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The Roles and Implementing Challenges of Public Participation in Municipal Service Delivery: A Critical Analysis of Mekelle city, Tigray Region, Northern Ethiopia

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Abstract : The purpose of the study is to assess the roles and implementing challenges of public participation in the municipal service delivery process and performance. A survey questionnaire, interview and focus group discussions were employed to collect the primary data. 382 questionnaires were collected from ordinary citizens, 8 interviews, and 3 FGD was also employed from local officials and CBOs and CSOs leaders in the city. Thus, it was a mixed research approach. Both parametric and non-parametric data analysis techniques were applied. The major findings are that the existing citizens' participation practice is not inclusive. The female and old aged groups are participating more than male and younger age groups. Similarly, citizens' with higher social connectedness (social networking) participate more than the other groups. Intermix of socially connected groups, respondents with older ages, female and high-income were found comparatively more connected than their other counterparts. Finally, citizens' level of participation determines their level of municipal service satisfaction. As such, results of the study reveal that with increasing level of awareness, income and access to networking platforms; peoples participation in service delivery has increased resulting a positive change. Results, thus, present a departure from a common understanding of low level of peoples' participation in service delivery and associated municipal governance.

Keywords: Citizens' participation, Social connectedness, Municipal Service Delivery.

Introduction

Nowadays scholars, development agencies, and international organizations recognize the twofold advantages of public participation viz. people get the timely service delivery demanded and facilitate the system to be more people friendly and accessible. It is, thus, a vehicle for achieving overall socioeconomic and environmental development endeavors across global, regional, and local governments. Participation is also an end objective by itself because it is among the basic human right which is included in the international covenants and national constitutions. Through effective public engagement programs, the process and outcomes of local planning, public policy and decision-making are expected to be more equitable, transparent, efficient, citizens oriented, and sustainable (Krishnaswamy, A. 2004). To be globally competitive and provide a good quality of life, cities need to deliver a wide range of services and infrastructure for their respective ordinary citizens. Thus, for urban areas to have demand-driven public projects and programs, it needs legitimate public participation and collaborative governance process. (Enid.S. and Andre. C, 2014). As such, effective public participation is representative of successful public sector reform programs that promotes equity and sustainable local development (Mezgebe, 2007). With all these crucial and comprehensive advantages, the local public participation process and performance face several challenges both in developing and developed countries. Hence, identifying the specific problems and providing actionable solutions calls for a detailed understanding through empirical study and literature experiences.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

The urban public needs are rapidly changing as society's become more diverse, fragmented, and complex. They expect the municipal services to deliver more accurately, better quality, faster but cost-effective. The ability to deliver more choice services, more transparency, and more accountability is needed to re-establish public trust in the municipal governance and public service

delivery process. The rationale for the decentralization and to have a participative government at the local level stems from a recognition that involving people in governance and service delivery processes makes local authorities accountable to their respective citizens for services and development in their area (Sirker and Cosic 2007). Unfortunately, many research studies conducted on the implementation of participatory governance and municipal service delivery in developing countries have exposed more problems and challenges compared to offering some feasible and workable solutions. Research made by World Bank (2007) In Ghana, citizens' participation in decision making and development planning in urban areas remains generally ad hoc, depending largely on the benevolence of a few assembly members. Similarly, findings of the study (Gwayi 2010) cited by (Makanyeza, Kwandayi, and Lkobe, 2013), asserts that poor public participation is rated among the vanguard problems that hinders public service improvement initiatives all over the developing world. In yet another research conducted by Saada A.Ali, (2017) in Tanzania. Electric supply also shows that municipal institutions adhere to the principles of good governance practices, but it does not abide by its Customer Service Charter which leads to poor service delivery and overall public mistrust on the municipal institution.

Likewise, a research result of Adigrat city of Tigray also shows largely the same result. About 80(62%) of respondents confirmed that there is no collaborative governance practice and officials are not open to the public.

From the above research results and the regional government Growth and Transformation Plan I (GTP I) evaluation report, it is clear that even though the federal and regional governments in Ethiopia took different initiatives and municipal service delivery reforms to improve participatory municipal governance and service delivery, there still remains the problem which is pervasive and requires immediate solutions and redressal of issues at hand.

Finally, though planners, developmental agencies and international organizations all encourage citizens' towards participation in local governance and service delivery process; its role is still debatable to many scholars. The most pressing issue is housing. Rents are increasing almost exponentially. When you're living on a budget and your rent increases on a lease renewal, it becomes very difficult to live there. Housing and community development are therefore the integral issues. Transportation is yet a big issue, as people struggle with ways to get around.

