Urban Governance and Urban Poverty: The Critical Analysis of Basic Services Provision in Maseru, Lesotho

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Abstract

This article argues that with the increasing urbanization in Maseru, the post-independence urban governance fails to provide adequate basic services to the growing population particularly poor areas, thus escalating poverty in these areas. Studies show a direct relationship between urban poverty and urban governance elsewhere in Africa (Halfani, 1997; Yankson, 1995 and 2000a; UNCH, 1996; Satterthwaite, 1999 and Strenand Cameron, 2005).This study seeks to show this particular dilemma in relation to Maseru where studies of this nature have not been conducted before. The study is mainly comparative where about 60 poor households' from poor areas of Motimposo, Sekamaneng and Thibella were compared with 60 middle-income households from Stadium area and White City in Maseru.

Keywords: urban governance, poverty, infrastructural development, middle-income areas, poor areas.

1.0 Introduction

The rejection of the urbanization process in the developing world has arisen because of the failure of the governments/local governance to cope with its effects – the failure of governments to provide basic needs such as land, shelter, and services of the growing city population.

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Thus, it is not urban growth itself that is a problem but the rapid rate of growth outpacing the institutional, administrative, and financial capacity to cope with it and mainly unaddressed inequity.

Most problems, which are a result of urbanization, arise largely from a failure of government institutions to manage rapid change and tap the knowledge, resources, and capacities among the population within each city (UNCH, 1996 and Satterthwaite, 1999). Maseru, the capital of Lesotho faces this predicament too.

The world is faced with expansion of cities and growing urban centers. According to Bromley and Gerry, (1971, 33) the urban poverty worsened because of the continuous migration of the rural poor into the urban areas in search of livelihood and failure to find adequate means to support themselves, which resulted in growth of road side and slum life in cities. Lesotho is one of the countries faced with this challenge today of coping with the adverse consequences of rapid urbanization, which include a deteriorating living environment due to lack of basic services. According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), 1996, the rate of urban poverty is expanding at about 7 percent particularly in urban slums and squatter settlements. Poor people living in these areas face social and economic exclusion, with limited access to basic social infrastructure and services.

Since the 1980s, cities in developing countries were estimated to have over 40 percent of their population living in slums and squatter settlements and Maseru is no exception. The situation seems to have shown little improvement. The failure on the part of Lesotho governments to address these problems is largely due to the challenge of: lack of resources; designs of infrastructure and services set at levels unaffordable to the poor urban people; rapid urbanization exceeding capacities to implement city development plan proposals; measures that have often not reached the urban poor; non-involvement of beneficiaries/communities in planning and implementing urbanization and absence of policies and flexible by-laws to deal with problems of urbanization such as squatter and informal settlements.

The paper has six sections: this introduction, literature review, background on governance, urbanization and development of Maseru, political and administrative arrangements for local governance, conclusion and recommendations.

2.0 Literature Review

In countries where electoral processes exist, the state is composed of an elected government and an executive branch.

The state's functions are manifold - among them being the focus of the social contract that defines citizenship, being the authority mandated to control and exert force, having responsibility for public services and creating an enabling environment for sustainable human development. This involves mediating interests for the public good and providing effective and accountable public services. In all these roles, the state faces a challenge - ensuring that good governance addresses the concerns and needs of the poorest by increasing the opportunities for people to seek, achieve and sustain the kind of life they aspire to. The state can do much in such areas as upholding the rights of the vulnerable, protecting the environment, maintaining stable macroeconomic conditions, maintaining standards of public health and safety for all at an affordable cost, mobilizing resources to provide essential public services and infrastructure and maintaining order, security and social harmony (UNDP, 1996 and Leftwich, 2004).

State institutions can also empower the people they are meant to serve - providing equal opportunities and ensuring social, economic and political inclusion and access to resources. Parliaments of freely and fairly elected members representing different parties are crucial to popular participation and government accountability. States should also decentralize political and economic systems to be more responsive to citizens' demands and to changing economic conditions. This is what good governance requires (UNDP, 1996:1). Therefore, through governance the nation's needs are to be addressed so as to improve people's welfare. This article focuses on local government institutions as state institutions responsible for the development of urban areas in Maseru by assessing their response to the basic service needs of the poor in the increasing urbanization.

