roads. However, in as far as other TLCs are concerned, the absence of road construction projects, indicate that there is a need for these. Comments from interviews with the mayor of Mdutjana (referred to in footnote 22) on roads, show that there is a relationship between the availability of roads and capital investment in the Mdutjana municipal area. *“Investors cannot bring their businesses to the TLCs because of the problem of roads. The roads are bad that is why we are starting with infrastructure and roads in particular, as the inaccessibility of our areas discourages investors from investing in our area.* (Malefo, 1999). Another interview with the Mayor of Mbibana²⁵, reveals that the TLC, had planned for road construction in all areas of the municipality. However, the fact that the TLC budget comes from the District Council, it is difficult for the TLC to implement projects at its own pace. On-site observation of road construction in the Region revealed that there were an insignificant number of road construction projects in the different villages of the Region.

A point worth mentioning is that of all TLCs, Mdutjana proved to be the only TLC addressing its road condition situation. Plate 9 shows an almost complete road project in the TLC. The road links Siyabuswa and Matjhirini, an important transport village. A notable desperate situation is that of Moutse and Moretele which respectively, out of 32 respondents only 3 (9.3%) and 14 respondents, 4 (28.5%), admitted that there was some road construction in their locality.

Several interviews with a variety of community leaders and some NGOs, reveal that this state of affairs in these TLCs is a result of lack of robust leadership. However, TLC officials indicate that there is a problem of ethnicity that impacts on the development of their municipal areas. There is an indication that the District Council, which is the main source of funding of projects in the Region, is dominated by the non-Sotho speaking individuals who disadvantage the predominantly Sotho-speaking TLCs. The state of roads in the whole Region is really serious despite the claims by some TLCs that the matter is receiving serious attention.

²⁵ Interview with the mayor of Mbibana TLC, Mr Speed Mashilo, 18 August 1999.

Plate 9: Road construction in Mdutjana TLC



5.4.1.2. Water

Water pipe laying, which represents the construction of water infrastructure, constitutes a relatively higher percentage of success when compared to other projects. Out of 96 respondents 46 recorded that water projects were underway in their localities. This may be an indication that TLCs have also identified water supply as the first priority and are addressing the water needs of their communities. This therefore suggests that the municipalities of the Region are in fact attending to water provision. It can also be observed that improvement in water provision comes as a result of the Presidential Projects, a national programme that seeks to alleviate the basic needs problem particularly in the rural areas. Most of the funds for improved water infrastructure came directly from the DWAF.

Nevertheless 48% is still a dismal record considering the need for such a fundamentally important resource. Figures for Moutse, historically the most deprived of all TLCs in the study area, indicate that 18 out of 32 respondents (56.3%), acknowledge attention is being given to water provision in their district. This proves that local government in the Region is earnestly addressing the water problem. The results of Mkobola, Mbibana, KwaMhlanga, Mdutjana and Ekangala which were

historically well-supplied could mean that, despite the presence of water infrastructure in these TLCs, the recent supply to Moutse and Moretele has posed a problem since these newly connected areas get their supply from KwaNdebele sources. In this way, some villages in the former KwaNdebele TLCs experience a drying-up of the taps. So that the water need in the KwaNdebele TLCs is not equal to a lack hydro-infrastructure, but a shortage as a result of connection to new settlements and to Moutse and Moretele. In general, there is an indication that efforts are being made to meet the demand. An added advantage is DWAF's plans include finding ways to augment the supply so as to meet water needs.

5.4.1.3. Health facilities

The Regional tally shows that 28 out of 96 respondents (29%), indicate that there was a clinic under construction in their locality. Most of these construction projects exist in the municipalities that belonged to the territory of former KwaNdebele. The reason for this occurrence is attributed to the plans and contracts entered into by the former KwaNdebele administration. These construction works were either a product of unfinished work by the former KwaNdebele administration or TLC implementation of plans from the defunct government. In Moutse and Moretele where there is a great need, only few health projects were observed. Interviews with a number officials from the TLCs have indicated that most municipalities are aware of the fact that health services are the responsibility of the TLCs, However, there appears to be an understanding in most of these municipalities that the Provincial Health Department should provide health facilities.

