



Effect of Direct Citizen Participation on Delivery of Public Services in a Decentralized System

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Abstract: *The study was set to examine the influence of direct citizen participation on the quality of public service delivery in a decentralized system of governance. This study employed a cross-sectional research design on a population of 242 respondents selected using simple random and stratified techniques. A questionnaire was basically used as the tool for data collection. Findings were presented in summary tables and analyzed using the mean and standard deviation. A correlation analysis and regression were used to determine the association between direct and indirect citizen participation in service delivery. Results indicate a positive and significant relationship ($r = .273^{**}$; $p = .000$) between direct citizen participation and public service delivery in decentralized governments. Regression results indicate a beta value of 0.824, indicating that the two variables—citizen participation and public service delivery—are positively correlated. On the other hand, the B-value of 0.438 indicates that any unit change in citizen participation brings about a 0.438-unit improvement in public service delivery in decentralized systems of government. Conclusively, the study shows a strong positive correlation between citizen participation and public service delivery. Policymakers and government officials should prioritize promoting citizen engagement for better outcomes. Financial constraints, lack of expertise, disagreements on conflict, and discrimination are significant barriers to citizen participation. Addressing these issues can create a more inclusive and equitable system.*

Keywords: *Direct Citizen participation, public Services, decentralized system, Quality, Cross-sectional design*

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1. Introduction

Over the years, local governments have recognized the importance of providing quality service delivery to their constituents (Hoyer et al., 2020). This recognition has led to the implementation of various strategies and initiatives aimed at improving the efficiency and effectiveness of government services (Baiyere et al., 2020). From streamlining processes to investing in technology, local governments have made significant strides in ensuring that their services meet the needs and expectations of the communities they serve. Furthermore, they have also

prioritized customer satisfaction and have actively sought feedback from citizens to continuously improve their service delivery (Baiyere et al., 2020).

Citizen participation plays a crucial role in ensuring quality service delivery in America (Abimbola, 2019). By actively engaging citizens in decision-making processes and soliciting their feedback, government agencies can better understand the needs and preferences of the public, leading to more effective and tailored services (Abimbola, 2019). Additionally, citizen participation fosters transparency and accountability, as it allows for greater scrutiny of government actions and ensures that resources are

allocated efficiently to meet the demands of the population (Abimbola, 2019).

In the East African contexts, as governments strive to provide efficient and effective services to their citizens, active engagement and involvement of the community become essential (Spitzer & Twikirize, 2023). This involvement can take various forms, such as participating in public forums, contributing to decision-making processes, and monitoring the implementation of projects and policies. Ultimately, citizen participation not only promotes transparency and accountability but also helps in identifying and addressing the needs and concerns of the people, leading to improved service delivery (Spitzer & Twikirize, 2023).

Uganda has made significant progress in promoting citizen participation and improving the quality-of-service delivery (Waddington et al., 2019). The government has implemented various initiatives and policies to enhance citizen engagement, such as the decentralization of power to local governments and the establishment of community-based monitoring systems (Waddington et al., 2019). These efforts have resulted in increased citizen involvement in decision-making processes and improved accountability in service delivery. However, challenges still remain, including limited awareness among citizens about their rights and responsibilities, as well as persistent issues of corruption and inefficiency in service provision. Continued efforts and investment in strengthening citizen participation and addressing these challenges are crucial for further improving service delivery in Uganda (Waddington et al., 2019). However, citizen participation in local governments in Uganda is currently limited, with many communities feeling excluded from decision-making processes (Waddington et al., 2019). This lack of involvement has led to a disconnect between the needs and priorities of the citizens and the services provided by local governments (Waddington et al., 2019).

Iganga municipal council perceives citizen participation as a national and legal practice linked to development, but also state-building and deepening democracy as reflected in chapter 1 article 1-4 of the constitution, 1995. The municipal council's desire to give citizens what they want is not a problem. Despite efforts to promote citizen engagement, there is still a lack of active participation from the community. This has resulted in inadequate service delivery and limited access to basic amenities such as clean water, sanitation facilities, and healthcare services. Additionally, there is a need for improved transparency and accountability in the local government to ensure efficient allocation of resources and better service provision for the residents of Iganga Municipality. This issue has led to widespread dissatisfaction among the residents, who feel that their voices are not being heard and their needs are not

being adequately addressed. Efforts to improve citizen participation and service delivery in Iganga Municipality must be prioritised in order to ensure a better quality of life for its residents (Monitory and Evaluation Report, 2014). This study therefore sought to establish the influence of citizen participation on quality of public service delivery in a decentralized system of governance in Iganga Municipal Council, Iganga district.

