

Introduction

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The state bears the responsibility to provide services to its citizenry. This is not only because there are weak and vulnerable members of society that cannot afford the basics but also because some services are of a nature that cannot effectively be provided by the private sector. The effectiveness and transparency in the delivery of public services has long been a topic for discussion in political and academic discourse. Issues tend to focus around transparency and questions of whether the right, deserving people are receiving the services; whether the mode of service delivery is the most effective and whether or not government expenditure is fully accounted for in the service delivery continuum of input, output and impact.

In his article, **Stephen Moyo** reports on a study that sought to determine governance challenges in municipal service delivery in the North West Province of South Africa. Findings of this study suggest that the influence of political parties in municipalities determines the modus operandi in that local authority and impacts the quality of public services provided in terms of efficiency and impact.

Mahama and Dowetin report on a similar matter using the case study of Tema Metropolitan Assembly in Ghana. The authors show how the delivery of public services is shaped by the dynamics of politics. Specifically political dynamics between the service provision agencies impact critical issues of waste management, sanitation, drainage, safety and security, infrastructural development, cleanliness and urban planning. It is worth noting that the effort towards effective revenue collection is the strongest point of the municipality, which is said to be effective in revenue collection yet revenue collection does not match service delivery.

Abubakar Abdullahi's paper is empirical and examines the pattern of public housing distribution in Nigeria. The research reported in this paper shows that the targeting strategies adopted in public housing distribution have neglected the majority of the people who desperately need housing. These targeting strategies have transformed public housing into clientelistic goods designed to reward supporters and financiers of the ruling political party.

Targeting beneficiaries of public goods based on class, income status or political considerations denies a majority of citizens access to public goods. In this regard, it is recommended that a basic-need approach be adopted in the distribution of public housing and other public goods.