IMPLEMENTATION OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT POLICIES AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN THE MKHAMBATHINI LOCAL MUNICIPALITY IN THE PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL (SOUTH AFRICA)

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DECLARATION

I, Gideon Sibanda, declare that:

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to investigate why the phenomenon of rural poverty and underdevelopment persist despite the various policies, interventions, and programmes to redress problems of the past in South Africa post-1994. The study shows that, amongst others, the vagaries in policy implementation, the adoption of a top-down approach to implementation and inconsistent public participation contribute to the persistence of rural poverty and underdevelopment. The study also raises questions about the extent to which local governments facilitate and encourage public participation in their policymaking, prioritisation, and implementation processes. Public participation is foundational to the process of democratization of society, and sustainable rural development in South Africa cannot happen without the meaningful public participation of people living in rural areas. In addition, there is inadequate and limited analysis and critical review of the rural policy implementation processes and mechanisms of public participation, particularly at local government level. In this qualitative case study (located in Mkhambathini Local Municipality which is rural), in-depth face-to-face interviews were undertaken with seven ward councillors; and focus group discussions with seven-ward committees which consist of ten members each. The verbatim qualitative responses are analysed according to the themes. The findings highlight that the absence of developmentally oriented civil society organisations in rural areas contributes to poor service delivery. Other problems such as the issue of security of tenure, particularly in areas that fall under traditional authorities remain under-addressed. The study recommends that the Ingonyama Trust Act (Act No. 3KZ of 1994) be reviewed to incorporate the issue of land rights of rural people and security of ownership of land in rural KwaZulu-Natal. While this study cannot be conclusive on the issues of implementation of rural development policies and public participation at the local government level, it identifies issues of concern that need to be addressed. These include weak public participation structures, lack of monitoring and evaluation systems, poor coordination of the implementation of rural development programmes at the local government level. The study recommends the establishment of policy coordinating structures in the local rural municipalities to spearhead the rural development agenda.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES, FIGURES AND MAPS

Figures

Maps

ABBREVIATIONS and ACRONYMS

ANC African National Congress
AIDS Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
CBOs Community Based Organisations
CPOs Community Participatory Organisations
CDFs Community Development Facilitators
CDE Centre for Development Enterprise
CBWP Community Based Public Works Programme
CEP Community Employment Programme
COSATU Congress of South African Trade Unions
CRDP Comprehensive Rural Development Programme
COS Council of Stakeholders
COGTA Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs
CRC Citizen Report Card
DPME Department of Policy Monitoring and Evaluation
DRDLR Department of Rural Development and Land Reform
DLA Department of Land Affairs
DPLG Department of Provincial and Local Government
ECDC Early Childhood Development Centres
EFF Economic Freedom Fighters
GDP Gross Domestic Product
GNI Gross National Income
GNP Gross National Product
GEAR Growth, Employment and Redistribution
HIV Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HODs Heads of Departments
ILO International Labour Organisation
ISRDS Integrated Sustainable Rural Development Strategy
IDT Independent Development Trust
IDP Integrated Development Planning
ICT Information and Communication Technology
IFP……..Inkatha Freedom Party
LG Local Government

LCC	Land Claims Commission
LGER	Local Government Budget and Expenditure Review
MEC	Member of the Executive Council
MP	Member of Parliament
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
NBOs	Neighbourhood Organisations
NRDS	National Rural Development Strategy
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
PCFs	Provincial Coordinating Forums
PMG	Parliamentary Monitoring Group
PPO	Public Participation Officer
RRA	Rapid Rural Appraisal
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
RDF	Rural Development Framework
RDI	Rural Development Initiative
Stats SA	Statistics South Africa
SACP	South African Communist Party
SANCO	South African Civic Organisations
SAIGA	South African Institute of Government Auditors
SARPs	Structural Adjustment Reform Programmes
UN	United Nations
UNPD	United Nations Population Division
VFM	Value for Money
WOP	War on Poverty

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This study focuses on the development and implementation of rural development policies in the post-apartheid era in South Africa with reference to the Mkhambathini Local Municipality in the KwaZulu-Natal Province. The problems of rural poverty and underdevelopment have persisted in the post-apartheid era in South Africa despite numerous policy interventions. Lack of effective policy implementation has been identified as the reason for unsatisfactory results on the ground. Although rural development policies formulated in the post-apartheid era place public participation at the centre of policy making processes and their implementation, the reality on the ground indicates limited and, in some instances, no participation by rural people and non-governmental actors in the rural context. This study examines public participation at the local government level and presupposes that participation remains an integral part towards both the implementation of rural development policies and a prerequisite of achieving sustainable rural development.

This introductory chapter outlines the background and rationale as well as the motivation for the study within the context of rural poverty and underdevelopment in South Africa. The chapter outlines further the research problem, aims and the objectives of the study. The research approach adopted in this study is descriptive, qualitative and interpretive. Both the research approach and the instruments used to gather data are explained in the methodology chapter. The chapter concludes with an overview of the chapters contained in the thesis.

1.2 STUDY BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

The conditions of rural poverty and underdevelopment in post-apartheid South Africa have been largely viewed as a direct consequence of the colonialism, apartheid and a range of discriminatory policies that accompanied both historical moments (Terreblanche, 2012:101). Bundy (1988) identifies numerous factors which helped to entrench rural poverty and underdevelopment during the colonial era. The first main factor was the dispossession of land which was the basic means of production for Black people, and the second factor is the development of a capitalist system which made it difficult for Black farmers to compete with White farmers (Bundy, 1988). The shortage of land inhibited productive farming amongst

Black farmers. The situation was further compounded by other factors such as drought and stock diseases which depleted the resources of Black famers in the rural areas. Researchers such as Du Toit (2017), Ndlovu (2017) and Wolpe (1980) also note that, the colonial system adopted policies that forced Black farmers to abandon their land to work in the commercial farms and mines as cheap labourers. Policies such as the Native Land Act of 1913, the Group Areas Act of 1950, and the Promotion of Bantu Self-Government Act of 1959 entrenched the apartheid system in South Africa in that they disenfranchised the majority of Black people and confined them to rural areas (referred to as the Homeland or Bantustan) that had limited economic opportunities and poorly developed infrastructure. The Bantustan policy became the cornerstone of the apartheid system and it facilitated separate development (Khapoya, 1980:30). The Bantustans were given land that was generally poor and inadequate to sustain the populations for whom they were set up. The creation of Bantustans deprived theBlack African people of their political, social and economic rights. As a result, the life of the Black African people on the Bantustan territories was characterised by poverty and limited economic opportunities.

To this end, Seekings and Nattrass (2015:4) assert that:

> "Apartheid had perpetuated income poverty and exacerbated income inequality in very obvious ways. African people had been dispossessed of most of their land, faced restricted opportunities for employment or self-employment, were limited to low-quality public education and health care, and most were physically confined to impoverished parts of the countryside or cities. At the same time, the white minority had benefited from discriminatory public policies. Public revenues that might have been spent on poverty relief were spent instead on the military and police".

The Integrated Sustainable Rural Development Strategy (ISRDS) (2000:7) also states that, "[a]pproximately 70% of South Africa's poor people live in rural areas and have their incomes constrained because the rural economy is not sufficiently vibrant to provide them with remunerative jobs of self-employment opportunities". Hence, the root cause of rural poverty and underdevelopment in South Africa stems from the colonial and apartheid eras' policy of separate development and disenfranchisement of Black African people. It is not a coincidence therefore, that rural poverty affects mostly African people and women and children in particular. To this end, Khapoya (1980:33) writes, "For example, at any given time, there is an absentee rate of 70% among menfolk in KwaZulu due to migrant labour". This explains why there is still a higher percentage of women than men living in rural areas (StatsSA 2017:56).

The transition to multi-racial democracy and the 1994 democratic elections precipitated a review of policies in all spheres of life in South Africa. The African National Congress' (ANC) Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) base document set the foundation for the new policy trajectories in the post-1994 era. The RDP base document which was later adopted as an RDP white paper by the government of national unity (GNU) was a result of a broad process of consultation, and was largely viewed and accepted as a pro-poor policy document. The ANC used the RDP to promise a 'better life for all' in South Africa, especially to the poor in rural communities. It promised that, "attacking poverty and deprivation would be the first priority of the democratic government" (ANC, 1994:15). The notion of a 'better life for all' signalled a change, which would be characterised by an improvement in the quality of life for all South Africans in general. For the people living in rural areas in particular, the new change entailed access to productive land, safe water and sanitation, quality education, electricity, improved health care services and developed infrastructure. Thus, the goal of the RDP was to deliver a decent living standard and economic security to all South Africans (ANC, 1994:79).

The RDP also promised to make the poor people living in rural areas into partners in their own development. Here, the new government would not assume a paternalistic role and instead, the RDP promised to enfranchise and empower the poor to "develop their full potential and sustain themselves through productive activity" (ANC, 1994:16). In this way, the RDP foregrounded the importance of public participation as an integral part of the new non-racial and non-sexist development agenda. Although the RDP resonated well with a wide range of stakeholders on the ground, it was later viewed as too ambitious and unachievable in practical terms (Hirsch, 2009).

