



The Forgotten Roles and Importance of Traditional Leaders in Rural Communities: Does the Government Still Care?

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Abstract

The traditional leadership in South Africa is an imperative body historically and politically. Nevertheless, throughout the years their significance wrangled debates and thus not everybody concurs or sees them as role players. Given these, intensive research has been conducted on the parts and functions of traditional leadership in South Africa. With various legislations such as the White Paper to provide for the existence of traditional leadership. This paper, in this manner, points out the overlooked roles and functions of the traditional authorities and forecasts how the government has placed a blind eye on the traditional authorities. To showcase the views of traditional leaders in the rural areas and to highlight the conceivable ways for the government to incorporate the traditional authority within the governance forms in today's life and show the strength of transformation of traditional leaders through the Transformational leadership theory.

Keywords: *Traditional Leadership; Rural Communities; Municipality; Public Participation; Governance; Post-Apartheid; Transformational Leadership Theory*

Introduction

Traditional authorities in the pre-colonial times, or before democracy; performed tasks, and functions and had responsibilities in their communities or societies. These functions were to safeguard the community, safety, and security, provide safety to the tribal authority, land distribution and allocation of the administration of justice, and provision of spiritual leadership (Mashele, 2004 citing Naudascher and Kgathanye, 1997). Therefore, traditional leaders have had a place in the South African sphere of authority in the communities. However, it cannot be disregarded that during the colonial times they were only used for the British interests and rules, interestingly they had roles. As Mashele posits that they had a role to serve the people but at the same time to minister to the colonial's interest.

Despite the struggles of the apartheid era, the traditional leaders found foot to also play part in the struggle formations for the “long walk to freedom” democratic of South Africa. Kompi and Twala, argue that it is an undeniable fact that the traditional authorities have had their fair share of contributions towards the fight against the minority rule as much as the African National Congress (ANC) (Cited in Mathonsi and Sithole, 2017). The authors further add that although they lack recognition for the role they played, they still play a pivotal role in the lives of the South Africans to this day. Traditional leaders at the grassroots levels have achieved more than can be counted, and the results can be seen through the number of factors rural communities have managed to uphold until now.

Given the roles they play in the communities, they are the stakeholders in the local government and for effective participation, they must also be included in the government's activities (Tlou, 2020; Ragolane and Malatji, 2021). However, the problem appears when they are not seen as important anymore, or when the post-apartheid legislation still denies the existence of a traditional leader for a traditional community to be recognized by the government (Weeks, 2019). Traditional leaders in the South African communities have a place and must be regarded as such, this also goes for the new modern era. According to du Plessis (1999) research has indicated that in various jurisdictions where the traditional leaderships were removed, abolished, or interfered with by the government, the intended results were not achieved. Furthermore, he mentions that the traditional leaders have continued to exist, notwithstanding such interventions.

As Koenane (2017) writes, South Africa should be true to the principles and traditional values that have kept it authentic and unique. The institution of traditional leadership has shown resilience throughout the ages, and while political dispensations with their ideologies have come and gone and will continue to come and go, I think that the institution of traditional leadership – which has been the rock of traditional governance – will endure.

Indeed, South Africa must remember where it came from and where it is headed. It is therefore wise for the government to recognize the traditional leadership if the rural areas are to be ruled and governed with peace and stability; in addition, it is preferable for the traditional authorities to be included and to be given positive and constructive roles (du Plessis, 1999). Various research still states that a lot of people in communities still trust and are deeply embedded in the traditional authorities. With that said, the traditional leaders are the *sine qua non* for good governance in rural areas (Koenane, 2017)

Conceptualisation of Traditional Leadership

Traditional leadership is a term where people first think of customs, traditions, cultures, and indigenous authority. In that case, what is a traditional leader? According to Mthandeni (2002), a leader is someone who occupies a throne, and a stool of an area by the virtue of their ancestry where they have been appointed by the customs and traditions of that area and they, therefore, have authority over the area and the people through the appointment of instrument and order of the government to exercise authority over the area and the tribe. Nonetheless, traditional authorities or leadership is a complex term, which is known by distinctive terminology, Ncube (2015) mentions that it cannot be denied that traditional leadership has existed and still exists around the world, just with different terminology.