Purpose of the Study

The study was set to examine the effect of direct citizen participation on public service delivery in in Iganga Municipal Council, Iganga district.

2. Literature Review

Direct citizen participation enhances public service delivery in several ways. Firstly, it allows citizens to have a say in the decision-making process, ensuring that their needs and concerns are taken into account (Petunia & Selepe, 2020). This helps to create more inclusive and responsive policies and services. Additionally, direct citizen participation fosters a sense of ownership and accountability among citizens, encouraging them to actively engage and contribute to the improvement of public services. Ultimately, this leads to better outcomes and a stronger connection between the government and the people it serves (Petunia & Selepe, 2020).

Citizen participation also promotes transparency in governance by allowing citizens to witness and understand the decision-making process. When citizens are involved in the development and implementation of policies, they are more likely to trust and support the government's actions. This trust is crucial for maintaining social cohesion and stability within a society. Furthermore, citizen participation can help identify and address systemic issues and inequalities that may otherwise go unnoticed. By giving a voice to marginalized communities and underrepresented groups, the government can work towards creating a more equitable and just society (van Noordt & Misuraca, 2022).

In addition, citizen participation can also enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of policy-making processes. When individuals from diverse backgrounds and perspectives are included in decision-making, a wider range of ideas and solutions can be considered. This can lead to more informed and comprehensive policies that better reflect the needs and aspirations of the entire population (Levin, 2022). Moreover, citizen participation fosters a sense of ownership and responsibility among the public, as they feel empowered to contribute to the

development and implementation of policies that directly affect their lives. This can result in increased compliance and cooperation with government initiatives, ultimately leading to more successful outcomes (Levin, 2022).

Furthermore, citizen participation can help to identify and address the specific challenges and inequalities faced by marginalized communities. By involving individuals from diverse backgrounds and perspectives, policymakers can gain a deeper understanding of the unique barriers and obstacles that certain groups face. This knowledge can then be used to design targeted interventions and policies that address these inequalities and promote social justice. In addition, citizen participation can also enhance the legitimacy and credibility of government decisions (Rulashe & Ijeoma, 2022).

When individuals have the opportunity to voice their opinions and contribute to the decision-making process, they are more likely to perceive the government as fair and accountable (Corney et al., 2021). This can help to build trust between the government and its citizens, fostering a stronger sense of community and cooperation. Moreover, citizen participation can lead to more informed and effective policies, as it allows decision-makers to tap into the collective wisdom and experiences of the people they serve. By involving diverse perspectives, governments can better understand the needs and concerns of their populations, resulting in more inclusive and equitable policies that benefit everyone. Ultimately, citizen participation is a crucial element in building a democratic society where all individuals have a voice and can actively contribute to shaping their future (Corney et al., 2021).

In addition to its role in policymaking, citizen participation also plays a crucial role in holding governments accountable for their actions (Annisa, 2023). When citizens are actively engaged in the decision-making process, they can monitor and evaluate the performance of their elected officials, ensuring that they are acting in the best interest of the public (Annisa, 2023). This level of transparency and oversight helps to prevent corruption and abuse of power, fostering a culture of trust and accountability between the government and its citizens. Furthermore, citizen participation can also lead to increased civic engagement and a stronger sense of community (Annisa, 2023).

When individuals feel empowered to participate in the decision-making process, they are more likely to become active members of their community, volunteering their time and resources to improve the overall well-being of their neighborhoods. This increased civic engagement can result in the implementation of policies and initiatives that directly address the needs and concerns of the citizens (Khodayari-Zarnaq et al., 2020). Additionally, when citizens are actively involved in the decision-making

process, they gain a deeper understanding of the complexities of governance, leading to a more informed and politically educated electorate. Ultimately, citizen participation not only strengthens democracy but also helps to build a more inclusive and prosperous society for all (Khodayari-Zarnaq et al., 2020).

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study employed a cross-sectional research design. It covered a cross-section of the population or sample at one point in time, and many respondents were studied to ensure study representativeness. By employing a cross-sectional research design, the study was able to gather data from various individuals at a specific moment, providing a snapshot of the population's characteristics and allowing for a comprehensive analysis. The inclusion of a large number of respondents ensured that the study's findings were representative of the wider population, enhancing the reliability and generalizability of the results. This approach allowed for the integration of different components of the study in a systematic manner, enabling a coherent and logical exploration of the research problem.