The RDP was later replaced by the Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) policy in 1996. GEAR did not match the RDP in terms of popularity and acceptance. Labour movements considered GEAR as a neo-liberal economic policy designed to advance the capitalist agenda at the expense of the workers and the poor (Cashdan, 2002; Hirsch, 2009). According to Hirsch (2009), the primary objective of GEAR was to promote local and foreign investment in order to grow the economy. Although GEAR managed to achieve reasonable levels of economic growth and macro-economic stability, evidence on the ground indicates that it adversely widened the gap of inequality between the rich and the poor and made South Africa

one of the most unequal countries in the world (Netshitenzhe, 2008). To this end, GEAR was viewed as a top-down approach informed by neo-liberal economic principles, and in contrast to the RDP that reflected a commitment to grassroots and bottom-up development approaches. The GEAR policy benefited the elite while the poor and marginalised rural communities waited for the economic benefits to trickle down to the grass-root levels. Although the primary objective of GEAR was to grow the economy by promoting local and foreign investment, it did not place rural development on the list of its priorities. The lack of prioritisation of rural development policy during the GEAR resulted in a slow down of the implementation of rural development programmes that had been initiated during the RDP policy framework. However, the subsequent rural development policies built on the ideas and vision of the RDP. As a result, Naidoo (2013:196) notes that, "the South African government has many good policies on paper but has failed many times in their implementation". Khoza (2003:47) also asserts that good policies have developed in the post-1994 era, but have largely remained "as symbols of transformation" and "have not been successfully translated into effective implementation on the ground". In addition, Rispel and Moorman (2013), state that the problem is in the failure of various government departments to prioritise implementation. Finally, the poor coordination between different government departments has been identified as one of the reasons for implementation failure (Phuhlisani Solutions, 2009).

It is argued in this study that failure in policy implementation and not the dearth in rural development policies accounts for the prevalence and persistence of rural poverty and underdevelopment. The rationale of this study is to investigate the reasons behind the problem of implementation of rural development policies in the post-1994 era in South Africa. The research question of this study is: Why does the phenomenon of rural poverty and underdevelopment persist in the post-apartheid era despite numerous policy interventions? In addition, the study aims to investigate why the ANC government has[1] not delivered its promise of 'a better life for all' to the majority of the people living in rural areas. Statistics South Africa (StatsSA, 2017:89) notes that, there has been a decline of poor households in rural areas but, the majority of rural households remain poor. Hence, this study focuses on public participation in the policy-making, and implementation processes at the local government level in South

[1] The report on poverty trends in South Africa indicates an overall decrease in incidence of poverty between 2006 and 2015 in both rural and urban settlement types, with urban settlements benefiting more noticeably with a 24% reduction of poverty. Within the same period, rural settlements only experienced 14% reduction of poverty (StatsSA 2017:89).

Africa and to that effect, it uses a case study approach based on the Mkhambathini Local Municipality in the province of KwaZulu-Natal.

1.3 STUDY MOTIVATION

The post-1994 ANC-led government made the promise to deliver 'a better life for all'. Although the ideals of the RDP have formed the thrust of subsequent rural development policies, the reality on the ground indicates that the majority of rural communities are still waiting to realise the promise of 'a better life'. The researcher, who worked with rural communities in the Mkhambathini area on the outskirts of Pietermaritzburg, for eight years, witnessed the reality of rural poverty and the vulnerability of the people living in rural areas, and hence this study. In addition, the researcher was motivated to engage in this study by personal experience and reflection as a Development Studies lecturer at St Joseph's Theological Institute for six years, focusing on public policy and implementation processes and the role of public participation.

The researcher holds the view that public participation is a key component of policy-making, policy prioritisation and the implementation processes. The aim of this current research is therefore to show that, sustainable rural development cannot be achieved without the meaningful and robust participation of the people living in rural areas. An awareness of the body of rural development policies that have been formulated post-1994, and the various legislations that promote public participation, motivated the researcher to investigate why rural poverty and underdevelopment persist. In particular, the researcher was motivated to investigate the nature of public participation in policy making and implementation processes at the local government level.

Masiya, Davids and Mazenda (2019:30) note that, "municipalities are expected to afford citizens or communities as clients and stakeholders the opportunity to actively participate in municipal policy processes, that is, express their views before, during and after the policy development process to ensure that policy implementation reflects community preferences as far as possible". This assertion highlights the importance of public participation in matters that directly impact on people's lives. Pandeya (2015:93) also adds that, public participation affords the poor an opportunity to express themselves through various forums and mechanisms which

are designed for them to influence public institutions and policies. Tufter (2017:143) affirms the positive impact of public participation on service delivery and argues that, it can promote accountability and reduce corruption and mismanagement at the local government level. It is important therefore, to investigate the extent to which the people living in rural areas are aware of both the opportunities and need to participate and actively influence public institutions and policies at the grass-root level.

1.4 RESEARCH PROBLEM

The importance of public participation in the policy-making processes and their implementation is explicitly highlighted in the RDP base document's description that it is "a people-driven process" (ANC, 1994:5). The subsequent rural development policies of post-1994 emphasise the significance of public participation in the identification, prioritisation, and implementation of rural development programmes at the local government level.

To this end, the Integrated Sustainable Rural Development Strategy (2000:32) states that:

> "The process of selecting the services and programmes at the local level will be the chief instrument for integration, and the Integrated Development Planning (IDP) process will play an important role in this. Participatory assessment takes place under the provisions for preparation of integrated development plans (IDPs) as laid out in Municipal Systems Bill and the regulations of Municipal Systems Act (Act No. 32 of 2000). The provisions will ensure that structured participation by residents and stakeholder groups is incorporated into choices that are made in the formulation of IDPs".

IDPs are policy documents that are supposed to guide development processes at the local government level. Each municipality is obliged to formulate its own IDP that carries the aspirations and development priorities of the local communities. The Municipal Systems Act (Act No. 32 of 2000, section 29(1)) clearly states the importance of involving local communities in the identification of their development needs. As a result, there is a need to establish whether the problems that perpetuate rural poverty and underdevelopment in post-1994 South Africa reside in the implementation process, or they are the result of a mismatch between rural development policies and the lived realities of rural communities.

It is against this background that the following study problem statement is based: The ANC government promised 'a better life for all' South Africans, especially the formerly disenfranchised rural people. This promise has not been kept. The phenomenon of rural poverty

and underdevelopment persist in the post-1994 era despite numerous policy interventions and promises. The study also focuses on public participation in the policymaking and implementation processes at the local government level. As already stated, public participation creates a platform through which the public can contribute inputs in decision making and implementation processes. In South Africa's case, public participation is more essential as the country emerged from a long history of colonialism and apartheid which denied the majority of South Africans the right to participate in the process of governing (Masango, 2001). To this end, the problem statement reflects a broad policy area that this study seeks to address. The researcher therefore decided to focus on rural development in one particular rural municipality as a case study, namely the Mkhambathini Local Municipality in the province of KwaZulu-Natal.

The Mkhambathini Local Municipality is situated within the uMgungundlovu District Municipality. It covers a geographical area of approximately 917 square kilometres, with a population of about 63 142 people (IDP 2018/2019:12). It is one of the predominately rural municipalities in the province of KwaZulu-Natal and has a total of seven wards. The characteristic of these wards is such that, four are traditional council areas, two are farming areas and one ward has an urban component. The profile of Mkhambathini Local Municipality is described in detail in chapter five of this study.

1.5 RESEARCH AIMS

The researcher acknowledges that public policy making and implementation processes and public participation at the local level are huge and complex policy areas. Public participation in public policy processes, especially in rural communities, can indeed not be over-simplified.

Notwithstanding the complexities of policy implementation and public participation, particularly at the local government level, the aim of the study is to demonstrate the importance of meaningful public participation at the local government level. In this way, the study aims to show that rural development is essentially about the people living in the rural areas and their well-being. It entails recognising the value of local resources and mobilising the same resources and utilising them in a sustainable way to improve the quality of life of the rural people. Furthermore, the study aims to examine the structures of public participation at the local

government level and determine whether such structures provide sufficient power for the public to influence key policy decisions and their implementation. As such, the people living in rural areas cannot be excluded or remain passive in matters that concern their life. Their active involvement in the making of key decisions that affect their life and their active role in the implementation of such decisions should be an integral part of rural development. Although the importance of public participation is emphasised in the rural development policy documents, the study suggests that in reality, the local government is still dominated by top-down approaches in which the role of public participation is not fully promoted, and the voices of the rural people are still muted. The key aim of the study is to investigate the reasons behind the implementation failure of rural development policies in the post-apartheid era in South Africa. To this end, the main research and sub-questions guide the study.

1.6 RESEARCH QUESTION AND SUB-QUESTIONS

The main research question has been stated as: Why does the phenomena of rural poverty and underdevelopment persist in the post-apartheid era despite numerous policy interventions? The main research question is restated here for the purpose of emphasis, and it provides the background for the sub-questions. In this regard, Schulze (2002) asserts that the main research question needs to be fine-tunned by identifying sub-questions which should contribute to the solution of the main problem. In line therefore with this perspective, the following sub-questions have been identified:

- Why does rural poverty and underdevelopment persist in the Mkhambathini Local Municipality?
- What programmes of rural development have been implemented in the Mkhambathini Local Municipality in the post-1994 era?
- What opportunities have the people living in the rural areas of Mkhambathini Local Municipality been given to participate in the policymaking and implementation processes?
- What structures of public participation exist in the Mkhambathini Local Municipality?
- To what extent do the people living in the rural areas of Mkhambathini have the power to influence policymaking and implementation processes?
- What is the relationship between public participation and rural development?