Research has indicated that the definition of traditional leadership is a complex one since it does not prescribe a universal form. According to Lutz and Linder, cited by Dubazane and Nel (2016) traditional leadership is “an institution that includes political, socio-political and politico-religious structures which are rooted in the pre-colonial period rather than in the formations of colonial and post-colonial states”. Dubazane and Nel, further state that there is a considerable amount of debate around the role of traditional leadership within a democratic government in Africa. Traditional leadership, however, across countries would have distinct roles and would be seen differently in their context of customs and

traditions. Lutz and Linder (2004) state that in Latin America, Africa, and Asia traditional leaders are seen as leaders of communities and are described as chiefs and elders, whereas in the European countries they are referred to as kings.

Dubazane and Nel (2016) go through different scholars' arguments and ideas, firstly being Ntsebeza (2004, 2006) views the traditional leadership as being undemocratic and no longer relevant, secondly, Mwalukomo and Patel (2012) also are against it stating that it excludes women. The authors further add those of support (Keuder, 1998; Lutabingwa, et al., 2006; Ayittey, 2010) they posit that there is a democratic aspect to the traditional systems as they do not permit or allow those in rule to make decisions without consultations. Sithole and Mbele, (2008); Ayittey, (2010) add that advocates of traditional leadership still be that traditional leadership is an organic form of African democracy and that it is possible to accommodate it in the western style of democracy given the correct arrangements.

On the other hand, the current form of traditional leadership has been reduced to conform to the colonial bureaucratic systems and western culture, notwithstanding the institution has survived hardships such as colonialism and apartheid, however, it remains a functioning institution in parts of the South African provinces (i.e. Limpopo, KwaZulu Natal, North West, free state, and eastern cape (Ayittey, 2010; Beall, Mkhize and Vawda, 2005, Cook, 2005, Mwalukomo and Patel, 2012 in Dubazane and Nel, 2016).

In South Sudan just like in South Africa, traditional leadership is indicated by terms such as elder, chief, headman, sub-chief, prophet, etc (Babal, 2006 in Hoehne, 2008). Traditional leaderships are not a creation of the electoral process but are based on tradition and culture, where the role is inherited or appointed unlike the modern democracy of the electoral process. In South Africa alone several traditional authorities are still operational such as the Queen Modjadji (of the Balobedu Tribe), and The Zulu king (of the Zulu ethnic group). And these leaders have had a role to play in the democratic form of society.

Theoretical Framework: The Theory of Leadership

Shai (2017) examined and discussed leadership with governance for the delivery of services in the Tubatse Municipality. Within that discussion, he mentions that "in the present day, South Africa is perceived as a country for hope, democracy, and transformation globally." He further cites the African Leadership Summit in Johannesburg in March 2006, where Rev Jesse Jackson commented that: "because you have had this marvelous transformation and because your scars of apartheid have been turned into stars, you can now be a leader globally" According to Shai, Jackson added that leadership is a calling for integrity, responsibility, visionary, honesty, and accountability. Another quote he added was by Vicencio and De Soto (2006) "leadership is measured by the size of the cause, not the crowd". Additionally, South Africa represents the global community whose beauty outshines its ashes, credibility, and moral authority around the world (Shai, 2017).

While leadership is one of the most complex phenomena, which various researchers have shared their views on. This paper, therefore, is primarily trying to associate the leadership criterion with the traditional authorities, their roles, and their importance in society. It is therefore important to assert a theory that emphasizes the traditional leaders, thus enabling their form, tradition, customs, and most importantly history and what they still stand up for in the modern era. This is because traditional leaders are what most countries or societies have been built upon until the new dispensation.

Transformational Leadership Theory

According to Northouse (2001), transformational leadership is a process that includes changing and transforming people. This theory is built upon the transactional leadership style because it does motivate followers, however, does not give intellectual stimulation or individual consideration to

individuals, which is where transformational authority comes in (Bass 1985, in Kest, 2007). This applies at all levels of organizations, from bottom to top approach and from top to bottom (Kest, 2007).

Transformational leadership, in other words, is the ability to induce individuals to need to change, improve, and be led. It includes assessing associates' motives, fulfilling their needs, and valuing them (Northouse, 2001). Rada (1999) in Kest (2007) sets that where substantive change is required, transformational leadership gives moral elevation. Concurring to Kest (2007), the definition of transformational leadership has advanced, adding that Burns (1979) has pushed that in a transformational setting, the leader and followers have common objectives, and both rely on their motives in to attain the required objectives. They too raise themselves to the next level of accomplishment and inspiration.