It is observed, however, that in the developing world the urbanization process has had adverse effects. This is due to the fact that governments/local governance has failed to cope with its effects. This includes the failure of governments to provide basic needs such as land, shelter and services for the growing city population.

It is, however, not urban growth itself that is a problem but the rapid rate of growth outpacing the institutional, administrative, and financial capacity to cope with it and the mainly unaddressed inequity. Most problems which are a result of urbanization arise largely from a failure of government institutions to manage rapid change and tap the knowledge, resources, and capacities among the population within each city (UNCH, 1996 and Satterthwaite, 1999). The entire range of institutional arrangements is proving to be unsuitable for handling the challenges of urban development in the late 20th and 21st centuries. The combined effect of accelerated growth, pervasive poverty, and increased marginalization has impaired the performance of existing municipal systems (Halfani, 1997:19).

As early as before the 1980s, the development focus in many developing countries was on rural areas. There was a presumption among the policy architects, urban managers, and researchers that urban areas were better off in terms of social and economic infrastructure (Mascarenhas, 1994). However, Strenand Cameron (2005) attests that cities have gradually decayed mainly due to the presumption that unhealthy conditions like poverty were predominantly a feature of rural areas. The implication of this policy framework was that the municipal authorities were fully responsible for responding to the ever-soaring rate of urban population without a corresponding increase in investment in the infrastructure, a condition that made them unable to respond to the hazards of rapid urbanization. This article discusses the urban local authorities' policy framework within which they operate in their response to the basic service needs of the poor within the Maseru urban area.

Performance of municipal government has not been impressive elsewhere in Africa. In addition to the perennial problem of weak institutional capacities, urban authorities from Cape to Cairo and from Dar es Salaam to Dakar demonstrate a serious absence of popular trust, lack of accountability, weak institutional capacities, and extremely poor delivery record. Most of them have not been able to perform their basic functions, including the delivery of social and economic services (Halfani, 1997:20). For example, Olowu and Akinola (1995:23-27) demonstrate that excessive centralization in Nigeria and a style of public policy management that alienates the people are the main factors which perpetuate the urban crisis. Bello-Imam (1995:7-9) indicates that in terms of financing, central governments have assigned urban governments with functions to perform tasks which do not match their resource allocation. Their capacity to mobilize and utilize resources is very weak.

There is an observation of similar trends in Ghana, where the local government system has been ineffective. Local government has become almost wholly dependent on central government for financing. It has neglected its base of revenue and suffers from managerial and manpower problems.

Local governments are finding it difficult to provide basic services to the expanding population, the majority being poor (Yankson, 1995 and 2000a). In Gambia as well, urban authorities have not succeeded in improving sanitary and drainage conditions in the urban areas. Gambian municipalities are under excessive control of central government. Other deficiencies relate to the preponderance of central government in the overall decision-making process. In exercising the process of supervising and coordinating different communes, the central government deprives local governments of necessary autonomy in some critical functions of management, for example, budget and fiscal administration (Halfani, 1997:20).

The rapid growth of urban population has obvious implications for infrastructure and service needs of cities. The failure to expand water supplies, sanitation systems, housing, and transportation to match the growth of the population has been a major problem in the cities of the developing countries. Approximately, 40 percent of urban population does not have access to safe water supplies, over 50 percent does not have access to proper sanitation, and 40-50 percent of the population lives in slums and informal settlements (UNCHS, 2003). These informal settlements provide unsatisfactory living conditions and have inadequate essential infrastructure. Other services too are quite inadequate to meet the rapidly growing needs. Municipal authorities only collect a quarter of solid waste in most cities of the developing world. Much of the uncollected waste ends up on open ground or in watercourses with the remainder burned in open areas near habitable places, with obvious consequences for public health. Inadequate road networks result in severe congestion as the volume of traffic grows.