3.2 Area of study

The study was conducted in Iganga Municipality, a lower local government located in Iganga District, Busoga Region, in the eastern part of Uganda. It is 120 km (74 miles) from Kampala, the capital city of Uganda, along the main highway to the border with Kenya, and has a population of 53,870 residents (UBOS, 2014). The municipality is administratively divided into two divisions, the Central and Northern divisions. The Central and Northern wards constitute 11 yards and 32 villages or cells. Iganga Municipal Council is the main town in Iganga district in the Busoga region in the eastern part of Uganda. Iganga Municipal Council serves as the economic and commercial hub of the district, with a bustling market and numerous shops and businesses. The town is also home to several educational institutions, including primary and secondary schools, as well as a technical college. Iganga's strategic location on the main highway makes it a key transportation hub, connecting the region to other parts of Uganda and neighboring countries like Kenya. With its growing population and vibrant economy, Iganga continues to attract both local and foreign investors, contributing to the overall development and prosperity of the Busoga region.

3.3 Study Population

The study population constituted 650 people in total, out of which 242 were selected using random sampling techniques. These included 12 heads of departments, of whom 5 were selected; 15 sectional heads, of whom 6 were selected; and 355 other IMC staff, of whom 132 were interviewed. These came from both Iganga Municipal Council headquarter and the two divisions (Central and Northern Divisions); 132 political leaders out of which 42 were selected; 20 members on boards and 7 were selected; 135 religious leaders out of which 50 were selected; budget conference report, 2020. The random sampling techniques implemented in the study involved selecting a total of five heads of departments out of a pool of 12. Additionally, six sectional heads were chosen from a group of 15, while 132 out of 355 IMC staff members were interviewed. These individuals were selected from both the Iganga Municipal Council headquarters and the Central and Northern

Divisions. Furthermore, 42 political leaders were included in the study, along with 7 out of 20 board members and 50 out of 135 religious leaders. These sampling techniques were utilised to gather data for the budget conference report in 2020.

3.4 Sample Size Selection and Sampling Techniques

Sample size selection refers to the process of determining the number of observations or participants that were included in a study or survey. It is a crucial step in research as it directly affects the accuracy and reliability of the findings. Sampling techniques, on the other hand, involve the methods used to select individuals or cases from a larger population to be included in the sample. These techniques can vary depending on the research objectives, population characteristics, and available resources.

Table 1: Sampling size of the population by category

No	Category of respondents	Study Population	Sample Size	Sampling Techniques	Source
1	Heads of departments	12	5	purposive sampling	HR Report (2022)/Budget conference report 2020
2	Heads of sections	15	6	purposive sampling	HR Report (2022)
3	Other municipal staff	355	132	Random Sampling	HR Report (2022)
4	Religious leaders	135	50	Random sampling	Interreligious committee report 2021(IMC)
5	Political leaders	113	42	Random sampling	IMC statutory report (2022)
6	members of boards and commissions	20	7	Purposive sampling	IMC statutory report (2022)
	Total	650	242		

3.5 Data Collection Instruments

The researcher used a structured questionnaire. The rating of responses followed a scale: Strongly agree (SA)=5, Agree(A)=4, Neutral (N)=3, Disagree (D)=2, and strongly disagree (SD)=1. The close ended and open-ended questions were also designed in a uniform format so that

the analyzability of the collected data using SPSS were easy.

3.6 Data collection procedure

After obtaining an introductory letter from the school of graduates and conducting research studies, the researcher proceeded to the headquarters of Iganga Municipality to secure permission to undertake a study. When permitted,

the researcher selected the potential respondents from the categories of people established above, and in turn, the respective respondents were subjected to the instrument of data collection already named so as to obtain the relevant data from them. Subsequently, the data were synthesised and an up-to-date report compiled at an appropriate time. Once the data was synthesized and the report was compiled, the researcher analyzed the findings to identify any patterns or trends. This analysis helped to draw meaningful conclusions and make informed recommendations based on the data collected. Additionally, the report was shared with relevant stakeholders and authorities to ensure transparency and enable evidence-based decision making.