In the traditional leadership, where the role was to guide and instil order in communities, traditional leaders have managed to provide this without failure. While their leadership is derived from the culture, tradition, and beliefs it has proven to have made what the communities are to this day. Adding to this the government mandate of the Transform and development at the grassroots level involves traditional leaders as per the constitution and statutes. Provided that this is adhered to and to avoid the inclusivity of this function does necessitate good democratic governance where legal culture, rule of law, participation, etc are promulgated.

Rapatsa (2015) asserts the views of Osborn, Hunt, and Jauch (2002) that leadership should be construed as an emerging social construction embedded in context and should not only be concerned with the incremental influence of a superior toward subordinates, but it is also crucially about the collective incremental influence of leaders in and around the system. And because South Africa opted to democratize, traditional leaders must be assessed according to the context of systems of democratization and societal expectations arising thereof. This is achievable when we employ the transformative leadership theory, necessitated fundamentally by transformative constitutionalism influencing democratic governance systems”

The institution of traditional leaders has been beneath debate for numerous years, within the South African democracy, where their commitments and roles have been neglected within the current times. Whereas others have seen them as undemocratic or unfriendly to democracy (Ngcobo, 2016). This theory, subsequently, gives that the traditional leaders are not as it were what the new systems describe them to be but a powerhouse that “possess keen sense of purpose, moral trust, empowerment to others, values, and principles, and embed visionary authority” Reddy (2007) and Ndebele (2007) in Rapatsa (2015).

The argument provided within this theory is that the transformational government that South Africa sought to have especially at the grassroots levels ought to be incorporated withinside the traditional leaders. In the end, Rapatsa (2015) citing Bass and Steidlmeier, (1999) posits that, hence, leadership largely rests on morally legitimate value in the person who never deliberately act in bad faith.

He further adds that these standards naturally join angles of identity and character into leadership theory, rendering it a comprehensive phenomenon that requires an appreciation of material conditions and individual capabilities and demeanors to circumstances. In this process traditional leaders embody the a) idealized influence, b) inspirational motivation, c) intellectual stimulation, and d) individual consideration. The setting of South Africa’s transformative democratic governance system impliedly places transformative leadership theory as that which needs those performing public functions or whose activities influence the rights and/or interests of communities got to be transformative leaders (Rapatsa, 2015). In accord Shields, (2010) in Rapatsa, posits that, It is destined for safeguarding social justice, redistributive justice, democracy, social transformation, the culture of justification, access to educational opportunities, and wider social welfare services. Its prime objective is to propagate for leaders to yearn for an equitable and just society where people’s humanitarian needs are fulfilled.

Literature Review

The Role of Traditional Leaders in Rural Communities

Traditional leaders have had roles to play especially in the rural communities as per transformative leadership, and these roles have had an impact on the way of life of the people living in those areas. There is extensive research done on the roles of traditional leadership since the democratic dispensation from Mashele (2004), Kest (2007), Bizana-Tutu (2008), Nxumalo (2012), Baloyi (2016), Koenane (2017), and Ntonzima and Bayat (2012), these researchers have argued that the traditional leaders have a role to play in the local government and deserve recognition.

Section 211 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) states that, the institution, status, and role of traditional leadership, according to customary law, is recognized, subject to the Constitution. A traditional authority that observes a system of customary law may function subject to any applicable legislation and customs, which includes amendments to, or repeal of, that legislation or those customs” ...and.... The courts must apply customary law when that law is applicable, subject to the Constitution and any legislation that specifically deals with customary law”

The traditional leadership roles are envisaged in the white paper. According to Khonou (2009), the White Paper was a culmination of a lengthy process wherein the country engaged in a dialogue regarding the role and place of the institution of traditional leadership in contemporary South Africa as a democratic state. The key objectives of the White Paper centered on the principle of creating an institution that is democratic, representative, transparent, and accountable to the traditional communities. It, therefore, poses that the House of Traditional Leaders shall:

- (a) Advise government and participate in developing provincial policy impacting rural communities.
- (b) Advise government and participate in the development of provincial legislation that impacts rural communities.
- (c) Participate in national and provincial programs geared toward the development of rural communities,
- (d) Participate in provincial initiatives meant to monitor, review, and evaluate government programs in rural communities.
- (e) Advise the provincial government on the customary interests of traditional communities; and
- (f) Perform tasks as may be determined by a member of an Executive Council of a Province or as may be provided for in provincial legislation.