This study draws on both primary and secondary data in the investigation of the above sub-questions and hopes to contribute to a broader understanding of the problems of rural poverty in the post-apartheid South Africa. The researcher acknowledges that the results of the case study are restricted to a single case rural municipality and do not therefore present a generalizable and representative statement of the overall problem. The case study can however contribute to the existing body of knowledge in terms of comparisons to similar contexts. That notwithstanding, the researcher contends that the case study results provide valuable and useful empirical data to understand the problems pertinent to rural development and recommend possible solutions to address them.

1.7 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The main objective of the study is to contribute to the broader issues of rural development and public participation in the post-apartheid era. To this end, the objectives of the study cannot be achieved without fully answering the main research question and the sub-questions which guide the study. Against the above backdrop, the objectives of the study are:

i) To investigate the reasons behind the persistence of rural poverty and underdevelopment in the post-1994 era in South Africa.
ii) To examine the extent to which public participation has been accommodated in the making of rural development policies and their implementation.
iii) To examine whether structures of public participation have sufficient power for rural people to influence rural development policies and their implementation.
iv) To investigate whether public participation is in any way a contributing factor to implementation failure.
v) To understand the multi-dimensional nature of rural poverty and rural development.
vi) To investigate how rural people of Mkhambathini Local Municipality perceive poverty and rural development.

The above objectives describe what the study seeks to achieve. The study examines the rural development policies that have been implemented in the post-1994 era in South Africa to determine the causes of implementation failure. The objective of the study is also to examine the opportunities that people living in rural areas have to participate in the policymaking and implementation processes. To this end, it examines the structures of public participation that exist particularly in the Mkhambathini Local Municipality. To this end, the study seeks to

understand the extent to which public participation has been accommodated in the making and implementation of rural development policies. Public participation is not a new phenomenon in studies of policy implementation. It has been mooted as a fundamental aspect of policy implementation (Brinkerhoff and Crosby 2002:51). The concept also features prominently in the literature on rural development approaches promoted by Chambers in the 1990s such as the Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA). Chambers (1994:953-969) describes PRA as "an approach and methods for learning about rural life and conditions from, with and by rural people". In the context of South Africa, the RDP and the subsequent rural development policies make a provision for public participation. However, it is argued here that meaningful public participation at the local government level still remains a distant ideal.

A survey of the literature on public policy in South Africa indicates that good and forward-looking public policies have been developed in the post-1994 era (Netshitenzhe, 2008). This view indicates that the problem of rural development does not reside in the policies and instead lies in the implementation process. To this end, the objective of the study is to address the question of what makes the implementation of rural development policies in the post-1994 era so difficult to achieve. A further objective of the study is to investigate whether the nature of public participation in rural areas contributes in any way to implementation failure. In this regard, the study endeavours to analyse the nature of the relationship between key concepts of rural development, policy implementation, public participation, and power. These key concepts are examined in order to arrive at definitions that are appropriate for this study. As a result, the study also seeks to explain the view why the government is yet to deliver on its promises to improve the quality of life in rural communities as outlined in the rural development policies. This research has academic value in that, it analyses the relationship between public policy implementation, public participation, and power in the context of rural development in South Africa. The contribution of the study lies in that it establishes a symbiotic relationship between public participation and rural development, and thus posits that sustainable rural development is not attainable without meaningful participation of the people living in the rural areas.

This research is also significant in that, it identifies implementation analysis and evaluation as concurrent processes that are integral to the successful implementation of rural development policies in South Africa post-1994. This identification takes note that the main reason behind the continued problems of rural poverty and underdevelopment relate to the problem of

implementation failure which does not state the specific aspects that need to be addressed during the policy execution process. Therefore, the analysis of the key concepts of policy implementation, public participation and power is necessary to understand the broader issues of rural poverty and underdevelopment in the post-1994 South Africa.

The academic value of this study also lies in that both secondary and primary sources are analysed in the investigation of the research problem. To this end, the Mkhambathini Local Municipality, which is predominantly rural, was used as a case study for the research. The case study provided primary data from participants who are the key players in the policy-making and implementation processes at the local government level. Those are key participants who interact and deliver services directly to rural communities.

Finally, an examination of the nature of public participation at a rural municipality, such as Mkhambathini, enables this researcher to determine whether or not people in rural areas have sufficient power to influence policies that directly affect their life. The researcher argues that public participation without the necessary power is reduced to a public relations act and manipulation of the poor. It also limits the rural people's contribution to their own development and exalts the government as the provider and main actor in the theatre of rural development. In addition, the objective of the study is to contribute to the literature on rural development in the post-1994 South Africa. A review of the available literature reveals a lack of information that links public participation in policymaking and implementation processes directly to rural development in the post-1994 South Africa. It is significant that the study recognises people living in rural areas as the main architects and drivers of rural development and that their public participation can play this role in partnership with government and other stakeholders. In this way, the study places the destiny of rural people in their own hands.

1.8 CHAPTER OVERVIEW

This study is presented as outlined in the chapter summaries that follow:

Chapter one: presents a general introduction to the entire thesis. It explains the background and rationale of the study and the context of the research. It also presents the problem statement and explains the main research question that the study aims to investigate. The chapter also

outlines the main aim of the study based on the background and problem statement of the study. The objectives of the study and its intended contribution to the broader issues of rural development and public participation in policymaking and implementation processes at the local government level in South Africa are also explained in this chapter.

Chapter two: outlines the conceptual framework of the entire dissertation. The meaning of the key concepts such as rural, rural poverty, rural development, policy implementation and public participation are presented in this chapter. The chapter focuses on a broad literature review in order to clarify these key concepts which are a prominent feature of this study. The chapter also provides a theoretical framework which guides the analysis of main issues that the study investigates. To this end, the chapter presents a detailed literature review on policy implementation and public participation. The works of Brinkerhoff and Crosby (2002) on public participation, and Arnstein's ladder of citizen participation are considered in the establishment of a theoretical framework for the analysis of public participation at the local government level, particularly in rural municipalities such as the Mkhambathini Local Municipality in the Province of KwaZulu-Natal which is the case study of this research. Arnstein's ladder of participation is relevant for this study and is utilised as a tool to analyse who has the power in the processes of policy making and implementation at the local government level. It is argued in the study that the participation of people in the rural contexts can only become meaningful when people are given sufficient power to influence key decsions and their implementation.

Chapter three: investigates the growth of rural development policies in the post-Apartheid South Africa. It begins by providing the historical milieu of rural areas in South Africa which are described in this study as unique because they are a result of racial segregation and discriminatory policies of colonialism and the apartheid regime. Beginning with the RDP policy document, the chapter investigates the various phases of formulating rural development policies in the post-apartheid era and identifies the main areas that needed to be addressed. The various phases culminated in the inauguration of the Comprehensive Rural Development Programme (CRDP) in 2009, which became the official rural development policy crafted by the democratically elected ANC government. The CRDP is described as a three-pronged strategy which aims at integrating rural development, land reform and agrarian transformation to achieve social cohesion and development in rural areas. The chapter's conclusion underlines

the significance of a successful implementation of the CRDP in solving the contentious issue of land reform in South Africa and achieving the vision of "a better life for all" in South Africa.

Chapter four: develops the argument that the government's good intentions expressed in policy documents do not automatically produce the intended outcomes at the grassroots level. To this end, the chapter analyses the reasons behind the persistent reality of rural poverty and underdevelopment, despite the existence of good and forward-looking rural development policies. The chapter also identifies a plethora of implementation factors, which must be addressed in order to improve rural development.

Chapter five: explains in depth the methodology and approach to the study. It focuses on the qualitative research and explains why it was chosen as the most appropriate approach to the study of this nature. The chapter also outlines data collection instruments, data analysis, the research participants and ethical considerations for this study. In addition, factors that impact the validity and reliability of qualitative research are explained. Finally, the chapter discusses the notion of and use of a case study research, which was to capture the reality of rural areas and obtain empirical data on the practice of public participation at the local government level.

Chapter six: presents the case study findings. It provides a detailed profile of Mkhambathini Local Municipality as a category B municipality that is characterised by low economic activity, low levels of infrastructure and high rates of poverty and unemployment. The chapter helps to unpack issues of rural poverty, rural development, policy implementation and public participation at the local government level in a rural context. The collected empirical data is analysed and interpreted based on the theoretical work discussed in chapter two of this study. The limitations and factors that perpetuate rural poverty and underdevelopment are also discussed in this chapter.

Chapter seven: concludes the thesis. It presents an overview of the study findings and makes recommendations based on the analysed and interpreted data. It also underlines the source of the problems of rural development in the post-apartheid South, which do not reside in the policy but are as a result of an avalanche of implementation factors that need to be addressed. The chapter also makes recommendations, as part of the conclusion, seeking to improve the implementation of rural development policies and identifies areas that need further research.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on the key concepts underpinning an analysis of rural development policies and their implementation, and public participation. The objective is to construct a conceptual framework, based on a review of literature and examination of the study key concepts. According to Miles and Huberman (1994) and Robson (2002), a conceptual framework is a system of concepts, assumptions, beliefs, and theories that support and inform the research. The chapter draws on the observation that the problems of rural poverty and underdevelopment persist in most parts of the developing world despite the foundation and existence of satisfactory rural development policies and programmes and strategies. It also recognises the complexity of public policy implementation due to the involvement of multiple stakeholders with competing agendas and thus argues that, the co-ordination of activities of various stakeholders is imperative to harness the implementation process. The chapter, therefore, presents a detailed analysis of implementation literature with specific reference to implementation analysis, implementation evaluation, management of implementation and implementation co-ordination.