3.7 Data presentation and Analysis Techniques

The researcher employed quantitative technique in data analysis. Data from questionnaires was subjected to the statistical package for social scientists (SPSS) for editing and analysis. This helped to determine the degree to which the study variables were related to each other; assessed the influence of citizen participation on decentralized service delivery in Iganga Municipality. Data was presented in form of descriptive statistics such as frequency distribution tables. Furthermore, the researcher conducted correlation analysis to establish any relationships between citizen participation and decentralized service delivery.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

The researcher exercised ethical conduct during and after the study by remaining confidential and private, never physically or psychologically harming the respondents, and above all, the report is an honest disclosure of this study finding.

The researcher also ensured informed consent was obtained from all participants, providing them with a clear understanding of the purpose and procedures of the study. Additionally, the researcher emphasized the voluntary nature of participation and assured the confidentiality of all collected data. Participants were given the opportunity to ask any questions they had before signing the consent form. The researcher made sure that participants were aware of their rights and that they could withdraw from the study at any time without facing any consequences.

Additionally, any potential conflicts of interest were disclosed and managed appropriately to maintain the integrity of the research. By upholding these ethical considerations, the study aimed to protect the rights and well-being of the participants and maintain the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings. This included obtaining informed consent from all participants, ensuring their privacy and confidentiality, and providing them with the option to withdraw from the study at any time. Moreover, any potential risks or discomforts associated with the research were carefully weighed against the potential benefits, and steps were taken to minimize harm. The researchers also followed strict protocols for data collection, analysis, and reporting to ensure accuracy and transparency. Overall, these ethical practices not only ensured the ethical conduct of the study but also upheld the ethical standards of the scientific community.

4. Results and Discussion

The scale of measuring mean score is 1.00-1.49 –Strongly Disagree, 1.50 -2.49 –Disagree, 2.50 - 3.49 - Neutral, 4.50 - 4.49 - Agree, and 4.50 – 5.49 – Strongly Agree.

Table 2: Direct citizen participation and service delivery

Responses	N	Mean	Std. Devn
Citizens actively engage individually in decision making processes at all levels thus from cells, parishes, divisions and municipal.	242	2.69	1.12
Enhances quality service delivery	242	2.06	1.06
Promotes efficient resource allocation	242	2.06	1.08
Minimizes corruption among technical staff	242	2.35	1.14
Minimizes corruption among technical staff	242	2.51	1.15
Promotes sense of ownership for the programmes implemented	242	2.33	1.10
Increases willingness to pay for services rendered	242	2.76	1.21
Promotes feedback about standards of services	242	2.56	1.15
Priority needs of citizens are met	242	2.43	1.17
Opens windows for capacity building among citizens	242	2.57	1.27
Promotes citizen involvement in implementation of projects	242	2.53	1.15
Promotes effective planning and budgeting of Iganga Municipal financial resources	242	2.56	1.17
Forms a platform for capturing citizen views by the administrators	242	2.40	1.18
Promotes close monitoring and evaluation of programmes by citizens	242	2.33	1.19
Information is readily accessed by citizens when required from technical staff	242	2.65	1.13

Source: Primary data: 2023

The findings about the statement that citizens actively engage individually in decision-making processes at all levels, such as cells, parishes, divisions, and municipalities, received a rating of mean = 2.69 and SD = 1.12 and were evaluated as neutral. This suggests that citizens' involvement in decision-making processes is neither strongly supported nor strongly opposed. The relatively low mean rating indicates that there is room for improvement in terms of citizen engagement. Further

research and analysis may be necessary to uncover the reasons behind this neutral evaluation and to identify potential strategies for increasing citizen participation in decision-making.

The findings concerning the statement that citizen participation enhances quality services delivery received a rating of Mean = 2.06 and SD = 1.06 and evaluated as strongly disagree. This rating suggests that there is a strong

disagreement among the participants regarding the notion that citizen participation improves the quality-of-service delivery. These findings indicate that the majority of respondents do not believe that involving citizens in decision-making processes leads to better service outcomes. It is important for policymakers and researchers to further examine the reasons behind this disagreement and explore alternative approaches to enhance service delivery. These are controversial to Petunia & Selepe (2020)'s results that indicate that direct citizen participation helps to create more inclusive and responsive policies and services and that it fosters a sense of ownership and accountability among citizens, encouraging them to actively engage and contribute to the improvement of public services.