The issue of public participation demands a lot of communication and a lot of education. Elected officials often think they know it all, but the planning knowledge of community engagement allows us to hear other points of view as well. There is a need to build understanding and consensus in planning and urban governance.

1.3. Research questions

- How inclusive is the existing public participation practice of the city?
- What major factors are affecting citizens from participation?
- How the citizens' level of participation affects the citizens' level of municipal service satisfaction?

1.4. Research objectives

- To review the existing participation practice of the city in terms of inclusiveness.
- To identify the major factors which affect the level of citizens' participation.
- Analyze the relationship between the level of citizens participation and corresponding service satisfaction.

Related literatures

Public participation

In many works of literature in the field of study the terms “engagement”, “involvement” and “participation” have been used interchangeably. Similar approach has been used in a paper documented by (FAO, 1998). Accordingly, participation is defined as a “process of communication between local communities and development agencies, in which local people or ordinary citizens assume the lead role in analyzing their current situation to identify the need or problem requiring attention in order to plan, implement and evaluate development activities, and even implement and evaluate the quality of participation process itself”. Citizens’ participation in the context of new public management is defined as “an interaction of public administrators and citizens, concerned with public policy decision and public service delivery process” (Callaha, 2007).

According to the European Institute for Public Participation (2009), public participation can be described as a deliberative process by which interested or affected citizens, civil society organizations, and government actors are involved in policymaking before a political decision is taken.

2.2. Why public participation?

People’s participation in the public governance process not only enriches democracy by fostering citizens’ liberty and equality, but it also increases public transparency, enhance accountability, builds social capital, reduces conflicts, ascertains priorities in public goods and services, promote government legitimacy, cultivate mutual understanding among the ruler and ruled, or advances fairness and justice in the governance process and building trust among and within the participants, especially between the government at all levels and the ordinary citizens. (Box 1998; Putnam 2000; King & Martinelli 2005; Callahan 2007). Thus, effective people’s participation, especially at the municipal level enables citizens to set goals and priorities of their interest, supervise or monitor the actions of politicians and members of the city administration and hold them responsible and accountable for their decisions made and actions are taken.

According to the concept of a New Public Service, (Mindarti, 2007), put society as a citizen who has the right to be given the great quality of public services of the state. Citizens also have the right to protect their rights: their voices are heard, while values and preferences are cherished.

Sometimes helping government decision-makers and the public become more informed and an enlarged view of issues (Fung 2007). Public participation also supports having a more equitable distribution of limited public resources (Simonsen and Robbins 2000). Citizen involvement can also be a powerful source of ideas and motivations for social innovation and bureaucratic partnership; Citizens may be better positioned to assess the relevance and effectiveness of public services, so they can contribute much in the evaluation of public programs and service delivery processes and performance.

2.3. Public participation and municipal service delivery

One of the major reasons for establishing local government is to bring the government to the communities and it enables the local people can participate fully in the process of governance and it provides essential local services and thus speed up the pace of social, economic and political transformation (Amujiri, 2012). Citizens’ participation in the process of public service delivery may lead to better public services, which comply with the needs of citizens, better decisions, higher quality, and more efficient collaboration in using public money for public services.

A developmental local government is a community-oriented approach and its all programs, initiatives, and reforms are broad and inclusive. (Koteze and Kellerman 1997) insist that as a result

of these citizens oriented approach, the local government will encourage public engagement, and consequently support the programs and activities that seek to develop and benefit the mass residents.

Hence, effective and well-managed citizen participation will lead to a situation where the local sphere of government receives a valuable contribution from the communities and this will help in determining the quality and quantity of public services delivered Madumo, O. S. (2014).

Furthermore, citizens' has better ideas than the public officials about the service they need, so ordinary citizens can help local service providers to understand their needs, requirements and priorities which are vital solutions for their current and future problems. Similarly, citizens may become directly involved in the design and delivery of services, a process referred to as problem-solving collaboration, According to Helen E. Landemore,(2012) the ‘ ‘ Many Are Smarter than the Few’’

2.4. Arguments on the need for public participation concept

Different arguments have been stated by different authors or researchers to advocate or opponent to the citizen participation towards improved local governance and service delivery process and performance.

Those supporters of public participation are denoted by ‘People-centered’ the other side is also called ‘Authority Centered’; agencies should not be concerned that seeking public input means having to do what the public wants.’