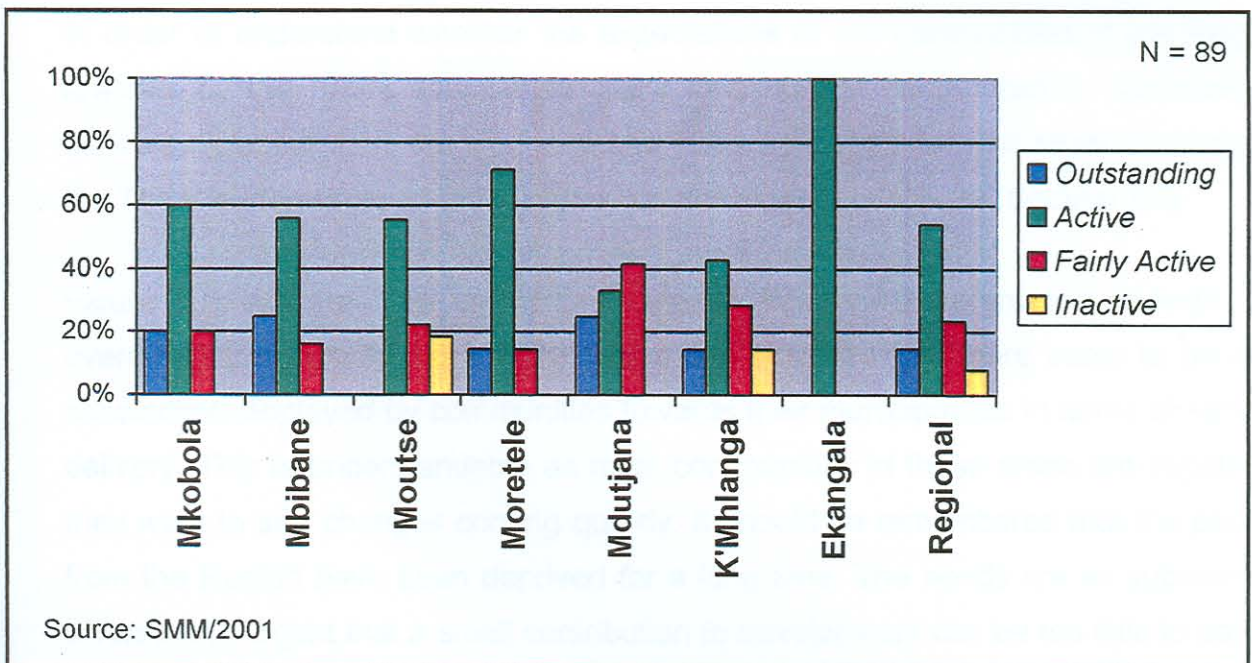
5.5. Community participation level

The RDP strategy encourages community participation in all projects. It advocates a people-driven change where communities take charge of their affairs. There is realisation by the communities of the Region that they need to be involved in the decision-making processes in community projects and that there needs to be a closer working relationship between the communities and the councillors because these communities have leaders and these leaders "*make things happen. They come from a variety of backgrounds each bringing unique resources*" (IRI, 1998:44). To ascertain whether local residents were involved in both needs identification and involvement in development projects respondents were asked pertinent questions

(Appendix 3A, Section 3). These issues test the effectiveness of synergy between decision makers in debate and policy matters.

In as far as physical involvement in projects is concerned, the majority of respondents (59%) indicated that local residents were involved in the local projects by way of providing labour for the projects. Mkobola claimed 50% involvement, Mbibane 53% Moutse 50%, Moretele 75%, Kwamhlanga 62% Mdutjana 70% and Ekangala 100%. Although there is evidence that reflects satisfactory community involvement in projects, particularly in Moretele, Mdutjana and Ekangala, there is also an indication that local contractors are not involved in the projects, most of the contract work is awarded to contractors from outside the villages. Asked to qualify their communities' participation in TLC matters particularly the identification of priority needs, respondents indicated (Figure 5.4) that, in general, they are active in local civic matters. There is a 54% indication in the Region as whole that communities participate in decision-making processes. Ekangala and Moretele show a high rate of incidence of active involvement.