While this is not the only set of legislation that shows the roles of the traditional leadership, according to Mashele (2004) the white paper favors the process where the traditional leaders are consulted on the issues of development, regarding them as advisors to local government and mobilizers of their people. In the rural areas, traditional authorities’ Traditional leaders assume responsibility for prevention, detection, and punishment of crime, efficient use of labor resources in his area, eradication of noxious weeds; preservation of fauna and flora; use of water supplies; protection of public property; monuments and other historical objects; rehabilitation of land; prevention of soil erosion and overstocking (Hartman et al, 1993 as cited by Ntozima and Bayaat, 2012).

Ntonzima and Bayaat (2012) further cite Hartman, that Traditional leaders report the event of contagious or infectious diseases among individuals or animals, unnatural passings of individuals and wrongdoing; the unauthorized presence of non-natives; unauthorized occupation or cultivation of land; the presence of criminal trespassers; unlawful ownership of arms, ammo, alcohol, unsafe or habit-farming drugs, distributions, and handouts; the unauthorized collection of benefits, demands or other. Traditional leaders have played imperative formative, authoritative, and political roles in provincial areas. The underlying preface for these roles is that they speak to the ethnic units and are the closest authorities to the people. Traditional leaders act as culture bearers and overseers of traditions as an image and agent of

the group's collective identity, the traditional leader is anticipated to protect the group's legacy and guarantee its transmission from era to era. They also include the judicial role where they act as interpreters of customary laws and practices (Mthandeni, 2012).

According to the White Paper (2003) at a local level, traditional councils, as established by custom, will promote cooperative relations with local municipalities. The institution of traditional leadership can also participate in the municipal Ward Committees established in terms of national legislation. Traditional leaders will also continue to participate in municipal councils in terms of section 81 of the Municipal Structures Act No. 117 of 1998 until legislation providing otherwise is introduced. Traditional councils shall:

- (a) Support municipalities in facilitating community involvement in development planning processes.
- (b) Communicate community needs to municipalities and other spheres of government.
- (c) Recommend appropriate interventions to the government to bring about development and service delivery.
- (d) Promote indigenous knowledge systems for sustainable development.
- (e) Participate in the development programs of municipalities and other spheres of government; and
- (f) Participate in the development of policy and legislation at the local level

Mboh (2021) investigated the role of traditional leaders in conflict resolution in communities in Mahikeng Local Municipality, she posits that traditional leaders have a role in mediation and negotiation. In these communities the "*Lekgotla*" the aim was to bring unity and reconciliation to the communities among other things. Mboh, further adds that, although there are challenges, traditional institutions and traditional authorities still have the prospect and aptitude for effectively maintaining law and order, performing security functions, and fostering social cohesion in such small communities. Traditional leaders should be given due recognition and protection in the legislative arrangements in South Africa, and a policy should be shaped along those lines so that conflict resolution is not the exclusive ambit of the Western-court system.

Support from Government to Traditional Leaders

The government has a role in supporting traditional leaders and should not change due to the society we live in. Koenane (2017) mentioned that some ANC leaders were concerned about how rural communities were neglected, with O.R Tambo showing concerns that they have not done enough for the rural communities. Koenane posits that this statement could be interpreted from two perspectives: political and moral; that it was politically and morally the obligation of the ANC to alleviate poverty in the rural areas. Thus, instituting support for the traditional leaders to meet this obligation.

Nxumalo (2012) states the views of the government officials about the roles of the traditional leaders, the local government officials see the traditional leadership as an institution that must be considered within the local financial development and argues that the government encompasses a legislative command to incorporate all the role players within the affairs of the government.