Based on the people-centered view, citizens become active participants in the creation and implementation of the policies, decisions, and/ or any process which affects them. Citizens are capable individuals who are willing and able to take responsibility for their own choices, priorities, decisions, and actions, although one may say this is not always the case, i.e. unrealistic (Box, 1998; Robert, 2004 and Gaventa, 2006) who supports the people-centered view claimed that citizens are capable and efficient to participate in all aspects of local government matters of governance and public service delivery process and performance.

This is because people learned through participating and thus the educational element of participation (Robert, 2004) will make people more matured hence, participatory and people center governance is prominent for effective local governance and public service delivery process.

The proponents of citizens participation justify a lot of purposes for public participation; these may include: embodying the ideals of democratization participation and principles of inclusion; fulfilling legal requirements in the local governance process; improving social justice; enhancing social consensus; informing the local people about public decisions towards public problems and opportunities; analyzing and generating alternative solutions for local problems; and generating effective public policies, programs, plans and projects of having higher quality in terms of their content being they are demand-driven; in such policies, strategies, plans and projects the local citizens exert their all-round support in the implementation and evaluation process (Bryson et al. 2013). One of the important arguments for public participation is that it is an important end unto itself in a democratic society.

They have just noted the key role citizens' participation plays in reflecting and consulting local citizenship, the public, and the public values. Similarly, numerous other potential advantages of effective citizen participation are well documented; though public participation demands-resources such as skill, time and money of the participants, but can generate numerous advantages that significantly outweigh the expected cost of participation (Roberts, 2004; Feldman and Quick, 2009). Participants can contribute to the public decisions through providing new and generic information, different ways of seeing, public issue, and motivation to address identified problems

(Renn et al., 1993), sometimes helping government decision-makers and the public to become more informed and develop an enlarged view of issues (Fung, 2007).

Public participation can also support a more equitable distribution of limited public resources (Abers 2000; Simonsen and Robbins 2000). And it can create resources for future problem-solving and implementation to address new public issues by enhancing trust and legitimacy among the participants, building better relationships, and generating generic knowledge and interest about public policy issues and processes (Feldman and Quick, 2009; Ansell, 2011). Whether participation actually does produce these benefits depends on a number of factors which may from the local government side and/or from the participants side affect its contribution towards governance and service delivery process and performance.

Finally, the International Association for Public Participation IAP2 states that the benefits of public participation are better released through implementing effective and the best approach to engage for the purpose of audience and subject matter. The consequences of failure in policies, governance, and service delivery outcomes are costly than any investment costs of public participation embodied.

In contrast, based on the opponents or the viewers of Authority center, which are often supported by members of local government and elected or appointed officials, those who believe direct citizen participation is politically ‘naïve’, and governance mostly rests on informed and knowledgeable elite and it is more of nominal. Only a small group needs to be actively and directly involves in the public decision-making process. Some scholars such as (Crosby et al and Irvin and Stansbury, 2004; Yang, 2006), and Bowman and Kearney, 2007), argued that the local authorities focus on a limited scope or role for people’s participation in the decision-making process and the formulation of policies. According to Bowman and Kearney (2007) from the perspective of local government officials, people participation can be a nuisance because it may disrupt established routines.

Similarly, another researcher in the area of study has stated some arguments that prevent direct citizens’ participation in the local governance and service delivery process; (Stivers, 1990 and Fishkin, 1991) expressed how the modern societies are too complex, and it is very difficult for governments to support through face to face relationships. But in the normal experience, all participants do not require face-to-face communication among the participants.

(Clevel, 1986) believed participation is undesirable because it would be too expensive, too slow for public decisions and a waste of time for all the participants. Others also argue that most actively involved citizens might represent private interests that are very different than the broader mass interest. Moreover, the majority of local governments do not have the capabilities to manage the dynamic issues facing in the current modern society’s interest through direct participation. In addition, people are too busy with their private lives, including supporting their families, thus most ordinary citizens have no interest to engage and spent their precious time on public agendas. All these issues prevent direct participation to take place and make sense in local governance and service delivery process and performance.

According to Barber (1984), excessive citizens’ participation by the government increases political conflict among the participants; it also jeopardizes stability and social order. High expectations for direct participation are difficult to meet with the government, thus it creates alienation, low self-esteem, and distrust and this discourage participation of the people. Grisez Kweit, M., & Kweit, R. W. (2007) Revealed that citizen participation had no impact or a slight negative impact on satisfaction and legitimacy

Critics of participation argue that it is too complicated, costly, and time-consuming, and for them that there is no evidence that participation improves the process and outcomes in public governance and service delivery efforts; hence, the costs associated with citizens’ participation in the light of what it does deliver are not justifiable.