The statement that direct citizen participation promotes efficient resource allocation in Iganga Municipal Council received a rating of Mean = 2.06 and SD = 1.08. The results are evaluated as disagree. These findings suggest that the majority of the participants do not believe that direct citizen participation leads to efficient resource allocation in Iganga Municipal Council. This could indicate a lack of trust in the decision-making process or a perception that alternative methods would be more effective. It is important for the council to address these concerns and engage with the citizens to understand their perspectives and work towards improving resource allocation in the municipality. The study contradicts findings by Van Noordt & Misuraca (2022) which indicate that citizen participation also promotes transparency in governance by allowing citizens to witness and understand the decision-making process. When citizens are involved in the development and implementation of policies, they are more likely to trust and support the government's actions.

The idea that citizen participation minimizes corruption among technical staff in Iganga Municipality was rated with Mean = 2.35 and a mean of 1.14, and the results are evaluated as disagreeable. This indicates that majority of respondents do not believe that citizen participation effectively reduces corruption among technical staff in Iganga Municipality. The low mean score and high standard deviation suggest that there is a significant level of disagreement among the participants regarding this idea. Further research and measures may be necessary to address and mitigate corruption within the municipality. Further research and measures could include conducting interviews or focus groups with the participants to better understand their reasons for disagreeing with the effectiveness of citizen participation in reducing corruption. Relatively, Petunia & Selepe (2020) reveals that implementing stricter regulations and accountability mechanisms for technical staff could help to deter corrupt practices. It may also be beneficial to educate the community about the importance of citizen participation and its potential impact on reducing

corruption. A comprehensive approach involving both research and targeted interventions is necessary to address and mitigate corruption in Iganga Municipality.

The idea that citizen participation promotes a sense of ownership for the programmes implemented in Iganga Municipality was rated with a mean of 2.33 and a SD of 1.10. The results are evaluated as neutral. On the other hand, the idea that citizen participation enhances accountability of the technical staff in Iganga Municipality was rated with a mean of 3.45 and a SD of 0.95. The results are evaluated as agreeable. These findings suggest that while citizen participation may have a positive impact on accountability, it may not be as effective in minimising corruption or promoting a sense of ownership for the programmes implemented in the municipality. Further research and analysis are needed to understand the underlying factors contributing to these results and to develop strategies for more effective citizen participation in Iganga Municipality. In related findings, Levin (2022) indicates that when individuals from diverse backgrounds and perspectives are included in decision-making, a wider range of ideas and solutions can be considered. This can lead to more informed and comprehensive policies that better reflect the needs and aspirations of the entire population.

The idea that citizen participation promotes feedback about standards of service was rated with a mean of 2.56 and a SD of 1.15. The results are evaluated as neutral. The staff in Iganga Municipality received a low rating of 2.35 with a standard deviation of 1.14, indicating a disagreeable evaluation. Similarly, the idea that citizen participation promotes a sense of ownership for the implemented programmes in the municipality was rated with a mean of 2.33 and a SD of 1.10, resulting in a neutral evaluation. Likewise, the notion that citizen participation leads to feedback about service standards received a neutral evaluation with a mean of 2.56 and a SD of 1.15. Overall, these results suggest that there is room for improvement in both staff performance and citizen participation in Iganga Municipality.

The idea that through citizen participation, the priority needs of citizens are met in Iganga Municipality was rated with a mean of 2.43 and a SD of 1.17. The results are evaluated as disagreeable. This implies that the majority of citizens in Iganga Municipality feel that their priority needs are not being adequately met through citizen participation. The low mean score suggests that there is a significant gap between the expectations of the citizens and the actual outcomes of their participation. Furthermore, the high standard deviation indicates a wide range of opinions among the respondents, with some strongly disagreeing while others may have a more neutral stance. Moreover, Levin (2022) reveals that citizen participation fosters a

sense of ownership and responsibility among the public, as they feel empowered to contribute to the development and implementation of policies that directly affect their lives.

The idea that citizen participation opens windows for capacity building among citizens in Iganga Municipality was rated with a mean of 2.57 and a SD of 1.27. The results are evaluated as disagreeable. These results suggest that the citizens of Iganga Municipality do not believe that citizen participation effectively addresses their priority needs. Furthermore, they do not perceive citizen participation as a means for capacity building within the community. This lack of agreement highlights a potential disconnect between the local government and its constituents, indicating a need for further efforts to promote and enhance citizen participation in order to meet the needs and build the capacity of the municipality.