In local government, the support of the traditional leadership through their complementary roles and set aside the conflict concerning "Who had the right to consult the community on development; who had the right to convene community meetings; who will manage the development funds; and finally, whose responsibility it was to ensure that the desired development took place" with the government officials Venson, Pelonomi ed (1996) in Ntonzima et al (2012). Nevertheless, the government must solve this conflict and other challenges arising within this sphere, given that:

Traditional leaders and local government institutions have complementary roles to play, such as, for instance, in service delivery to local communities. Traditional leaders remain intricately connected to

and are trusted by local communities. Traditional authorities are therefore important for mobilizing support and ensuring ownership of projects by local populations. In addition, traditional leaders can guide local governments on various policy issues at the community level. At the local level, traditional chiefs often intervene in matters such as housing; land distribution; providing support to obtain identity documents to confirm proof of residence for bank services; applications for social grants; and other basic government services. Furthermore, some specific activities of traditional leaders can be considered democratic. One example is the institution of Izimbizos, which illustrates a “consultation and consensus” Mashumba and Minzdie (2009).

According to the white paper (2003), South Africa’s transformation from undemocratic, unrepresentative, and unaccountable systems of government necessitated that all values, practices, institutions, and structures of governance, be reviewed in the light of the new order. Chapter 12 of the Constitution envisaged that this broad transformation of society would include the institution of traditional leadership, precisely because this institution has a critical role to play, especially in rural areas. It is the vision of government, therefore, to transform and support the institution of traditional leadership with the constitutional principles of democracy and equality and that it may represent the customary interests of communities, play a role in socio-economic development, contribute to nation-building, and be accountable.

In terms of administrative decentralization, the government has sought to include traditional councils’ informative local government, especially in rural areas where there were no elective structures in the past. For instance, being included in existing traditional councils and tribal courts are new government-sponsored traditional deployment centers, named “traditional” since they are set up beneath the aegis of local chieftaincies and in coordination with traditional structures of administration (Phindi, 2020)

Governments need to keep up a consistent discourse with their stakeholders as such interaction can cultivate effective participation. In the same way, the stakeholders would get it significance of consultation. For instance, in the past, the public division utilized the arrangement of information as a component to deliberate on the government’s exercises within the community. This interaction was adequate in the sense that the government was able to arrange for resources and time for a community to deliberate on issues (Phindi, 2020).

Methodology

Research methodology refers to a systematic way of gathering data from a particular population to understand a phenomenon in question and to further generalize facts obtained from a larger population (Cohen, et al 2000 in Ngcobo, 2016a). This study, therefore, applies a qualitative research approach to gather information and data from the study’s interest subjects. qualitative research method “...give real and stimulating meaning to the phenomenon by involving the researcher directly or indirectly in the process” (Taylor, 2005 in Ngcobo, 2016b). This study was undertaken in Relela and Kgwe-kgwe villages, under the Greater Tzaneen Municipality.

Study Objectives

To assess the role and responsibilities of traditional leaders in rural communities.

To understand the views of traditional leaders in rural communities regarding their involvement in municipal functions.

To provide recommendations on the support of traditional leadership roles.

Research Design

According to Leedy and Omrod (2005), a researcher must have a research design that simply put the planning as it entails the procedures the researcher must follow. A research design is a plan that describes the procedures and techniques the researcher is going to take when collecting and analyzing the data (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010, Ngcobo, 2016). As indicated this study will use the qualitative technique, to obtain data through interviews, observation, documents, etc.

Target Population

This research focuses on individuals who hold the leadership position in the traditional houses of the Relela and Kgwe-kgwe in Bolobedu. Jha (2014) in Ngcobo (2016) posits that the research population refers to the group under which the study has identifies based on characteristics, interest, and relation to the study. The age range of the participants was between the ages of 40 to 60 plus. The population was therefore chosen as per knowledge on the idea of being insightful to the study and being affected by the problems identified. The study population for this study was the traditional leaders or headmen of the communities.

Method of Data Collection

This study adopted the qualitative research method for data collection, where it produces descriptive data including people won words (Brynard and Hanekom, 1997). This method establishes what people do, think, know, and feel by observing, interviewing, and analyzing documents (Patton, 2002 in Shai, 2017). This method is used to gather the information and insights from the traditional leaders.

Research Techniques

Interviews

The researchers used interviews as a data collection technique from the municipal officials. The study used in-depth interviews to gather information from the participants, this allowed the researchers to have secure, profound conversations and proper generation of data (Morse, 2002 cited by Mdlalose, 2016). The one-on-one interviews were conducted with the traditional leaders in the communities. The semi-structured interviews were chosen as a technique to collect data because the views and ideas of the participants were linked to the interpretations of their responses and the responses from the interview were noted so that the researcher can thoroughly read to identify the related patterns in the responses (Ragolane and Malatji, 2021).