Figure 5.4: Participation Level of Communities in TLC matters



5.6. Community expectations and satisfaction

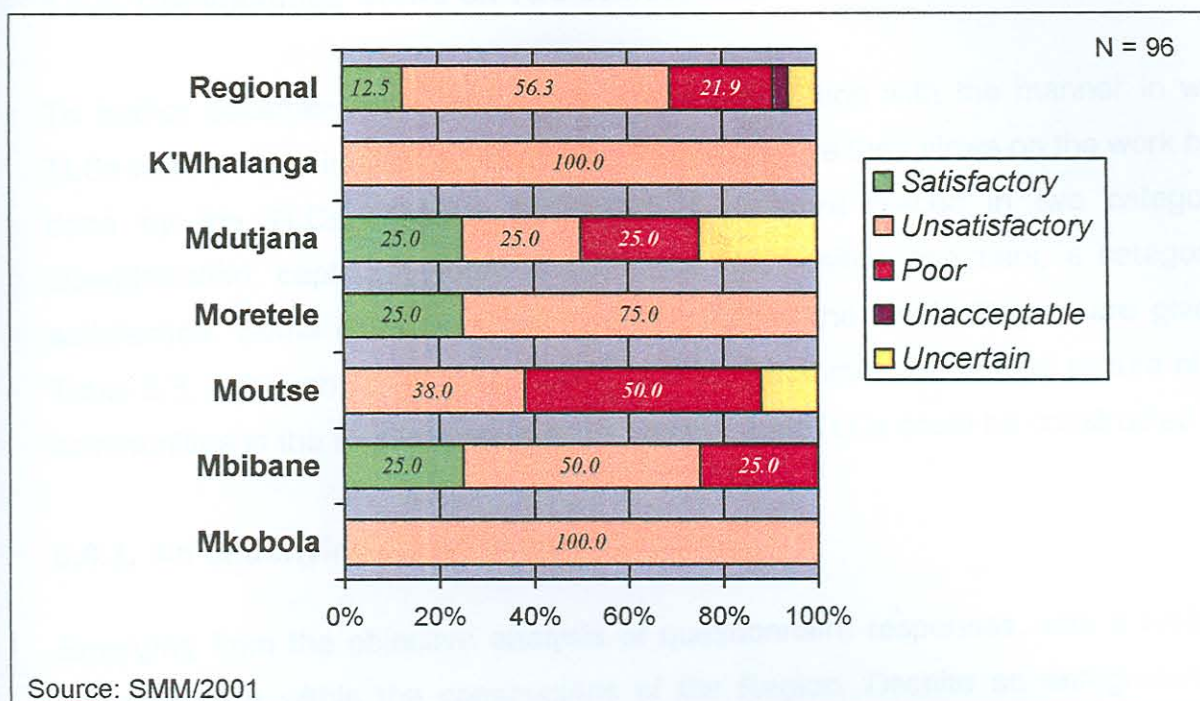
There is no doubt that the intentions of the new dispensation in South Africa are to achieve redress and equity in all fields of human endeavour. Equal to the task are the expectations of most South Africans who for the first time are called upon to shape their own destiny. These expectations are a legacy of a long and bitter history of deprivation and neglect. Communities across the lengths and breadths of South Africa expect municipalities to provide quality municipal services: commodities that were always privileges to them. In its mouthpiece, *Voice* (1999:4), SALGA (South African Local Government Association) observes that "... *some municipalities are unable to meet community expectations on service delivery. Provincial governments have intervened without much success to rescue [some] local councils. At the core is the continuing culture of non-payment of services by communities, absence of reliable revenue base for smaller municipalities, most of which are located in former homelands and failure by national government to determine the adequate share of national revenue due to local government*".

5.6.1. Community expectations with regard to service delivery

In order to understand whether the expectations of the communities of the Region are met by the newly established TLCs, and also to verify whether communities derive satisfaction from the work of these TLCs, respondents were asked to evaluate the TLCs' performance in terms of service delivery (Appendix 3A, Section 3.5).

Figure 5.5 indicates the different responses from the different respondents. An overall picture derived from these responses indicates that there seem to be less satisfaction displayed by communities towards their municipalities in terms of service delivery. This is understandable as most communities in these areas are impatient, they want to see changes coming quickly. It should be remembered that the people from the Region have been deprived for a long time. The needs are so substantial, diverse and urgent that a small contribution to development can be too little to satisfy the communities. However, a relative lack of satisfaction does not necessarily imply that the municipalities are not steadily delivering to meet the needs of the people.

Figure 5.5: Community satisfaction level with regard to service delivery



Data (Figure 5.5) proves that although there are few projects TLCs are attempting to do their bit. Unfortunately this is perceived by communities as too little. An interview with the Bantwane Traditional Authority on 25 August (referred below) indicates that, although there is little evidence in terms of service delivery, there is hope that more projects can be expected to be forthcoming.

Question: Can you give a comment about how you understand service delivery in your jurisdiction.

Answer: Very little is happening, except the construction of the school you passed as you came here (Plate 2). This is an old village, we still use candles to light our houses and fire wood to cook our food. We are however happy because our local leaders brief us about everything. We hope more projects are coming. We must be patient things do not happen overnight.

Several interviews with mayors in the Region give the impression that the local municipalities are not in control of the finances. This impacts negatively on the pace of service delivery.