The chapter highlights the significance of public participation in relation to the making of rural development policies and implementation. The meaningful and active participation of the people living in the rural areas and other stakeholders operating at the grass-root levels is essential to achieve rural development. The chapter argues that public participation should form the basis of implementing rural development policies. The term public includes individuals who live in the rural areas, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), community-based organisations (CBOs) and local institutions that represent the interests of people living in the rural areas and private businesses. More significantly, the chapter argues that people who live in the rural areas need to be empowered and adequately resourced in order to meaningfully participate in their own development. To this end, autonomous organisations based in the rural areas have a critical role to play towards empowering the poor in the rural areas through skills development and training. This underscores that, autonomous organisations should empower rural communities with skills that influence decision-making processes and their implementation. In addition, autonomous organisations that are development focused can

empower the poor in the rural areas with skills to determine the agenda of their development and to utilise their local assets to ameliorate their living.

2.2 CONCEPTUALISING RURAL DEVELOPMENT

The concepts of rural, rural poverty and development represent different dimensions of rural development and therefore, they are critically engaged with here to establish a definition and understanding of rural development for this study. Some of the objective indicators that are associated with rural development are also identified and explained in this section.

2.2.1 Defining the Rural

The term rural is generally used to describe areas in the countryside that fall outside the geographical boundaries of areas that are classified as urban or city centres. These areas are isolated and located in remote areas. However, Malatji (2020) notes that while the term "rural" may seem clear for many people, their interpretations of what constitutes "rural" are often not in agreement. Ashely and Maxwell (2001) also note that the definitions of "rural" are obscure because of the varying degrees of rurality. This view is supported by the European Union (2010) which asserts that rural areas in the European Union (EU) have various communities with different cultures, evnironments, economies and other features. According to Reynnells (2016), federal agencies in the United States use different definitions of "rural" because in that context, rural areas have multidimensional characteristics. Based on this backdrop, it suffices to state that the definition of "rural" depends on the geographical area, country and the criteria applied.

The interpretations and viewpoints of what constitutes "rural" are not homogenous. Deavers (1992) for example, defines "rural" by differentiating it from urban areas. Deavers (1992) elaborates that a rural area is one characterised by small-scale farming, low-density settlements with limited economic activities and is far from urban centres. In addition to being located outside the cities, rural areas have lower population density, no industrialised zones and fewer or poor infrastructural development. A more elaborate description of rural areas is provided by Wiggins and Proctor (cited in Malatji, 2020:14) when they define rural as a "space where human settlement and infrastructure occupy only small patches of the landscape, most of which is dominated by fields and pastures, woods and forest, water, mountain and desert". This indicates that rural areas have characteristics which set them apart from urban areas and cities.

The World Bank (2003a) describes rural areas as the geographical space which includes small towns that each country designates as rural. However, other characteristics notwithstanding, the most basic characyeristics of rural areas is their low population density.

In the Global South, these areas have limited or no access to resources, infrastructural development (roads, electricity, communication etc), quality service provision (education, health care, water and sanitation), economic opportunities nor employment. Van der Ploeg et al (2008) note further that, rural areas in the Global South are characterised by small villages and a simple lifestyle with agriculture being the principal occupation and source of livelihood. It is estimated that 75% of the world's poor reside in rural areas and this percentage is not likely to fall below 50% before 2035 (Alderman, 2000; Ravallion, 2000; Cord, 2011). In the Global South, rural areas are also characterised by high levels of poverty, deprivation, unemployment, and social exclusion that arise from a plethora of challenges and deficits. These challenges include: lack of economic opportunities, poor service delivery and lack of investment (Cord, 2011). Rural areas are also associated with characteristics such as high illiteracy rates, poor health facilities, social, educational, and economic exclusions that perpetuate gender and intersectional inequalities. Rural populations in the Global South tend to be simple in their approach to life owing to their constrained access to resources and economic opportunities (Cord, 2011). As a result, rural populations are rendered more vulnerable to political manipulation and at risk to exploitation by the political and economic elites at both local and national levels.

Location in rural areas and rural life is dominant in Africa. Binns, et al (2012) note that, the majority of Africa's population live in rural areas and they will continue to do so for many years to come. This means that the majority of African people are directly or indirectly affected by poverty and deprivation, hence the need for rural development. The prevalence of poverty in the rural areas of Africa has caused some researchers to use the two concepts of rural and poverty interchangeably (Biggs& Ellis, 2001; World Bank, 1975). This indicates that poverty is largely entrenched in the rural areas of Africa and is a dominant characteristic of rural life in the African context and many parts of the Global South.

In addition, rural areas in the Global South can be identified by their spatial and geo-political characteristics. They are marked by scattered settlement patterns, culture and ethnic diversity. In some cases, they are subjected to both political and traditional authority, which is a

phenomenon that is not common in the cities and urban areas. Mahlati (2011:55) notes that, "[T]he characterisation of rural areas is critical for understanding the human, socio-economic and environmental aspect of development". The rural conditions also reflect a geographical location and spatial dimension in which people living in rural areas make their history and in that way influence their livelihoods and survival strategies. Most rural areas are marked by high rates of poverty, unemployment and gender inequalities and yet, Wiggins and Proctor (2001) argue that rural space has value with rural populations conducting specific productive activities in order to earn their livelihoods. To this end, Wiggins and Proctor (2001:429) state that:

> "It is the immobility of the natural resources that primarily defines the rural economic role. Farm lands, forests, water bodies, mineral deposits and the like are for most practical purposes immobile. We use them on site or not at all. Hence rural areas are usually the location for farming, forestry, quarrying (inland), fishing and mining".

The geographical location and spatial dimension of rural areas determine the socio-economic life and productive activities that can be undertaken by the rural populations living in these areas. The rural space is largely utilised for specific activities such as large scale and subsistence farming. Grant (2011:26) underscores the afore-mention in the statement that rural populations "survive through livestock or crop production from their farms and self-employment". However, the common features of rural areas such as poor infrastructure, illiteracy, poor service provision and lack of economic and education opportunities and choices indicate that the value of the rural space is not adequately exploited for the benefit of the rural populations. As a result, people living in the rural areas, especially the economically active ones migrate to urban areas and big cities in search of economic opportunities. The phenomenon of rural-urban migration exacerbates the problem of urban poverty and unemployment. It also creates the problem of informal settlements on the periphery of urban areas.

On the contrary, rural areas in the Global North exhibit features that are quite different from those associated with the countryside in Africa. According to Luda (2012) the distinction between rural and urban areas in the West and Europe has been problematic. Midgley, Ward and Atterton (2005) also confirm that, the geographical boundaries that separate rural areas from urban areas in the Global North are no longer clear. As a result, these authors argue that

the rural and urban can only be interpreted in relation to each other. A study conducted by Duenckmann (2010) in the German city of Panten revealed that a significant number of people migrate from the cities to smaller rural villages which are perceived as quiet and less hectic. The reasons behind this urban-rural migration are evident in Luda's (2012) observation that, most rural villages in the West and Europe have a well-developed service sector and infrastructure. This is in contrast to the Global South, especially in the African context, where rural villages are less attractive due to poverty, lack of economic opportunities and poor or non-existent infrastructural development. Luda states further that, the phenomenon of urban-rural migration that occurs in the West and Europe causes conflicts in some situations because "the so-called newcomers change the traditional village structure through their differing cultural and social values" (2012:38). This indicates that the conflict is the direct result of the collision between the urban and rural worldviews. To this end, Hajnal (2006:13) adds that, "spatial reorganisation and concentration, and the related changes in occupation and lifestyles are taking place so rapidly that seemingly unmanageable conflicts appear between the emptying and structurally distorted rural areas and the overcrowded urban areas".

The conditions in the West and European rural areas are quite different from those in existence in the Global South regions such as Africa. African rural areas are characterised by massive poverty, lack of service provision, poor infrastructure and limited economic opportunities, which is unlike what obtains in the West and Europe. Luda's research demonstrates that the phenomenon of urban-rural migration that exists in the West and Europe is caused by different factors such as overcrowding and hectic city life. The peace and serenity associated with rural areas in the West and Europe act as a pull factor. According to Luda (2012) and Duenckmann (2010), the proportion of elderly people in rural areas is higher all over Europe than that of the youth. The reason seems to be that elderly people prefer the peace and tranquillity of rural areas as opposed to the hectic and industrious environment of the cities. Furthermore, Luda asserts that the proportion of self-employed people is higher in rural areas and significantly lower in the cities. Luda points out that the majority of urban employees in the West and Europe work in the financial and business service sectors that are concentrated more in the cities than the countryside. An interesting phenomenon is that the proportion of managers and senior officials who reside in the rural villages and work in the cities is above average. This indicates that the rural villages in the West and Europe are not so remote and isolated from the cities in comparison to those in the African context. Furthermore, as already pointed out, road networks,

transport systems, communication systems and the service sectors are well developed. Hence, rural areas in the West and Europe are, as noted by Luda (2012), particularly attractive to the elderly who wish to live in peace and tranquillity where important services and other amenities are readily available.