Moreover, provision of social services such as health and education lag far behind the needs. The health facilities for high-income groups may be very good while those of the poor are often so inadequate that their health conditions are as bad as those of the rural population are. UNCHS (2003:1) further points out that the costs of providing satisfactory urban services are high.

Thus, in order to meet the basic infrastructure needs of additional urban population, the governments of developing countries need to spend $80-$120 billion per year. This is just to cater for the additional population without any provision for improving conditions for the existing urban population. It is within this framework that this research assesses the response of urban governance in Maseru to the needs of the poor, including basic services delivery.

3.0 Governance, urbanization and development of Maseru

The post-independence period in Lesotho was mainly under the Basotho National Party under Leabua Jonathan who ruled the country since independence in 1966 to 1986, the period in which the underdevelopment of Maseru can mostly be ascribed to. The political development in the city deepened poverty after independence resulting in deterioration of socio-economic conditions where segregation and marginalization of Basotho who formed the opposition from various decision-making processes of governance continued while urbanization only exacerbate the perilous poverty situation.

The early years of independence in Lesotho were characterized by lack of local governance and development. Jonathan regime soon after gaining power abolished local governance structures, the district councils which he believed to be strongholds for opposition in order to consolidate his power and maintain order (Van de Geer and Wallis, 1982), the same way as in other African countries which gained independence in the 1960s where the post-independence leadership consolidated their power and eliminated opposition (Gordon, 2007:73).

The investment focused mainly on the rural areas where the government enjoyed its strongest electoral support to have won the 1965 elections and that continued throughout the 1970s and 1980s. Like in most African countries, the responsibility for development failure in Lesotho rests with the state. The state remained largely a one party state for 23 years in the post-colonial era and only purported to engage in decentralization but in practice did not devolve power to the local structures. Development remained centrally driven leading to its failure. While the Lesotho urbanization policy remained unimplemented leading to unplanned and unbridled settlements without infrastructure, a trend which is continuing. Additionally, the state investment in Maseru was largely concentrated on the establishment of the new government's headquarters.

The development in the rural areas was more on basic services infrastructure like roads linking rural areas and urban areas and rural water supply while in Maseru it was to put up new government office complexes and constructing tarmac roads linking the city and the north and south districts. Not much was done in terms of basic services infrastructure to the urban areas despite the fact that Maseru was receiving more population from the rural areas (Van de Geer and Wallis, 1982).

This means that Maseru was increasingly receiving migrants without it being compatible with this population increase. This trend however, was not peculiar with Maseru, it was also observed in the cities of the developing countries by UN Centre for Human Settlements (UNCHS) (2003) that failure to expand basic services infrastructure to match the growth of the population has been a major problem. Moreover, lack of development has further been constrained by tensions within local governance that derail development policies availing no further change in the existing levels of poverty.

4.0 Political and administrative arrangements for local governance

The government operated through Village Development Committees (VDCs)in order to carry out development in Lesotho, which their membership was predominantly the ruling Basutoland National Party (BNP)supporters. The central government through the District Administrator directly controlled these committees (Van de Geer and Wallis, 1982: 47).Maseru at the time was a town surrounded by villages with these structures. These advisory bodies were established with the main objective of obtaining representative expression of public opinion and consultation between central government and local people.

The second objective was to encourage public interest in the management of public affairs through the creation of opportunities to elect the representatives and to express public opinion in local public meetings. Decentralization therefore became the main emphasis and several committees were established to enhance local participation and local governance[2].

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[2]"Local Governance is generally used to refer to a decentralized, representative institution with general and specific powers, devolved upon it and delegated to it by central or regional governance in respect to a restricted geographical area within a nation or state, and in the

This suggests a local political process which is analytically separated from the nation-wide process because the issues around which it revolves have local characters and Stren and Cameron (2005) see decentralization of power from main governance to local level as good entry point for addressing wide range of social issues including poverty. But the Lesotho's decentralization structures were far from enhancing fair participation of local people based on the fact that their membership were drawn predominantly from the ruling party showing exclusion and marginalization of other citizens who could not form BNP membership.