However, there are compelling examples and best experiences from around the world of what goes wrong in circumstances where citizens are not consulted, and similarly, positive cases abound of the gains derived from citizen engagement (Cornwall, A. 2008). Lastly, based on the literature in the field of study, it can be concluded that the most important element that different People-Centered or proponents of citizen participation in the public governance process from Authority Centered or proponents of participation views is the level of people participating in the decision-making process. This, of course, is about power. So members of the local government advocate for Authority Centered in an attempt to keep power for themselves, and to avoid sharing their power with citizens and other governance actors. On this view, power is under local government control, and they are not willing to confer power to the people.

On the other hand, with the people center, citizens seek to be involved in the decision-making process that directly affects their lives and pursue the redistribution of power. Indeed, public participation is difficult to bring into the argument because many researchers, development agencies, and international organizations put citizen participation as not something which is given as a donation from the local authorities rather it is an ultimate human right. Citizen participation in decision-making processes at the local government level is a fundamental human right, not a discretionary policy option that policymakers can implement at their whim. (Sepúlveda Carmona, 2003). Thus, regarding its contribution towards effective local governance and service delivery, this research paper has come up with findings from empirical evidence and literature experiences.



Figure.1-Conceptual Framework

Developed by the researcher from different literature 2020.

Research Methods

Participants for the study were selected using a systematic random sampling approach. The Mekelle city is divided into seven sub-city administrations and each sub-city is further subdivided into 3-4 Kebele /ward administration. The city, the sub-cities, and Kebeles/ ward administrations have their independent governance structure of having legislative, executive, and judicial organs. Two Kebeles/ ward administrations were taken randomly from each sub-city.

According to the city Bureau of Finance and Economic Development (2018), the city has a total population of 423, 72. Based on (Morgan. K, 1970) sample size determination table, 382 residents with ages of more than 18 years were considered for the study through systematic random sampling technique. A semi structured questionnaire was used to collect the quantitative data. An informative interview was also conducted with the mayor of the city, the head of the municipal council, and three sub-city administrators. Similarly, FGD was also employed with CBOs and CSOs leaders in the city. The mixed concurrent triangulation approach has been used to

mix the quantitative data and results collected from the survey with the qualitative data and results obtained from interviews and FGD.

4. Results and Discussions

4.1. Respondents' Profile

From the sample respondents, 194 or 50.8% are male and the remaining 188 or 49.2 are female; similarly, 189 or 49.5% are younger age /18-35 and 193 or 50.5% are older age group /36-68; economically, 113 or 29.6% are people within absolute poverty their daily income is less than 1.9 USD, 232 or 60.7% are poor and low-income group their daily income is between 1.9 USD to 13.00 USD and the remaining 37 or 9.7% are middle and high income group and their daily income is greater than 13 USD. This economic classification is based on the criteria used by World Bank (2019) in its report on the 'Revised Poverty Illustration for East Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa: A New Threshold'.

4.2. Respondents level of participation

During the survey, the respondents were asked whether they had participated in any of the municipal governance and service delivery processes during the past one year. They were further asked as to how often they were participating? In case of non participation, whether or not, they have an interest to participate? The results of the survey indicated that about 163 or 42.70% respondents were participating in municipal governance and service delivery process during the last 12 months. This shows that a sizeable proportion of respondents have participated in any of the municipal governance and service delivery processes.

These findings are consistent with the study result of Kimutai et.al(2018) which was conducted in the Kisumu county of Kenya. Similarly, the research findings of Papa, R. O. (2016) are also in line with results obtained in this study. Results of the study revealed that 52.3% of the respondents asserted that they were participating in project development activities in the Busia County of Kenya. In yet another study conducted by Safari, K.H. et al (2013) related to the Salamas city of Iran also reported similar results. The study revealed that about 70% of respondents were consistently participating in municipal affairs.