5.6.2. Communities' views on TLC achievement

To further ascertain the level of community satisfaction with the manner in which TLCs were performing, respondents were asked to give their views on the work being done by the TLCs. Various comments given were placed in two categories: dissatisfaction, capturing negative comment and positive comment, a category of satisfaction. Some comments collected throughout the whole Region are given in Table 5.3. Although not all respondents provided comment, a general picture of how communities in the Region perceive the work of their TLCs could be constructed.

5.6.3. An underlying sense of dissatisfaction

Emerging from the objective analysis of questionnaire responses, was a feeling of dissatisfaction within the communities of the Region. Despite an antagonism that obviously results from a lack of provision of services to meet inhabitants' basic needs, the study uncovered concerns from communities that constitute another dimension of dissatisfaction with the TLCs. In an attempt to understand these problems, working relationships between TLCs and their constituencies were investigated.

Table 5.6: General comments about TLCs

Category 1 Comments	Category 2 Comments
1. Community does not benefit	1. Happy, something is happening
2. Projects are insufficient	2. Happy, we are involved
3. Projects are not according to priority	3. Happy our priorities are met
4. Delivery process too slow	4. Happy we are consulted
5. We are not involved	5. We need to be patient
6. Jobs are not created	
7. Nothing is happening	
8. No communication and consultation	
9. Promises not fulfilled	
10. National govt. should take-over	
11. There is corruption in the TLC	
Source: SMM/2001	

It was noted that, on one hand, TLCs were desperately attempting to address the needs of their communities, while on the other hand, there were communities who were aware of development plans and had participated in the prioritisation of needs.

When respondents were asked if they were aware of development plans for their areas, 64% of the 81 respondents indicated that they were. Also, asked if councillors are usually their line function of information, an interesting observation is that of the 96 (total sample of this study) respondents, only 37 responded to this question. 18 of the remaining 59 opted for other sources of information like the media and their organisational structures. This leaves 41 respondents who did not indicate their options. The significance of this observation is that the majority of the people (61.5%) do not have a communication relationship with their councillors. Many felt uninformed about municipal matters. Similarly just more than half (55%, n = 96) the respondents described their relationship with the TLCs as unsatisfactory or indifferent (Appendix 3A, Question 3.1). This is an alarming situation in the light of the ethos of the RDP that has as an ideal, an improved quality of life for everyone and that this be achieved through close co-operation and understanding between the authorities and the people. An interview with Mr Barney Mahlangu, chairperson of the Litho Traditional Authority on communication between communities and the TLC is revealing:

Question: *You have just indicated that the Witlaagte community which you serve has lodged a land claim on the Rust De Winter farm, were you assisted by the local council in your application?*

Answer: *No!*

Question: *Why not, is it because you did not inform them?*

Answer: *Our local TLC does not understand how to govern. They are not where the people are. We did the application ourselves as the Tribal office; as the leading institution of this community. Where can we find the councillors? You go to the TLC office they tell you they are in a meeting, you go back again they tell you they are gone to Nelspruit. Whom do they serve, ourselves or the office? You decide!*

Question: *Where do you think the problem lies?*

Answer: *I do not know. I think they (councillors) should improve their communication behaviour, they must come to the people and tell us about their programme we will support them they are our people.*

From this interview it is evident that there are weak bonds between the TLCs and the communities they serve. This is perhaps the genesis of apathy displayed by the communities of the Region. It should be noted that this is just a general picture — there are exceptional cases where the TLCs do communicate regularly with their constituencies. An example is Moutse. A number of stakeholders indicated that although very little comes in the form of projects, however, there are good communication links between the TLCs and the communities.

The facts presented and learnt from this research reveal that information from the questionnaire, several interviews and observations have assisted in defining the socio-economic and political situation prevailing in the Region. Firstly, data confirm that the Region requires certain basic needs: water, roads and health services. Second, there is confirmation from data that there are interventions that local government structures are initiating to meet the needs of their communities, despite handicaps. Third, evidence shows that the basic nature of the needs makes it difficult for communities to derive unqualified satisfaction from the efforts of the municipalities. Fourth, it emerges that communities are actively involved *"and they seem to be driving the process from the grassroots"* (Fairhurst *et al.*, 1999:124). Fifth, it is observed that weak communication links between councillors and their communities is a reason for the apathy displayed by most communities towards their TLCs. In the next and final chapter that follows, these observations will be collated and a conclusion will be drawn to establish whether there is sufficient evidence to support the central issue raised in the study.