This connotes lack of representation in development and its benefits hence exposure of many citizens to poverty risk including those living in Maseru. This means that in Lesotho, the government is legitimate because it has been elected democratically by the citizens but sustainable governance is not achieved because actions, resources, and events that are taken in the country do not involve the urban poor directly. Governance means the act of effecting government and monitoring through policy the long-term strategy and direction of an organisation. Notwithstanding, decentralization became a key development policy in Lesotho throughout the 1970s and 1980s.

The Lesotho government introduced the Urban Government Act of 1983. The Act was generally aimed at making provision for establishing and regulating urban local authorities. This Act entrusts certain powers to the Minister responsible to declare any area to be part of the municipality, to assign a name to and alter the name of a municipality defining the boundaries, and declare that any area shall cease to be a municipality and how a municipality or urban council shall be constituted.

The municipality in Lesotho was officially instituted as part of Local Government in 1989 under the same Act (Figure 1) financed and controlled by the central government. This bureaucracy has made the municipality a dormant institution which since its establishment has been failing to respond to the needs of the people by providing necessary basic needs infrastructure within its jurisdiction thus allowing poverty to deepen. Though new reforms were instituted in the years later to make local government work and address the needs of the people, all these efforts were unsuccessful to bring about development and eradication of poverty in Maseru.

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exercise of which it is locally responsible and may to a certain degree act autonomously" (Vosloo,1974:10)

The new government (of 1993) considered putting in place a more democratic Local Administration which involves participation of local communities in decision-making structures of governance by instituting local councils. The management of urban development is now vested in the local urban authorities (local councils and municipality) as mandated by Lesotho Local Government Act 1997. The Act empowers local urban authorities to control urban development and provide basic services including water. The organ gram below depicts the Lesotho local governance.

Figure 1: Local government structure (1997- to date).
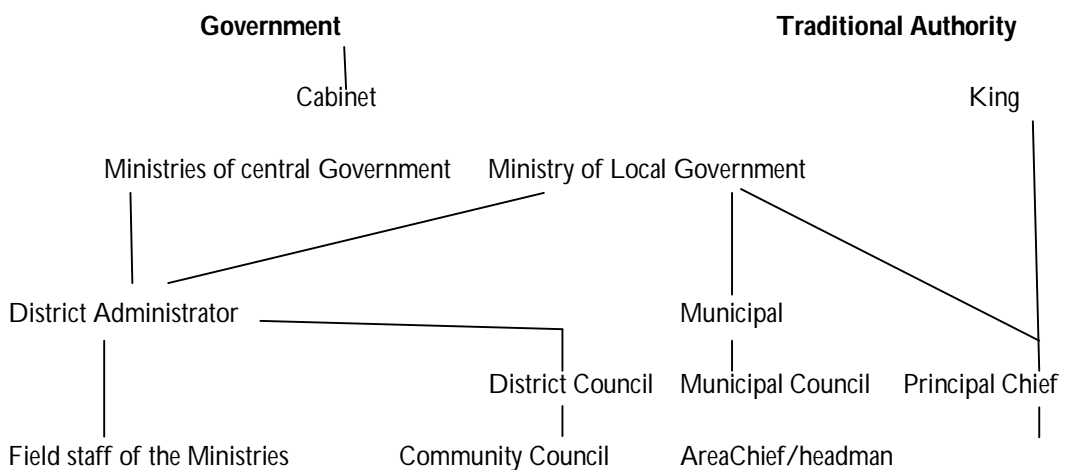
Source: Local Government (Amendment) Act No. 5 of 2004.

Local government is constituted by councilors, civil servants, and statutory bodies such as tender board. However, according to section 4 of the local government Act of 1997 as amended in 2004; representatives of gazetted chiefs shall be members of local authorities; therefore, chieftainship is part and parcel of local government system (Local government, 2005).