4.3. Inclusiveness as a measure of effective public participation

Research works in the field of study assert that inclusiveness is among the prominent legitimate measures of effective public participation (IAPP, 2007). However, the survey result revealed that the public participation process of the city has a critical challenge concerning inclusiveness. Of the total 163 respondents who have participated in the municipal governance and service delivery process, 114 or 70% were female, 119 or 74% were older-aged and 113 or 69% were the poor and low-income groups. This indicates that the male, the younger age and the two extreme economic groups have less level of participation. Regarding the economic status, survey results are also consistent with the Friedman's (2006) clarification in which he asserts that the poor cannot gain a voice through structured participation forums because they are usually disorganized. Additionally, they cannot participate as they are fully engaged in their day-to-day personal life. Unlike the poor of the poor people, middle and high income group people have relatively less level of participation, as they are busy in their daily business and do not have time to participate. However, they have an interest to participate, if they get an opportunity through convenient participation platforms like e-participation.

Based on the discussion with the key informants and the triangulation of the facts with the survey results, it is revealed that different factors are influencing the citizens' level of participation. The results revealed that the factors such as citizens' level of social networking or social connectedness, and citizens' level of public service satisfaction have a higher positive effect on the citizens' level of participation. FGD findings revealed further that the other major factor that create problem towards inclusive citizens participation are the non implementation of the networking

sites in peoples domain and limited provision of diverse channels of participation accessible to the diverse needs of the community.

4.3. Participation and social networking

As Putnam (1993), cited in Sisiainen, M. (2003) the social networking or degree of citizens' connectedness refers to what extent that the ordinary citizens are involved in the formal and local traditional associations. Accordingly, 218 or 57% out of a total of 382 respondents in the survey were not involved in any of the association or not a member of any social networking groups. Remaining 164 or 43% respondents were the members of any of the social networking platforms. There may also be a duplication to some extent, as anyone who is a member of any political party, may also be a member in any civic or local traditional associations. On the other hand, of 382 respondents of the survey study 163 or 42.7% were participating in municipal governance and service delivery process of the city for the last 12 months. Similarly, from 163 respondents who were participating 147 or 90% were a member of any social networking groups.

Table.1- Cross tabs of citizens' extent of participation and their social networking or social connectedness

			The extent of participation in municipal governance		Total
			Not participate	Participate	
Social networking /SN	Not member	Count	202	16	218
		% within social networking	92.7%	7.3%	100.0%
	Member	Count	17	147	164
		% within social networking	10.4%	89.6%	100.0%
Total		Count	219	163	382
		% within social networking	57.3%	42.7%	100.0%

(Source; Own: Survey 2019)

Based on the above table-1, a relationship between social networking or social connectedness and citizens' level of engagement in the municipal governance process has been worked out using Spearman's rho correlation coefficient. Results of the relationship have been displayed in table-1. The result revealed a strong positive correlation between the two variables, $\rho = 0.74$, $n = 382$, $p = 0.00$. With a high-level citizens' social networking, there will be a high-level of citizens involvement in municipal governance and service delivery processes. This is also consistent with the results obtained by Ganesh Prasad Pandeya, (2015). Results of the study asserted that with the establishment of vibrant social networks, there has been a positive impact on the citizens' level of participation in the local governance affairs. This reveals that the establishment of vibrant social networking has power to have effective citizens' participation in the local governance process.

Table.2- Spearman's correlation result between citizens' extent of participation and their level of social connectedness

Correlations				
			Social networking	The extent of participation in municipal governance
Spearman's rho	Social networking	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.743**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	382	382
	The extent of participation in municipal governance the last 12 months	Correlation Coefficient	.743**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	382	382

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

(Source; Own: Survey 2019)

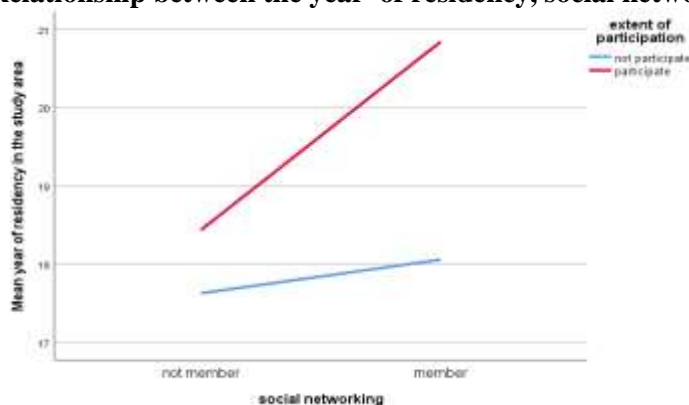
The survey result shows that of the total 194 male respondents 50 or 30.5% are members of any social networking group; but, of the 188 female participants in the survey study, 114 or 69.5% are members of any one of the social networking groups. Hence the survey result indicates women in the study area were more socially networked than those of the male gender group.