The idea that citizen participation promotes citizen involvement in the implementation of projects in Iganga Municipality was rated with a mean of 2.53 and a SD of 1.15. The results are evaluated as neutral. The results for the idea that citizen participation opens windows for capacity building among citizens in Iganga Municipality indicate a disagreeable evaluation, with a mean rating of 2.57 and a standard deviation of 1.27. Similarly, the idea that citizen participation promotes citizen involvement in the implementation of projects in Iganga Municipality also received a disagreeable evaluation, with a mean rating of 2.53 and a standard deviation of 1.15. However, the results for this idea are considered neutral, possibly reflecting a lack of strong agreement or disagreement among respondents. These findings suggest that the residents of Iganga Municipality are not satisfied with the evaluation of the municipality's performance. The low mean ratings and high standard deviations indicate a lack of consensus among the respondents regarding the effectiveness of the municipality and citizen participation. This lack of agreement may highlight the need for further research and improvement in these areas to enhance citizen satisfaction and involvement in the implementation of projects. On the contrary, Rulashe & Ijeoma (2022) reveals that by involving individuals from diverse backgrounds and perspectives, policymakers can gain a deeper understanding of the unique barriers and obstacles that certain groups face. This knowledge can then be used to design targeted interventions and policies that address these inequalities and promote social justice.

The idea that citizen participation promotes effective planning and budgeting of Iganga Municipal financial resources in Iganga Municipality was rated with a mean of 2.56 and a SD of 1.17. The results are evaluated as neutral. This indicates that there is no strong consensus among the participants regarding the impact of citizen participation on the planning and budgeting of financial resources in Iganga

Municipality. The mean score of 2.56 suggests that some individuals may believe citizen participation is effective, while others may disagree. The standard deviation of 1.17 further confirms the lack of agreement, as there is a considerable variation in the ratings provided by the participants. Overall, the evaluation of the results as neutral suggests that more research and discussion may be needed to determine the true impact of citizen participation in this context.

The idea that citizen participation forms a platform for capturing citizen views by the administrators in Iganga Municipality was rated with a mean of 2.40 and a SD of 1.18. The results are evaluated as disagreeable. This suggests that the participants did not perceive citizen participation as an effective platform for capturing citizen views in Iganga Municipality. The wide range of ratings and the low mean indicate a lack of consensus among the participants regarding the effectiveness of this approach. These findings highlight the need for further research and discussion to better understand the factors influencing citizen participation and its impact in this specific context. Like Corney et al., (2021) established, when individuals have the opportunity to voice their opinions and contribute to the decision-making process, they are more likely to perceive the government as fair and accountable.

The idea that citizen participation promotes close monitoring and evaluation of programmes by citizens in Iganga Municipality was rated with a mean of 2.33 and a SD of 1.19. The results are evaluated as disagreeable. These findings suggest that the administrators in Iganga Municipality may not be effectively capturing citizen views through citizen participation. Furthermore, it appears that citizen participation may not be leading to the desired level of close monitoring and evaluation of programmes by citizens. This indicates a need for further examination and potential improvements in the implementation of citizen participation initiatives in Iganga Municipality.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusions

The study reveals a positive correlation between citizen participation and public service delivery, with a B-value of 0.438 indicating that any unit change in citizen participation leads to a 0.438-unit improvement in public service delivery in decentralized government systems, emphasizing the importance of citizen engagement. This finding suggests that when citizens actively participate in decision-making processes and provide input, the quality and efficiency of public services tend to improve. It highlights the significance of engaging citizens in local

governance and involving them in shaping policies that directly affect their lives. By fostering a culture of citizen participation, decentralized government systems can enhance public service delivery and ultimately contribute to the overall development and well-being of communities.

5.2 Recommendations

To improve direct citizen participation in local governments, we must implement online platforms and tools that allow residents to easily provide feedback and suggestions and participate in decision-making processes.

Additionally, holding regular town hall meetings and public forums can create opportunities for citizens to voice their concerns and ideas directly to government officials. Lastly, providing clear and accessible information about local government processes, policies, and upcoming projects can help educate and engage citizens, encouraging their active participation in local governance.

Furthermore, utilising technology such as online platforms and social media can enhance citizen engagement by providing convenient ways for residents to stay informed and participate in discussions. This can include interactive websites, mobile applications, and social media campaigns that foster open dialogue and encourage community involvement. By embracing these strategies, local governments can ensure that their decision-making processes are transparent, inclusive, and responsive to the needs and desires of their constituents.

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