Sampling Technique

They used purposive sampling. Using this sampling the participants were selected based on their characteristics which made them important holders of the data the researcher is seeking (Lesia,2011). According to Tongco (2007) in Ragolne and Malatji (2021), a purposive sampling approach is a form of non-probability sampling this is simplest when one desires to have a look at a positive cultural area with informed specialists within and grant a permit to the choice of people who are of a view to validate the studies and offer records. This included the traditional or the headman in the communities of Relela and Kgwe-kgwe.

Research Question

The roles and functions of traditional leaders are important, and the government is on the rule to bring the government closer to the people, or the grassroots level. Traditional leaders are also a way to incorporate this strategy, as they are seen in their communities as the regulation shape of the government closest to them. It is therefore provided that the traditional leaderships have a positive role to play in arrangement and development improvements, especially in the rural communities. Therefore, is there a need to neglect traditional leaders in the enumerating approaches, decision making, organizing, or the utilization of approaches or their existence in general?

Data Analysis

This study analyzed a thematic analysis as a process to reduce the large amounts of data collected to make sense of the data (Ragolane and Malatji, 2022). The data were then grouped in terms of patterns from the responses of the participants. In this study, the data was collected and analyzed into themes, through this the data was organized, categorized, and summarized. The data that was collected was thoroughly read based on the questions and responses of the participants to understand the state of the answers the respondents gave. Using the thematic analysis, the data that was the same from the participants were grouped into the same categories. This enabled the researcher to have a more clear and more elaborative data reporting.

Results

The Roles and Responsibilities of Traditional Leaders in Rural Communities of Kgwe-Kgwe and Relela

The first respondent was the headmen's traditional leader's, assistant. When asked about his role as a traditional leader, He responded that they work hand in hand with the headman, they are involved in the solving of family differences. He also adds that they work with the councilor, sometimes for example when there is a project such as road construction.

The councilor also comes to the "kgoro" and informs the "Nduna" about the projects, he further mentioned that when there was a road construction recently in the village, the councilor came and introduced themselves and hired people during the meeting in the "kgoro" and when there was a water articulation project, they were invited to the headmen to attend a meeting. The headman of the Kgwe-Kgwe Village responded the same, that they do solve family issues and that when there are services that must be provided to the people, they make sure the community gets that information. He further stated he guides the community to be firm and as a leader makes sure that the people do live in a good space without problems.

Capacity and Support of Traditional Leaders

The municipality does not capacitate the communities to understand their right to participate in the municipal functions and to support the traditional leaders to help in this regard. The leader from relela entailed that the municipality and the council do not provide enough support for this engagement but do engage only for election. Therefore, showing that they only need the traditional leaders to call for meetings when it is for their benefit.

The leader from Kgwe-Kgwe stated that the roles and functions of the traditional leadership are to also enforce engagement in the municipal functions but that is impossible when they are not recognized. In terms of the municipality working with the traditional leaders, their relationship is blurred.

Perceptions from the Traditional Leaders on Public Participation

The Relationship between Councillors, Ward Committees, and the Traditional Leaders in Participatory Decision-Making Processes

The traditional authorities are identified as one of the important stakeholders in the decision-making process, thus their participation and relationships with the council are paramount. A question was asked on whether the council does engage, inform, and involve the traditional authorities on the issues concerning the community. The respondent from Relela Village responded that yes but sometimes they do as they please, however, the councillor does notify the community leader about the meetings and other activities that must happen in the community concerning the participation of the community for service delivery. He added by saying that that is the procedure the councillor must take as she cannot call for a meeting without informing the headman.

Therefore, the relation of inclusivity in the decision-making processes in Relela is fair sometimes as it is subject to issues of politics that lead to tokenism. In Kgwe-kgwe village the headman stated that he does not even receive reports from the councillor or does the committees notify him of the meetings about the village. He further added that the village in terms of working with the councillors a different story.

The community leader from Relela responded that in most instances where public participation must be effective, politics hinders those processes from being effective. The municipality, the councillor, and the ward committees are not fair when it comes to the issues of public participation. The officials only communicate or hire people in the hiding and then the public and even the community leaders are left in the shadows of the activities of the community.