Similarly, results further indicate that the level of social networking increases with the age level. Relatively, higher socially connected age group is the 36-68 age group, which is about 62% of the old aged respondents. Most of the respondents in this age group are the members of any formal or informal social, economic, and political organizations. Contrary to the above, respondents in the lower age group 18-36 years, reflect relatively much lower 23% socially connectedness. Thus, demographically females and older-age group respondents have a better social connectedness than their other counterparts. Consequently, the level of participation in the municipal governance and service delivery process is relatively higher than the other demographic groups.

4.3.1-Social networking and participants' year of residency in the city

The other variable which affects the extent of participation and social networking is the year of residency of participants. It has already been concluded statistically that social networking or citizens degree of connectedness has a strong spill over effect on the citizens' level of participation. Number of years of residing in a locality (residency) is yet another factor that affects citizens participation in municipal governance and level of satisfaction derived from the service delivery by the local government. As such, citizens' year of residency affects social networking and the level of participation and vice versa. With an increase in the citizens' residency time in the city, they get a better chances to strengthen their social relations and connectedness. As a result, the extent and frequency of participation in municipal governance and service delivery process keeps on increasing. It is clear from the figure 2 that with an increase in the number of residency in the city, results in becoming a member of the organization and increase the chances of networking.

Fig -2: Relationship between the year of residency, social networking, and level of pp



(Source; Own: Survey 2019)

4.4. Participation and effective municipal service delivery

The correlation between citizens' participation and the effective municipal service delivery performance independent variables (demand-driven public projects and programs, improve service quality, timely accomplishment, improve a sense of ownership, and local resource mobilization). After full filling the necessary assumptions, Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient has been employed. The result indicates that there is a positive correlation between the variables. The level of correlation coefficient between the citizens' level of participation in the municipal-governance process and the independent variables of effective municipal service delivery

performance is in the range of moderate to strong. The level of participation in the municipal-governance process and demand-driven public projects and programs, the value being $r = .709$. The level of public participation in the municipal-governance process and improve service quality the value being $r = .467$. The level of public participation in the municipal-governance process and timely accomplishment, the value being $r = .496$. The level of public participation in the municipal-governance process and improve a sense of ownership, the value being $r = .653$. The level of public participation in the municipal-governance process and local resource mobilization, the value being $r = .666$. For all these variables number of observations are 382 and p value is $< .01$. Results, thus, imply that with the high levels of citizens participation in the municipal governance process (independent variable), there will be a high level of the municipal service delivery performance (dependent variables).

Table.3- Pearson's correlation between effective citizens pp and effective service delivery variables

		Correlations					
		1	2	3	4	5	6
Effective Citizens' pp	Pearson Correlation	1					
	Sig. (2-tailed)						
	N	381					
Demand-driven projects	Pearson Correlation	.709**	1				
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000					
	N	381	382				
Improve service quality	Pearson Correlation	.467**	.528**	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000				
	N	381	382	382			
Timely accomplishment of public projects & programs	Pearson Correlation	.496**	.802**	.482**	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000			
	N	381	382	382	382		
Improve sense of ownership	Pearson Correlation	.653**	.743**	.495**	.540**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000		
	N	381	382	382	382	382	
Local Resource mobilization	Pearson Correlation	.666**	.748**	.481**	.479**	.850**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	
	N	381	382	382	382	382	382

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

(Source; Own Survey 2019)

4.4.1 - The perceived level of government involvement in the governance process and participants' level of municipal service satisfaction

From a total 182 respondents, who were responding a negative responses that they are totally dissatisfied and unsatisfied by the service they get from the municipal government, 168 or 92% were replying a negative response that the municipal government is totally un-involved and un-involved in the governance process. Contrary to the above, from the 32 respondents who were replying that they are fully satisfied and satisfied with the service, they obtained only 1 or around 3% responded the government is uninvolved. These results clearly show how the citizens' perception of involvement is associated with the citizens' perception of service satisfaction. This is also parallel with research findings of Abraham (2013). The study result revealed that the citizens' level of satisfaction with service delivery is low. It shows that not more than 40% of ordinary citizens are happy with the current type of projects undertaken, the cost incurred in completing those projects, the completion rate and overall project management. This also corresponds with a low perception of citizens' involvement in the project management cycle. Thus, local officials like municipal leaders and city planners' need to consider the citizens as a vital resource that can

contribute to improving the quality of life through their involvement in the overall design, implementation and delivery of public services.