Councilors are the pillars which support functionality of local government. People including the poor are supposed to be able to raise their concerns and views during their meetings with the councilors held before the council meeting. This is representative participation because they are represented by the councilors in the decision-making body and practically remain outside decision-making domain.

The councilor notes everything raised by the community and during the meeting of the council, he/she presents such issues before the council.

For instance, the community may agree on addressing the issue of electricity or water. Then they will inform their councilor what they have agreed on as a community. The councilor will then present that issue during the council meeting. A councilor sets aside at least a day in a given period for meetings with the community in his/her electoral division. During this period, both parties share views about emerging issues. People are free to present before the councilor their different problems and in turn, the councilor would try to solve their problems where necessary. This is because the councilor sees him/her as a leader who is in a position to solve problems. Councilor reports to the community the general decisions of the council and the actions it has taken to solve problems raised by the people in the electoral division. Then the people are in a position to criticize the decisions taken if those decisions fail to address their problems.

However, it is important to point out that representative participation does not necessarily mean that the concerns of the most vulnerable in the community are taken into consideration in decision-making. This is the true reflection of our urban areas. Taking Thibella and Stadium area in Maseru, both areas are under one municipality rule but because most vulnerable people live at Thibella, Stadium area is better off in terms of water supply. In Thibella, for people to access water for domestic use, they have to stand in long queues at public taps and this is not the case at Stadium area, in this area every household owns a tap.

Good governance implies inclusion and representation of all groups in the urban society and accountability, integrity and transparency of local government actions – in defining and pursuing shared goals. Urban management requires capacity to fulfil public responsibilities with knowledge, skills, resources and procedures that draw on partnership (UNDP, 1996). Decision-making in Municipal Council (MCC) lacks partnership with the urban poor in any projects' management and implementation and even at council level. The MCC lacks cooperative action with the urban poor at planning, implementation, and management and evaluation levels, either in the programmes or in the councils.

Moreover, the implementation of urban development plans is still constrained by the central Local Government control of the budget as such local authorities are failing to deliver basic services particularly to poor areas. This is visible in areas constituting municipality occupied by low income households who live in poverty. For example, Sekamaneng, an area with poor households does not have basic services including water supply and sanitation. Evidence from the studyrevealed that, in the Sekamaneng area, 97.5 percent of households collected water from open springs, 10 percent of households fetched water from a gully which is simultaneously used as a toilet by those households that did not have proper toilets. Some 5 percent of households claimed to fetch water from the nearby village, mostly during drought spells. Around 10 percent of households bought water from people who had tanks and collected rainwater or bought water from the Water and Sewerage Corporation (WASCO)(Field Survey, 2009) (See Table 1). These poor people did not have established permanent means of income-generation but only casual jobs and they had to buy water from vendors at R1.50 per 20 liters.

The situation was worse with regard to sanitation in the Sekamaneng community where 60 percent of households used pit latrines. These pit latrines were not in good condition, some had no doors and only tattered pieces of cloth hung instead to secure privacy. Some were in a state of collapse because the rusty iron sheets they were made up of were beginning to fall down, while some pits were poorly constructed and poorly covered so that the excreta was exposed. This made these toilets to become not only dangerous for human use but also a risk to the health of the households. 5 percent of households used neighbors' toilets and 5 percent used relatives' toilets and all of these were pit latrines.

Only 5 percent of households had proper VIP toilets. Some 7.5 percent of households were using the nearby gully because they had no toilets and 2.5 percent of households used an open pit dug at the edge of the yard as an alternative for a toilet(Field Survey, 2009) (See Table 2). An interviewee claimed that they used this pit only during the night to secure privacy. This situation has a far reaching impact in terms of health, not only for the household but for the community as a whole as it puts it at serious risk of diseases like typhoid particularly in dry and windy seasons. The situation also has an environmental impact in that it leads to increase in pollution of water sources, resulting in water-faecal disease cycle to communities with untreated water supplies.