Municipality's Involvement with the Traditional Leaders

The headman from Kgwe-Kgwe stated that the community has had problems of leadership in terms of community leadership, therefore further creating a problem of community engagement because of not having proper leadership in the area. The village now does not have stable leadership, even the ward committees are not committed to the community.

The Relela community leader said that the municipality neglects the villages, service delivery is only found in the areas next to the municipality, areas like NkowaNkowa, Matipane, and other surrounding places that are close to the municipality in town. The municipality forgets the villages and focuses on the town areas.

In the Kgwe-kgwe village, the headman responded that it is even worse since there is no participation at all. He mentioned that the community struggles in all aspects of service delivery and that has also led to having conflict between the representatives of the village.

The headman responded while shaking his head with a deep sigh said,

“The community is in the middle and of the fact that there is another” kgoro” in the village it has become difficult for the community to be involved, and this is also for the reason of not having any involvement from the rightful people.”

Issues in the village never get solved, and even when they could try there will never be people who participate in the village. Both respondents share the same sentiments that it affects issues of service delivery, like water shortages.

In these villages, there have been conflicts and protests between leaders, residents, and even officials. However, traditional authorities have been able to halt these incidences that even police officials could not solve.

The findings are in agreement with Koenane (2017) who indicated that nowadays, South Africa is experiencing political turmoil and instability to the point of destroying buildings; the worst example being the case where over twenty-two schools were destroyed by arson in Vuwani in Limpopo Province, which was not justifiable but was the result of dissatisfaction with service delivery in the area erupted in beginning of August 2015. Both elected provincial and local government authorities could not halt this vandalism and it was not until traditional leaders were invited to address the people and urge them to stop this destruction, because of traditional leadership's involvement, the violence ceased."

He further cites Kekana (2016), who also mentioned that in Vuwani, a small village in the Vhembe District of Limpopo whose existence remained unknown to many until recently, instantly shot to prominence when it erupted into violent protests in May. To date, many have come to know about it as that violent rural area in Limpopo where twenty-four schools were burned down in violent protests. But beneath the ashes of those schools' destructions lays an overlooked story about the role of traditional leaders in democratic South Africa.

Without a doubt, the mediation by amakhosi within the Vuwani protests illustrates that their authority is respected, and they are successful in settling genuine issues (Koenane, 2017). The issue of the traditional leaders not being recognized has also brought about the conflict amongst themselves in the communities, as the headman from Kgwe Kgwe revealed that the problems are deep that there are even multiple houses of authority since there are not given attention to their ruling and existence, coupled with political interest by political parties.

Study Limitations

Discussion

Recommendations

The traditional leadership in South Africa was promised to have the role and function in the democratic dispensation. Therefore, it is required to have the re-define itself within the framework of a democratic dispensation (Khonou, 2009). According to Mashele (2004) Despite having collaborated with past repressive regimes, the institution of traditional leadership is still relevant to most South Africans, especially those who live in rural areas. What is needed is for the institution to come to terms with democracy;

It is therefore recommended that that traditional leaders should not participate actively in politics, they should focus principally on pre-serving the customs of their respective communities, must make efforts to transcend tribal/ethnic barriers and contribute to nation-building, should make strides to promote the status of women, should continue to play an advisory role via the national and pro- financial houses of traditional leaders, and Should be restricted to an advisory and developmental role at the local government level (Mashele, 2004). Of importance, the roles and responsibilities as stipulated by the White Paper on Traditional Leadership and Governance (2003) such as arts and culture, land and agriculture, health and welfare, justice, security, and home affairs, economic development, environmental and tourism, natural resources management, information and customary functions must not exist through a paper but in practice, for better development, peace, and growth in our communities.

Conclusion

Traditional leadership is a transformational authority the government must be aligned with, in terms of all aspects of transformation in the rural communities. With that said, these roles are important and therefore should always be remembered, additionally, these are the roles in which the traditional authorities have had a dire pride and growth in bringing the communities together and developing through community engagements and participation. Overall, we grew up in a time when the community members and the traditional leaders would work together in creating better communities by contributing to having their water systems, building their bridges, and helping other families in need among other things. These are the things that hold and build a nation.

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