Although there is no global consensus on the exact meaning of the rural, a survey of the literature on rural development indicates that rural areas in Africa have common features that distinguish them from urban areas. These features include: poverty, poorly developed service sectors, poor road and communication infrastructure, limited economic opportunities, low investment, diseases, hunger and malnutrition, lack of institutional capacity, remoteness and reliance on agriculture as the primary source of livelihood and low population density (Allan and Heese, 2008; Narayan, Chambers, Shah and Petesch, 2000). On the contrary, urban areas are defined as places where people, services, and economic opportunities such as employment are concentrated in a limited geographic area (De Beer and Swanepoel, 2010). Unlike rural areas which suffer from a plethora of deprivations, urban areas hold much promise and therefore, attract people towards them. Another defining characteristic of rural areas in the African context is that they are intrinsically linked to traditional patriarchal authority and traditional leaders who are regarded as the custodians of local customs and cultural values (Galvin, 2010). This indicates that in addition to elected political leaders such as Members of Parliament (MPs) and Local Councillors, rural areas in Africa are ruled by traditional leaders who wield enormous power, authority and influence over rural populations. This is in contrast to the West and Europe where political life is based on democratic principles and processes.

2.2.2 Defining Rural Poverty

The concept of poverty is multi-dimensional and denotes an undesirable condition of life. It is also used to describe varying kinds of human deprivation in society. The complexity of the concept has resulted in the production of various scholarly theorisations and as a result, poverty cannot be confined to a single definition. Burkey (2003) notes that poverty, in its primordial form, is conceptualised as the lack of basic needs that are necessary for an individual human being to survive with dignity. Basic needs refer to essential amenities such as air, clean and safe water, nutritious food, physical and emotional security, appropriate clothing and shelter that are necessary for the individual to live a better life (Hart and Peet, 2009). The perspective of a basic needs approach suggests that, poverty affects individuals and communities, which

lack essential amenities to survive and sustain their individual members. The basic needs essential for a community to survive and sustain its members include, access to nutritious food, adequate communication systems, educational and health facilities, recreational facilities and transport, as well as a political system that provides mechanisms for participatory decision-making (Burkey, 2003). Therefore, basic needs are necessary for the community to function and sustain the well-being of its members.

The basic needs approach provides the framework for two economic definitions of poverty as absolute poverty and relative poverty. According to Schiller (1976), absolute poverty refers to a situation where an individual, community, country or region lacks resources to satisfactorily meet its basic needs. This is a situation in which the lack of money makes it impossible to acquire goods and services that are deemed necessary for an individual, community or country's welfare. In this regard, an individual or household is considered to be relatively poor when his/her income is significantly less than the average income of the population. This refers to a situation where basic needs are met while other perceived needs and desires are still lacking. In essence both types of poverty are determined by income distribution and other income related variables.

Nonetheless, the concept of poverty has been described as 'messy' by researchers such as Laderchi et al, (2003) and Kirsten (2011). For example, Laderchi et al (2003:244) state that,

> "The current approach to the identification of poverty and to policy formulation is rather messy: on the one hand, there is acknowledgement of its multidimensionality, combined with a pick and choose approach in advocacy with little consistency across studies. On the other hand, in practice the monetary approach retains its dominance in descriptions and analysis".

To avoid the messiness, Kirsten (2011) argues that researchers try to adopt the less complex monetary approaches to define and measure poverty. The emphasis on the monetary and material aspects of poverty is useful for measuring consumption and expenditure patterns. In addition, Greeley (1994) asserts that the use of absolute and objective poverty lines generates information that empowers the poverty reduction agenda and encourages the appropriate allocation of resources.

It should be stated, however that, the monetary approach has been strongly challenged by various researchers such as Finnis (1980), Sen (1990) and Chambers (1995). These researchers

unearthed an array of non-material aspects of poverty and human well-being that are not captured by the monetary approach.

Finnis (1980), an Austrian philosopher proposed a comprehensive list of dimensions of poverty that are not addressed by the monetary approach. The list includes health and reproduction, knowledge and education and aspects that include gainful employment, participation in recreational activities, friendship and other valuable relationships. Finnis (1980) argues that poverty cannot be fully addressed without taking into account its non-material dimension. Years later, Sen presents the argument that a standard definition of poverty that focuses only on the deficit or lack of income is quite narrow. Sen (1990) defines poverty, in his seminal work, "Development as Freedom", as capability deprivation. The notion of capability deprivation highlights non-material aspects of poverty such as lack of participation in decision making processes, violation of human rights, powerlessness and susceptibility to violence. For Sen (1990), income and wealth are mere instruments or means that can be used to attain what really matters, which is the kind of life that an individual desires for him/herself and the choices and opportunities available to them. In this regard, capabilities denote the various types of freedom that the individual or community has in terms of the range of choices and opportunities made available to them. Critical to Sen's argument is the notion of freedom which does not only allow people to live the kind of life they value but also influences their world. For Sen, poverty is synonymous to being *unfree*, hence the title of his book, *Development as Freedom*.[2] Therefore, the critical works produced by Sen and Chambers have contributed immensely to the understanding of the non-material aspects of poverty and development. In particular, the various forms of deprivations which sustain poverty and entrap the poor to the extent that, Sen views poverty as both deprivation and *un-freedom*. To this end, non-material poverty entails being deprived of the freedom to choose from a range of goods and services that the poor are also entitled to.

In the same vein, Chambers lists different forms of deprivation that are not adequately captured by the standard definition of income poverty. These deprivations include vulnerability to shocks such as sudden changes in income, ill health, social inferiority, powerlessness,

[2] Sen (1990:10) lists five distinct types of freedoms which are viewed in an instrumental perspective namely; political freedoms, economic facilities, social opportunities, transparency guarantees and, protective security. These freedoms must necessarily be in place in order to dismantle the iron cage of poverty and deprivation that robs the poor of their dignity and well-being.

humiliation and isolation. These deprivations all expose the "weakness in the correlations between income-poverty and some other deprivations" (Chambers, 1983:103).

Chambers is mostly credited for is his work on rural development in Africa that brought him closer to the reality of the poor in the continent's rural areas. Chambers (1983) presents, in his book titled, *Rural Development: Putting the last first*, a thorough analysis of rural poverty in Africa. He describes poverty as a key component of African rural areas that are isolated and excluded. Chambers makes an interesting observation that the true reality of rural poverty in Africa has not been fully perceived by many development workers and researchers, yet the same people have attempted to define and address it. In his introductory chapter (1983:2) Chambers observes that:

> "Outsiders are people concerned with rural development who are themselves neither rural nor poor. Many are headquarters and field staff of government organisations in the Third World. They also include academic researchers, aid agency personnel, bankers, businessmen, consultants, doctors, engineers, journalists, lawyers, politicians, priests, school teachers, staff training institutes, workers in voluntary agencies, and other professionals. Outsiders under-perceive rural poverty. They are attracted to and trapped in urban 'cores' which generate and communicate their own sort of knowledge while rural 'peripheries' are isolated and neglected".

Chambers' analysis reveals the deficiency evident in the way rural poverty has been narrowly defined by outsiders with no existential experience of rural life. The analysis also demonstrates how the isolated rural people have been excluded from defining their poverty and influencing policies aimed at addressing it. The several forms of deprivation that Chambers identifies reinforce each other and constitute what he terms the deprivation trap. Vulnerability and powerlessness are given particular attention and deserve further analysis in this study. Vulnerability relates to how people living in the rural areas lack sufficient buffers to mitigate the impact of natural disasters such as ill health, death, famine and other physical incapacities. It is this lack of buffers that forces the poor in rural areas to sell their assets and thus, amplify their poverty and makes them more vulnerable to the manipulation and exploitation by the ruling political elites (Mbeki, 2005; Chambers, 1983).

Powerlessness relates to the rural poor's lack of power to bargain with the political elites or to protect themselves in the context of unequal social relations. Chambers (1983) notes that, powerlessness is reflected in situations where the rural elites act as a net to intercept benefits intended for the poor and in the inability of poorer people to bargain. Powerlessness affects

women mostly, and those who are physically weak, disabled or destitute. Vulnerability and powerlessness are the two forces that sustain rural poverty. According Myers (2011), powerlessness implies that the rural poor lack the ability and skills to influence the world around them and the social systems in which they live. Myers (2011) adds that powerlessness is often overlooked even by development practitioners because it causes discomfort and is also used by the powerful to exploit and manipulate poor people in the rural areas.

The theme of powerlessness is also explored by Friedmann (1992) who considers poverty as a condition of systematic disempowerment. Friedmann (1992) argues that structural conditions are deliberately created by the elite to keep the poor in their position and limit their access to social power to the level of everyday survival. In his extrapolation, Friedmann (1992) associates social power with civil society but explains that it is quite limited in contrast to other forms of power such as state, economic and political power. In this regard, Friedmann (1992:67) provides a succinct explanation of the different forms of power as noted here:

> "Each form of power is based on certain resources that can be accessed by a collective actor. The state has the law on its side and a monopoly over the legitimate use of violence. Corporations have substantial access to financial resources, the power to shift capital from one place to another, and the power to hire and fire. The political community- parties, social movements, political action committees- has the power to vote, to stage street demonstrations and rallies, and to pressure politicians through lobbying. The power of civil society, finally, is gauged by the differential access of households to the bases of social power".