The situation was rather bad because people claimed to have no means to change their circumstances, as they had no income. It illustrates the depth of poverty in this area. However, areas such as White City where urban elites are residing are well served with necessary infrastructure including high mast street lights, meaning that even in the post-independence era Maseru is still underdeveloped with skewed distribution of basic services. Nevertheless, I want to greatly emphasize here that the structure of local governance has a greater bearing on poverty and underdevelopment of Maseru.

Table 1: Sources of water supply in Thibella, Sekamaneng and Motimposo

Water supply source	Frequency (%)		
	Sekamaneng	Motimposo	Thibella
Own yard		17.5	17.5
Open spring	97.5	7.5	
Gully	10		
Nearby village taps	5		
Neighbours taps free		10	
Neighbours taps with monthly payment		55	
Neighbours tanks	10		
Public taps		10	82.5

Source: Field Survey, 2009

Table 2: Type of sanitation in Thibella, Sekamaneng and Motimposo

Type of sanitation	Frequency (%)		
	Sekamaneng	Motimposo	Thibella
Pit latrine	60	67.5	5
Use of Neighbours' toilet	5	15	
Use of relatives' toilet	5	2.5	
VIP toilet	5	7.5	
Nearby gully	7.5	2.5	72.5
Open pit in the yard	2.5		
Public toilet			

Source: Field Survey, 2009.

Maseru has three forms of local administration running concurrently: Chieftainship responsible for local administration by executing government development policy in their respective areas, the District Local Government that deals with comprehensive development of the district and works in collaboration with chieftainship in all its levels (area and ward) which also form area or community local government under the district council and the municipality being responsible for city development. The district local governance comprises representatives from various community councils who are elected from their local government constituencies.

According to section 4 of the local government Act of 1997 as amended in 2004, gazetted chiefs shall be members of local authorities making chieftainship part of local government system (Local government, 2005), bearing in mind that Maseru is a district and at the same time it is a city that has encroached into the villages which formerly were and are still administered through chieftainship, a long standing traditional structure of the Lesotho governance since pre-colonial epoch. Maseru as a city is run by the municipality under the Mayor who is elected from the forum of all local councilors from all constituencies that form the 'Maseru urban reserve'.

The municipality council comprises the Mayor and representatives from chieftainship in the urban reserve. The system is such that we have traditional system representatives, chiefs and the political appointees elected through the political process (councilors). These two systems have not had harmonious relationships in executing development policies of government. Because chiefs have more influence among the Basotho than political appointees do, if they do not support those policies, people tend also not support them. This is because Basotho are more inclined towards traditional rule in their respective villages which have ruled Lesotho for over a century (from the pre-colonial times). Chiefs are believed to be more responsive to their needs than the politicians whom in most cases have been non-responsive to public needs through various governments since independence.

For example, as municipality has extended into areas that were formally agricultural settlements under the jurisdiction of traditional authorities (chiefs), it has become difficult for the municipal authorities to enforce laws and standards that regulate urban development such as regulating urban settlements on areas declared as the development areas.

Chiefs in areas which have initially been peripheral to the city centre, feeling sad from the fact that the municipality has reduced their power by declaring their land for urban development, continue allowing individuals who want to sell land do so regardless of the declarations made by the municipality by endorsing such sales holding on the Land Act of 1979 that gave them power to allocate land which the proposed Land Bill of 2009 intends to repeal. In the event, agricultural land is now being sold for settlements without basic services provision as indicated earlier with Sekamaneng and Motimposo. Hence, Maseru is faced with a perilous state of increasing poverty. In the communities, chiefs continue to have greater recognition though the democratic government put much emphasis on local government structures.

Chiefs are members in the local government councils and councilors are the pillars which support functionality of local government. People are supposed to be able to raise their concerns and views during their meetings ("*pitsos'* which refer to public gatherings) with the councilors held before the council meeting. These *pitsos* are rarely called and when they are called, the attendance of the people is not good, than if the chief calls a *pitso* showing how the Basotho are more inclined towards their traditional authority. The councilor takes the concerns of the community council meeting and then reports back to the community on decisions taken by the council. Rugege (1993: 31) however, argues that 'the strategy of *pitsos* as purported to promote democracy does not guarantee that all the concerns will be taken care off by those in power'.