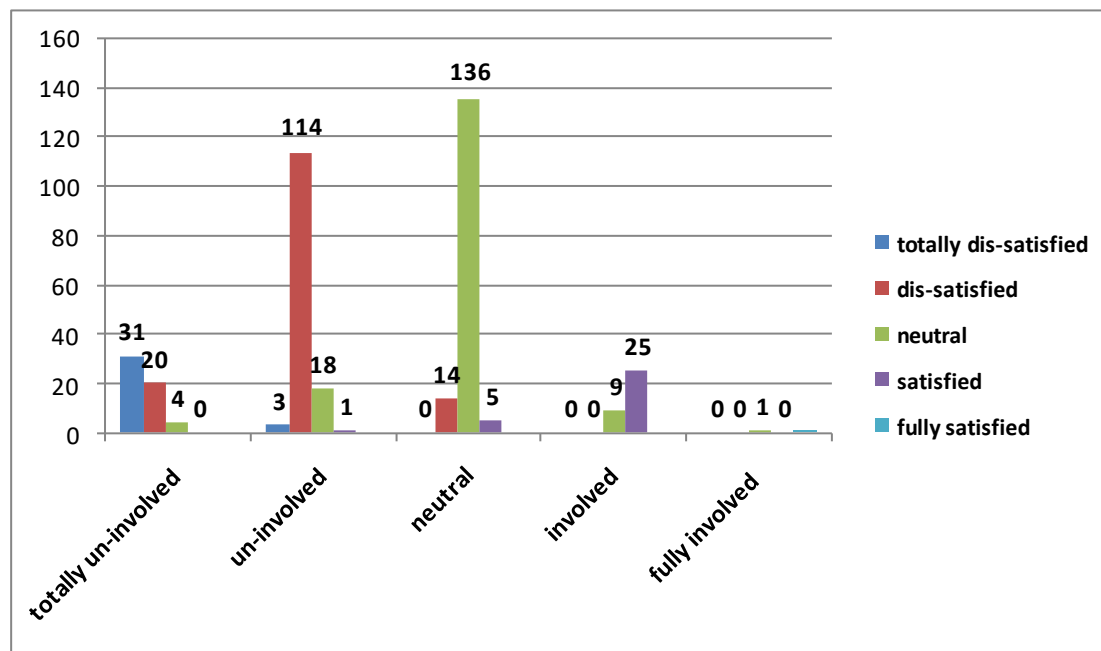
Table.4- Cross-tabulation between citizens perceived level of participation and service satisfaction.

How do you rate the current participation process of city administration? * How do you rate your level of service satisfaction with city administration? Cross tabulation?

Count		How do you rate your level of service satisfaction with the city?					Total
		TDIS	DIS	NET	SAT	FSAT	
How do you rate the current participation performance of the city?	Totally un-involved	31	20	4	0	0	55
	un-involved	3	114	18	1	0	136
	Neutral	0	14	136	5	0	155
	Involved	0	0	9	25	0	34
	Fully involved	0	0	1	0	1	2
Total		34	148	168	31	1	382

TDIS(Totally dissatisfied), DIS(Dissatisfied), NET(Neutral),SAT(Satisfied),FSAT(Fully satisfied). (Source; Own: Survey 2019)

Figure.2- Relationships between participation and citizens' perception of service satisfaction



Levels of citizens' service satisfaction and extent of participation in the governance process:

An attempt has been made to test the relationship between perceived levels of citizens' service satisfaction and the perceived extent of participation in the governance process using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation coefficient. Results obtained have been presented in table- 5. A preliminary analysis was performed to ensure that there is no violation of assumptions used in this analysis. To this effect the tests conducted include linearity, normality, and homoscedasticity. The result indicates that there was a strong positive correlation between the two variables viz. high level of service satisfaction and high level of perceived citizen participation in the governance process and vice-versa. The value being $r = 0.77$, with number of respondents being $n = 382$, and

the value of $p = 0.00$. Results also support the similar findings of Heywood(2007) which asserts that the effective cooperation of the municipal officials with the ordinary citizens could drive synergy where the optimal provision of public service better quality is achieved.