Friedmann views the household as the social unit of the poor that exists within the framework of four overlapping domains of social praxis namely: state, political community, civil society, and corporate economy. Each of these domains is characterised by a different set of institutions through which it acts. For example, the core of the state consists of the formal executive and judicial arms of government while that of the political community consists of different political organisations. The household forms the core domain of civil society. There also exists domains such as churches and other voluntary organisations, where civil society and the state overlap. The domain of economic power is the corporation and it is more complex due to its interconnection with the global economic system and other transnational corporations. To that end, Myers (2011:70) explains that:

> "[W]here the corporate economy overlaps with civil society, we find the non-formal economic sector and popular economic groups. These interacting domains are the system within which the poor household struggles to find space, location and influence".

The rural poor find themselves confined to the poverty trap with limited options to extricate themselves due to their powerlessness and vulnerability. As a result, the rural poor's survival and well-being depends to a large degree on the goodwill of the political and economic elites who determine policy and the allocation of resources.

Rural poverty can also be defined as a condition of underdevelopment in which the rural poor live under impoverished conditions and in a state of deprivation. According to Pellekaan and Hartnett (1997), the following indicators are associated with rural poverty in Africa:

- Inadequate access to employment opportunities due to isolation of rural areas,
- Inadequate access to physical assets such as land due to the absence of land reform,
- Inadequate access to the means for supporting rural development due to lack of investment by government,
- Low endowment of human capital caused by inadequate and inequitable delivery of education, health, sanitation and domestic water-services,
- Destruction of natural resources which impacts negatively on agricultural production,
- Inadequate access to assistance for those who live at the margin and are often affected by transitory poverty caused by drought, floods or wars,
- Inadequate participation of the poor in the design and implementation of development programmes that results in failure to take the needs of the poor into account, and
- Low physical infrastructure to support rural economies.

The lack of access to resources and opportunities, together with inadequate infrastructure perpetuate rural poverty and expose the rural poor to many risks (Chronic Poverty Research Centre, 2004; Ahmed et al. 2007; Grant, 2011). A further observation by Lipton (1977) is that, those who are more vulnerable suffer the most because those who are more powerful in rural areas capture the benefits of programmes and exploit the poor. As a result, the hardships experienced by the rural poor force them to migrate to urban areas where rural poverty subsequently translates into urban poverty. In this respect, Todaro and Smith (2011) explain that the more developed countries tend to have a more urbanized population while less developed countries have the majority of their populations in rural areas. The less developed countries have fewer urban or big cities as a result of urban bias. Todaro and Smith (2011:315) define urban bias as, "[T]he notion that most governments in developing countries favour the

urban sector in their development policies, thereby creating a widening gap between the urban and rural economies". This indicates that resources in less developed countries are being allocated more to the development of urban areas and big cities at the expense of rural areas. As a result, urban areas become more attractive to the rural poor who are forced to migrate to urban areas in search of a better life.

The migration of the rural poor to urban areas and big cities comes with its own problems and challenges. It increases social cost in the areas of housing and social services in urban areas Rural-urban migration also increases the problem of crime, pollution, and crowding in urban areas (De Beer & Swanepoel, 2010).The growing number of slums and informal settlements on the periphery of urban areas indicates the extent to which rural poverty is being migrated to urban areas. To this end, there is a correlation between rural poverty and urban poverty. This suggests that a reduction in rural poverty would prevent rural people from migrating to urban areas in big numbers and gradually reduceurban poverty. The solution to rural poverty is sustainable rural development. This entails making rural areas more attractive and comfortable for the rural people and investors. It further entails atransformation of the undesirable conditions of life in rural areas into a state of opportunities, growth and enhanced quality of life. Hence, Cord (2011) asserts that, the challenges of rural poverty can be overcome when strategies that are focused on pro-poor growth of the rural sector are devised and vigorously implemented to grow the rural economy. Notwithstanding the above theoretical articulation of rural poverty, one of the objectives of this study is to investigate how people in the rural areas perceive and understand poverty.

2.2.3 Defining Rural Development

Rural development is a subset of development. It is also multi-dimensioal and complex like the term "development". This indicates that there is no universal definition of the term "rural development". This entails those different explanations of development apply to rural development. For Peet and Hartwick (2009:1), "development means making a better life for everyone". Both authors show that the notion of a better life entails the ability of the majority of people to meet their basic needs and have sufficient food to maintain good health; have a safe and healthy place in which to live; access services available to everyone; and to be treated with dignity and respect. These authors make a clear distinction between economic growth and development. They clarify that economic growth is not development but is essential for the production of more goods and services (GDP) to increase the total national income (GNI).

Furthermore, Peet and Hartwick (2009) explain that economic growth can be achieved without addressing the problems of inequality and poverty affecting the majority of the people and, especially the poor. The thrust of their argument is that economic growth is essentially about expansion and production. This researcher contends that economic growth should not benefit the elite alone but should create opportunities for the poor to have easy access to the means of production. One of the key factors of production for the growth of rural economies is land. In this regard, rural development is directly linked to the land question and land tenure in most of the countries in the Global South, especially in Africa. The majority of the people living in rural areas depend on land for their livelihood, yet access to arable land remains a problem.

Land is a complex resource endowed with dualistic characteristics. Firstly, land is a commodity in the economic sense. Yet unlike other commodities, land is completely immobile and each piece of land is associated with a unique location in geographic space (El-Barmelgy et al, 2014). Land has unique qualities, which are linked to natural soil, fertility, mineral deposits, and climatic conditions. This means that all units of land are not of the same grade, and differ in terms of fertility and geographic location. According to El-Barmelgy et al (2014), the application of the same amount of labour, capital and other resources will give rise to differences in productivity with the more superior units being more productive than the inferior ones.

Access to arable land, security of tenure and appropriate skills are critical for the people living in rural areas to sustain themselves and alleviate rural poverty. Access to adequate land enables people living in rural areas to establish small farms for cultivating different crops and keeping livestock for their consumption and to sell the surplus for cash. In this regard, access to land has the potential to contribute to household food security and create opportunities for economic independence and wealth accumulation (Ashley and Maxwell, 2001; Binswanger-Mkhize, Bourguignon, and van dern Brink 2009; Hanstad, Prosterman and Mitchell, 2009). However, the major obstacle to accessing land in rural areas is one of ownership. According to De Soto (2000), poverty of rural people arises from a lack of proof of ownership. For most people living in rural areas in the Global South, land is a common property resource with fluid boundaries that are continuously adapted to suit people's social needs. As a result, most of the people in rural areas do not have an officially registered right of ownership of the land they occupy. De Soto (2000) describes the unregistered farmlands in rural areas as "dead capital" because it cannot be sold nor used by people in rural areas as collateral for accessing credit.

The formalisation of land ownership and security of tenure can encourage investment and development on and off the land. Land can be easily leased or sold to others in times of difficulty, as can the livestock to provide protection against shocks. Rural land owners can also raise credit and use land as collateral against loans. In addition, the formalisation of land ownership in rural areas can make it easier to transfer land to the next generation and allow them to benefit from the security it provides (Thwala, 2006; Hanstad, Prosterman and Mitchell, 2009; Grant, 2011). Furthermore, land reform as part of the process of rural development can contribute to job creation, increase the poor farmers' income and improve rural food security. This researcher posits that, land reform and rural development are intrinsically connected and need to be addressed simultaneously to alleviate rural poverty. However, the process of land reform needs to prioritise skills development and training, as well as the provision of appropriate infrastructure to enable the rural population to engage in productive activities to increase their income and food security.

A survey of the literature on development indicates that development is about change, the kind of change that creates space and opportunities for the poor to exercise their capabilities in a productive manner. Researchers such as Chambers (1983), Friedmann (1992) and Sen (1990), address both the material and non-material aspects of the human condition that include vulnerability and powerlessness, which are the major causes of poverty. On the same trajectory, Singh (1999:20) argues that development entails "a set of desirable societal objectives which a society seeks to achieve". It is when such desirable objectives are achieved that the quality of life that is cherished by the beneficiaries is realised. In this case development implies a change from what is perceived and experienced as an undesirable condition of life(i.e poverty) to what is not just acceptable but also desirable and cherished.

To this end, Todaro and Smith (2011:16), define development as a process that:

> "Must represent the whole gamut of change by which an entire social system, tuned to the diverse basic needs and evolving aspirations of individuals and social groups within that system, moves away from a condition of life widely perceived as unsatisfactory toward a situation or condition of life regarded as materially and spiritually better".