This is representative participation[3] because they are represented by the councilors in the decision-making body while practically remain outside decision-making domain. It is important however, to further point out that representative participation does not necessarily mean that the concerns of the most vulnerable in the community are taken into consideration in decision-making. This is reflected in the manner in which resources are shared between areas in Maseru.

Taking Thibella and Stadium area in Maseru as examples, both areas are under one municipality. Stadium area is an area with middle and high income households whose concerns are represented in the municipality council and is better off in terms of housing conditions, electricity, sanitation, and water supply.

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[3] Representative Participation refers to the decision-making process where democratically elected persons represent a large part of the population (Gaventa and Valderrama, 1999: 19).

Every household owns a tap and there are sewerage lines connecting each household. Thibella is an area with the most poor people whom to have access to water for domestic use, have to stand in long queues at public taps where they pay for every litre of water they get through the same representation in the municipal council as mentioned indicating that local governance is still characterized by exclusion, the voice of the poor has no space yet decentralization is regarded to be an entry point to address social issue including poverty (Stren and Cameron, 2005).

The challenge in this context is that Maseru City Council (MCC) lacks direct inclusion of the urban poor. Budget control is still centralized and the urban poor have no say, neither in the non-existent urban poverty reductive projects nor in the decision-making council meetings. The urban poor beside the electoral vote for the councillor cannot further vote to enforce implementation of their proposals or decisions and priorities addressing their needs or poverty.

The management sector (government) find itself under pressure of international policies and having to face with a new phenomena of good governance which by definition sounds simple but is practically extremely complex, largely new and potentially a source of high social tension. This is because the top-down kind of governance practiced in Lesotho and inherited from colonialism only sought after its own interests. This has resulted in quite a number of conflicts along political affiliations in Lesotho among citizens, government officials, and political parties at large.

Political parties used to fiercely strive for centralized political power where the winner of the general elections took all of such power, whether local or national as power was not decentralized (the first-past-the-post (FPTP) electoral model) though mixed member proportional electoral system at national level introduced after 1998 political unrest partly blamed for FPTP weaknesses has provided relative political stability. The challenge is that Lesotho urban governance is still inclined towards FPTP which excludes significant percentage of voters thereby consequently creating instability. Thus, Maseru remains underserviced with basic services, particularly poor areas increasing the already existing poverty.

5.0 Conclusion

There is a fairly direct link existing between the size of a city and basic services conditions and urban governance. The rate of urban growth in Maseru has an effect of creating an imbalance between population growth and basic services available but also urban governance is not doing enough to correct the situation. The rate of urban growth in Maseru is escalated by natural population increase coupled with urbanization, which is the result of commercial, industrial, and administrative development in the area. This urban growth has been characterized by high rate and haphazard, unleashing and tremendous agglomeration of unplanned settlements. Most settlements have sprung up without proper planning and development control requirements. Consequently, these settlements are not recognized by the city authorities and have been described as 'illegal'. To this effect, the Municipality has also tended to ignore them in the provision of the necessary services such as water, refuse collection, electricity and sewerage disposal.

6.0 Recommendations

With the prevailing situation where the population increase does not match the existing infrastructure, urban governance authorities in Maseru should conducted community based survey and sought for demand versus supply data on basic services in order to establish the magnitude of the problem. This will give a direction into how much resources should be invested in addressing the problem. The central government should decentralize power and authority to the Municipality to be able to function. This will minimize all the bureaucratic processes of approval which render it dysfunctional in providing basic services to the urban population.

There is a need for a review on the existing local government structures in Maseru where power is vested in multiple hands without harmonious working relationships in serving the population. This power struggle has rendered some of the structures dysfunctional in addressing the basic services needs of the population. The existing inequality where other areas are provided with basic services and there is dire lack of such services in some, particularly poor areas can be eradicated through a comprehensive policy/strategy involving the government and other development agencies so that these needs are thoroughly scrutinised and put on a long term plan to avoid recurrence of the situation.

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