Table.5- Pearson's correlation test result of citizens' perception of service satisfaction and levels of involvement

Correlations			
		total_pp	total_ssar
Total perceived level of participation	Pearson Correlation	1	.778**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	382	382
The total level of Perceived service satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	.778**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	382	382

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

(Source; Own Survey: 2019)

4.4.2-Citizens' degree of participation and municipal service satisfaction

As indicated in the table-6 it is evident that of the total 163 respondents who replied that they were participating in the municipal governance process 47 or 28.8% are of level one or they have been informed what government decisions are / one-way communication; 83 or 50.9% replied that they are at the level two or consultation /two-way communication and 33 or 20% of the respondents have replied that they are at the level three or collaboration / deciding together.

Table.6-Cross tabs between citizens' degree of pp and perceived level of service satisfaction

Citizen participation in the municipal governance process * degree of pp Cross tabulation						
			Degree of pp			Total
			Inform= level 1	Consult =level -2	Collaborate =level-3	
Citizens pp in the municipal governance process	PP	Count	47	83	33	163
		%	28.8%	50.9%	20.2%	100.0%
Total		Count	47	83	33	163
		%	28.8%	50.9%	20.2%	100.0%

(Source; Own Survey: 2019)

Similarly, the correlation coefficient has also been worked out between the citizens' level of participation in the municipal-governance and its corresponding service satisfaction. The results have been presented in table-7. The correlation coefficient was worked out using Spearman's correlation coefficient. The result reveals that there is a strong positive correlation between the levels of citizens' pp and citizens' perceived service satisfaction $r=.637$ $N=163$, $p<.01$. It could be inferred that with a high degree of citizens' participation, there is likely to be a higher level of citizens' perceived municipal service satisfaction. Results of the study are in conformity with the findings of Bostance, B., and Erdem, N. (2000) in case of Nyagna township Cape Town in South Africa. Results of the study revealed that as citizens' level of participation in water governance increases from no participation to citizens' power of Arnstein's theory of participation; citizens' level of water service satisfaction also significantly improves.

Table.7- Spearman's correlation between citizens' degree of participation and perceived municipal service satisfaction

Correlations				
			Degree of pp	Service satisfaction
Spearman's rho	Degree of pp	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.637**
		Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000
		N	163	163
	Service satisfaction	Correlation Coefficient	.637**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
		N	163	382
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).				

(Source; Own: Survey 2019)

To confirm the stand of the result, the level of citizens' perceived municipal service satisfaction across the three degrees of citizens participation yet another exercise has been worked out using Kruskal Wallis H test. Results of the exercise have been presented in the table -8. The mean rank for the three degrees of pp were 51.19, 79.43, and 131.29 for levels of 1, 2 and 3 respectively with N=163; statistical result=70.44; df2, p=0.00. Based on the result, it is justifiable to reject the null hypothesis H_0 (of no variation) and to conclude that the extent of perceived citizens' municipal service satisfaction is significantly different across the three degrees/ hierarchies of citizens' participation process. Hence alternative hypothesis H_1 has been accepted explaining the marked variation across the categories of participation. Based on Arnstein's theory of the ladder of participation, citizens have to be encouraged/ promoted to get engaged and participate in ways that further up the ladder of participation and satisfaction.

Table.8-Kruskal Wallis H test of citizens' degree of pp and perceived level service satisfaction

Degree/ Hierarchies of citizens pp		N	Mean Rank
Perceived levels of citizen service satisfaction	Inform= level 1	47	51.94
	Consult =level 2	83	79.43
	Collaborate=level3	33	131.29
	Total	163	

Test Statistics ^b	
	Service satisfaction
Kruskal-Wallis H	70.444
Df	2
Asymp. Sig.	0.000
a. Kruskal Wallis Test	
b. Grouping Variable: the degree of pp	

5. Conclusions

Citizens' level of participation in the study area is not inclusive. The male, the younger age and the poorest groups have comparatively less level of participation as compared to their other counterparts. The main reason to have less participation is because of their poor level of social connectedness, deprived municipal service satisfaction and lack of diverse channel of participation by the municipal government.

Relatively female, older aged and higher income groups of respondents are more socially connected than the others. Similarly, citizens' year of residency also has a positive effect on citizens' social networking.

The study has critically investigated the roles and implementing challenges of public participation in terms of municipal service delivery process and performance. Though, the debate for the need of public participation in improving municipal service delivery process and performance took a long time; this study confirms the positive role of citizens' participation in municipal service delivery for Mekelle city of Ethiopia. Those citizens with a higher level of involvement in the municipal governance process also have greater perceived service satisfaction and vice-versa.

The findings of this study have significant implications to urban managers and city planners to have an effective public participation towards collaborative governance and effective municipal service delivery.

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