Although the concept of development could mean different things to different people, it essentially entails change from one state of being to another. In the case of this study, it is a change from a state of poverty to a state of growth and improvement. According to Rist (2010), development has a transitive meaning, which means that for change to occur, an action must

be performed by a change agent. The change agent could be government, political organisations, NGOs, CBOs, private sector organisations such as businesses or individuals. It is important to recognise that development is a consequence of action or planned activity that should involve the poor as agents of their own development. To this end, Sen (1999:15) argues that development is more about "how society grants to individuals the capacity for taking part in creating their own livelihoods, governing their own affairs, and participating in self-government". For Sen, development involves people's participation in the making of important decisions that affect their life and environment. The removal of the major sources of *unfreedom* in the poor's lives is imperative for them to act as autonomous agents of change. These sources of *unfreedom* include "poverty as well as tyranny, poor economic opportunities as well as systematic social deprivation, neglect of public facilities as well as intolerance or overactivity of repressive states" (Sen, 1999:3). These sources of *unfreedom* are indeed a handicap to the poor and perpetuate the status quo of poverty and inequality.

As a subset of development, rural development has been defined by Singh (1999:20) as "a strategy to enable a specific group of people, poor rural women and men, to gain for themselves and their children more of what they want and need". Singh elaborates that, regardless of certain factors, such as the geographic location, culture, and the historical stage of the development of a society, there are three basic elements that constitute the true meaning of development. These basic elements are: life-sustenance, self-respect and freedom. Consequently, a society that has fully realised these three elements in practical terms can be classified as developed. Midgley (2004) states further that, rural development is concerned with the well-being of the entire population in the country side. The primary concern of such a process is the provision of basic welfare services such as health care, education, clean water, sanitation, roads and electricity. Rural development is also about improving rural infrastructure and the promotion of production-based activities that create economic opportunities and employment. The primary concern of the process of rural development is the long term growth and improvement of the whole gamut of rural life. The process is dynamic and complex as it seeks to address multiple causes of rural poverty. The table below summarises indicators that can be used to determine the level and extent of rural development in a given situation.

Table 1: Summary of Indicators of Rural Development

Indicator	**Explanation**
Improved infrastructure	Improved infrastructure in various sectors such as roads, communication, educational facilities, health care facilities, clean water, sanitation and electricity is a good indicator of rural development. Infrastructure is necessary for delivering quality services and for growing rural economies.
Economic growth (real income per capita)	Growing rural economies in the agricultural sector and tourism is important for creating jobs and increasing rural income. Economic growth helps to increase the real per capita income amongst the rural population and it creates productive opportunities. Essentially, growing rural economies prevents the depopulation of rural areas caused by rural-urban migration.
Improved social well-being	Social-well-being refers to the quality of social life and welfare. Therefore, access to good education, health care, reduced risks and vulnerability of rural people are good indicators of rural development.
Access to land and security of tenure	Land is a source of livelihood for many rural communities. Therefore, land tenure reform has a direct bearing on rural development. It is imperative that rural people gain access to arable land so that they can engage in productive farming activities. Landlessness perpetuates rural poverty and results in land degradation.
More participation	Participation is central to sustainable rural development. It empowers rural people to take responsibility of their own development in ways that will not harm the future generations. Therefore, rural development occurs when rural people are empowered to take responsibility for all development activities that concern them.
Improved security	Security is one of the basic human needs that rural communities struggle to meet. Rural development should seek to protect vulnerable groups such as women, the elderly and children under the law and ensure that they have easy access to justice. The challenge of rural development strategies is to ensure that rural people live in a safe environment.

Source: Cord, 2011

The above indicators can be used to measure and evaluate the extent of rural development over time. They reflect the dynamic and complex nature of rural development, which must encompass multiple areas of the material and non-material aspects of rural life in order to achieve a better life for all. The indicators also show that the agenda on the eradication of rural poverty remains a mammoth task for most of the developing countries where the majority of

the rural poor are found. Statistics indicate that in 2016, the population of people living in rural areas was nearly 3.4 billion people and that 92% of them were living in the rural areas of the developing world (OECD, 2016a). Data from the World Bank (UN, 2016a) also indicayes that rural populations are higher in Asia and Africa compared to Europe and America. Midgley (2004) notes further that rural poverty, inequality and unemployed have persisted in the developing economies despite impressive national economic growth and rural development policies. The major problem seems to be the lack of both prioritisation and innovative approaches to rural development. Thus, Muzaale (1987:75) observes that:

> "[M]any Governments in Africa have tended to treat poverty as a purely economic problem that could be overcome by means of carefully planned and implemented economic development programmes. But this approach has led not to a reduction in poverty but to a mere increase in average incomes and GNP".

Muzaale's argument demonstrates that aggregate economic development does not necessarily reduce rural poverty or benefit the poor, and that rural poverty is not just an economic problem but a complex one that covers the whole gamut of rural life. The tendency to treat rural poverty as a purely economic problem has resulted in an increase of rural poverty both in incidence and intensity in Africa (Muzaale, 1987:75). The variety of economic measures undertaken to eradicate rural poverty have also not been effective because they have failed to take into account the multiple causes of rural poverty. This indicates that rural development should include a variety of activities and programmes which are designed to bring on board rural people during programme identification, designing and implementation. In addition, this researcher argues that programmes designed to address rural poverty need to involve people living in rural areas in order to be relevant to the rural contexts. Finally, the processes of identifying and designing rural development programmes should be less sophisticated to allow people living in rural areas to play a meaningful role in their implementation.

A review of the available literature on rural poverty and development revealed specific characteristics of rural poverty that set it apart from urban poverty. For that reason, some researchers have argued that it is easier for development agencies and practitioners to influence access to services in urban areas than in rural contexts (Ashley and Maxwell, 2001; Satterthwaite and Tacoli, 2002; Grant, 2011). Wiggins and Proctor (2001) add that it is easier for the poor in peri-urban and urban areas to access services and opportunities because of their proximity to urban centres. On the contrary, it is difficult for the poor living in rural areas to access similar services and advantages because of the distance and travelling costs involved

(Wiggins and Proctor, 2001; Douglas, 2006; Grant, 2011). This indicates that most of the poor African rural dwellers are handicapped from accessing services and job markets by the lack of physical infrastructure. They also lack the necessary power to influence key decisions that affect their lives. The problem requires approaches that take into account various forms of deprivation and *unfreedom* that researchers such as Sen (1999), Friedmann (1992) and Chambers (1983), have identified and elucidated.

2.2.4 Historical background of rural development

The concept of rural development is not new. Baah-Dwomoh (2016) links it to the 1950s when the modernisation theories of development were introduced by the Bretton Woods Institution after World War 2. The modernisation theories promoted economic growth and capitalist economic policies as the solution to the problem of poverty (Phuhlisani Soulutions, 2009). In essence, the modernisation theories were premised on massive Western investiment and transfer of technology to poor countries in the South so that they could also embark on economic growth programmes and achieve the kind of growth that had been achieved in the North. In short, development in the 1950s was equated to "growth and industrialisation". The logic of the modernisation theories was that, for poor and underdeveloped countries of Latin America, Asia and Africa to solve their problems of poverty, they had to take the same developmental trajectory taken by America and Europe. Education and technological advancement were the prerequisite to acquire efficient techniques to bolster mass production (Matunhu, 2011). As a result, rural development programmes which were largely sponsored by America and Europe introduced farmers in Africa to new crops, new production methods and marketing skills (Matunhu, 2011; Ellis and Biggs, 2001). The biggest flaw of the modernisation theories was their inherent assumption that conditions and circumstances of the poor and underdeveloped countries of Latin America, Asia and Africa were homogenous, and that if they followed the same developmental footsteps as America and Europe they would achieve the same level of development. As already stated, the advocates of the modernisation theories focused more on economic growth and industrialisation, and ignored the role played by traditional beliefs and cultural values of traditional societies in the developing world.

The modernisation theories also dominated the 1960s and influenced approaches to rural development. To this end, Baah-Dwomoh (2016:8) explains that:

> "The 1960s saw high expectations of the promise of technology with a focus on technology transfer focused on large scale, input intensive agriculture based on

> packages of higher hybrid seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, mechanisation and post-harvest technologies which came to known as the Green Revolution in Asia".

The above articulation indicates that programmes of rural development in the 1960s focused on modernising agriculture by intensifying technology transfer and increasing inputs. The aim was to encourage rural farmers in poor countries to adopt new technologies and farming methods to achieve mass production. However, as Baah-Dwomoh (2016:8) points out, the approach "largely ignored local and indegeous knowledge, farming systems and tenure arrangements and also targeted mostly men overlooking the fact that much agricultural work was done by women". The fact that the role of rural women in agriculture and indigenous knowledge systems in the area of agriculture were not prioritised puts the sustainability of rural development in the 1960s into doubt. The evaluation of the extension programmes revealed that small scale farmers the majority of whom were women, contributed massively to the economic growth and that, they could easily drive economic development in poor countries. It is apparent that rural development programmes in the 1960s were still influenced by the modernisation theories which aimed at transforming traditional societies in poor countries from their primitive state (sic) to what was regarded as the progressive state (Reyes, 2001).

The 1970s saw a shift in the development discourse which also changed ideas informing rural development approaches. A study conducted by the World Bank in 1972 (quoted in Phuhlisani Solutions, 2009:11) concluded that, "It is now clear that more than a decade of rapid growth in underdeveloped countries has been of little or no benefit to perhaps a third of their population". The conclusion of the study indicates that economic growth does not necessarily lead to improvement of the quality of life of the poor. Put differently, economic growth without the transfer of resources and services to the poor in rural areas does not result in rural development. A paradigm shift in rural development approaches occurred in the 1970s as a result of the World Bank governor's speech which was delivered in Nairobi, Kenya in 1973. The governor acknowledged the imperative of poverty alleviation programmes and endorsed the adoption of new policy on rural development (Takeuchi, 2000). The proposed policy expanded the scope of rural development to include targeted investiment in agriculture, health and education, as well as the pvovision of physical infrastructure. In other words, the new policy took cognisence of the multi-dimensional nature of poverty, hence the adoption of a holistic approach to rural development. The new policy promoted the basic needs approach and the Integrated Rural Development (IRD) projects which focused on the provision of social services and financing

of agricultural programmes to increase income and food production in poor countries. The IRD projects in particular, aimed at creating a link between national policies and various government institutions to guide and regulate the planning and implementation of rural development programmes. According to Baah-Dwomoh (2016), the impact of the IRD projects of the 1970s was felt more in Asia and Africa. To this end, poor countries in Africa are said to have benefited more from the development of rural infrastructure, although in the main, "integrated rural development projects" performed poorly due to weak state institutions in most African countries (Baah-Dwomoh, 2016:9).

In the 1980s and 1990s rural development was affected by the Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAP), which were introduced by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. The SAPs forced poor countries, especially in Africa, to embark on economic and structural reforms which were intended to liberalise their economies and instil fiscal discipline, and promote good governance (Baah-Dwomoh, 2016). As a result, most African governments were forced to reduce their expenditure on social services and play a limited role in rural development. The non-state actors such as the international non-governmental organisations emerged to play animportant role of financing and implementing rural development programmes. The Word Bank and international donors also played a pivotal role of sponsoring rural development programmes in poor countries. However, the introduction of the SAPs adversely affected rural development and exacerbated poverty in Africa. It is difficult to ascertain the trickle-down effects that the SAPs were intended to achieve.

However, rural development approaches changed beginning of year 2000 with the approval and adoption of the Millenium Development Goals (MDGs) and Sustainable Livelihood (SL) strategies. The SL strategies take into account the various approaches that the poor employ to sustain themselves and focus on enhancing the livelihood sources of the poor in rural areas. The MDGs were adopted with the intention of reducing extreme poverty by half in all its facets by year 2015. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have since replaced the MDGs. The concept of sustainable development has become prominent in the development discourse because of the global challenges of climate change. This indicates that rural development policies in general have to incorporate the component of sustainability and contribute towards the mitigation of climate change. The concept of sustainability also promotes community-

driven rural development approaches and public participation in the making and implementation of rural development policies.

2.3. ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK FOR PUBLIC POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

This section focuses on the concepts: policy and public policy by examining the literature on policy studies. The concept of public policy implementation is particularly considered because it is central to this study.

2.3.1 Conceptualising Public Policy

A host of scholars of policy studies have defined both policy and public policy (Anderson, 2011; De Coning and Wissink, 2011; Bayat and Ferreira, 2006; Weimer and Vining, 2005; Hill and Hupe, 2002). A policy is a comprehensive framework which gives direction and sets the parameters for various stakeholders involved in resolving an issue of public concern. Anderson (2011:6) elaborates that, "a policy is defined as a relatively stable, purposive course of action or inaction followed by an actor or set of actors in dealing with a problem or matter of concern". Hanekom (1987) states that, a policy is indicative of a goal, a specific purpose, or programme of action that has been decided upon and must be pursued to achieve a specific objective for society. Finally, De Coning and Wissink (2007:4) explain that a policy is "a statement of intent or an action plan to transform a perceived problem into future solution". The difference between the various definitions of policy appears to be one of semantics and does not alter the essence of the phenomenon. Thus, whether a policy is defined as a framework of interaction, a declaration or purposive course of action, it must be directed to a problem or situation of concern that needs to be addressed.

Nonetheless, a policy can also be defined as an intervention strategy that gives direction on how to change a situation of concern or resolve a problem. Here, a policy identifies and defines a problematic situation, and outlines a plan of action to change the situation. It thus, defines what needs to be done to deal with the matter of concern. It also provides the legal framework within which actions to resolve the problematic situation have to be conducted. Ultimately, a policy develops over time and passes through various stages until it is recognised as official and legally binding.

Public policy is the outcome of a policy-making process. In this regard, Hanekom and Thornhill (1993) argue that policy-making is the activity that precedes the publication of a goal or

declaration of a purposive course of action. Public policies are developed by government bodies and public officials. Although other role players such as non-governmental organisations and other interest groups may participate in the policy-making processes and even determine policy direction, a policy only becomes public policy when it has been officially adopted by government (Anderson 2011:7). In this respect, Bayat(2006:108) explains that, "public policy is a desired course of action that is aimed at the realisation of public goals and objectives, and which is made public by means of legislation". According to Hogwood and Gunn (1984:19), public policies are subjectively defined and consist of a series of decisions that are taken jointly by politicians and other public officials rather than individuals. The decisions taken have to be goal oriented or action directed so that they can produce specific results that benefit society. Hill and Hupe (2002:5)note further that, public policies have a purposive character and are generally linked to societal problems to which they are supposed to offer a solution.

The process of public policy making is diverse and extremely complex as it involves numerous stakeholders with different political and personal interests. The process identifies an issue of public interest and brings it to the policy-making agenda after which follows the consultation of the public and key stakeholders, and in most cases, a robust debate by policy makers. Traditionally, scholars have identified five or six sequential phases of public policy namely: i) problem identification and agenda setting, ii) Policy formulation iii) Policy Adoption iv) Policy implementation and vi) Policy evaluation (Anderson, 2011; Cloete, and De Coning, 2011). Other scholars add the sixth phase of policy review or termination (Bayat, Fox and Ferreira, 2006). Nonetheless, the government is, as pointed out earlier, the main driver of the public policy-making process. Finally, public policies are processed and finalised through public institutions, even if other stakeholders may have been instrumental in their making (Hogwood and Gunn, 1984:23).

Public participation is an integral part of the policy making process and policy implementation. This study focuses on what happens when a public policy has been officially adopted by government. In other words, the study examines that critical phase of the policy-making process without which the objectives and goals of the policy cannot be achieved, and that is the phase of implementation which does not happen automatically. It requires the political will and availability of resources to put it into effect. In addition, implementation of public policy cannot be taken for granted because of its complex nature. Public participation creates a space

for multiple stakeholders with their different personal and political interests and exposes the process to many challenges. Therefore, it is imperative to clarify the concept of public policy implementation and identify the challenges that could hinder the implementation process. It is less wonder then that, Henakom (1994) describes public policy implementation as the vulnerable point of the entire policy process because the outcomes of any public policy depend on it.

2.3.2 Public Policy Implementation

This section argues that public policy implementation should be taken seriously due to its complex nature. It points out that public policy implementation is not a straightforward process due to the involvement of multiple stakeholders with different political and personal interests. In addition, it argues that the implementation of any public policy is always affected by different factors that can be found in or outside the policy environment.

The concept of public policy implementation is historically linked to Pressman and Wildavsky (1973) who identify implementation as an integral part of the policy process. Their focus on the implementation aspect of public policy marked a paradigm shift in policy studies. Their aim was to explain the discrepancy that researchers identify between policies as they appeared on policy documents and the reality of the situation they were intended to address on the ground. Pressman and Wildavsky (1984) defined implementation as a process of interaction between the setting of goals and actions taken to achieve them. Parsons (1995) later explains that implementation is about change and how change, as a dynamic process occurs as a result of implementation. Furthermore, Parsons (1995) explains that the dynamism of public policy implementation is a result of interaction between various stakeholders, such as politicians, administrators, service providers and local organisations, who get involved in the implementation process.

According to Mazmanian and Sabatier (1983), public policy implementation marks that stage of the policy process where basic policy decisions and objectives are acted upon by those who have been mandated to do so. The manner in which policy decisions are acted upon can produce or fail to produce the desired change. Paudel (2009) also state that, those mandated to act on policy decisions are usually centrally located actors such as politicians andtop-level bureaucrats who have access to the resources. Paudel's view portrays public policy implementation as a prerogative of those who are well resourced and politically connected. It suggests that the poor

and those in local contexts cannot contribute to public policy implementation because they lack resources and political power. Paudel seems to confine public policy implementation to the top-down perspective. However, the approach to public policy implementation will be discussed later in this chapter. O'Toole (2003), argued that public policy implementation begins with the establishment of an intention by government to do or stop doing something and ends with the practical impact of such an intention. In this way, the implementation of public policy is not located in any specific stage but is seen as running through the whole gamut of the policy-making process. However, the essence of public policy implementation is captured by Bayat (2006:108)in a statement that, "[T]he aim and expected practical implication of any public policy implementation is to change the statement(s) of intent, set out in a policy, into practical operational steps". This indicates that, unless a public policy is implemented, it remains dead on paper. Implementation therefore, embodies the pragmatic dimension of public policy. It also ignites the policy process to yield practical results. Put differently, the policy in question should be implemented and its impact should be assessed to determine whether or not the intended objectives have been realised.

The dynamic and complex nature of public policy implementation is the result of the involvement of multiple stakeholders with different levels of personal power and economic interests, as well as political interests. Each of the stakeholders has an agenda and uses their power to influence the implementation process to deliver the results that will satisfy their constituency. Therefore, public policy implementation is not just dynamic and complex. It constitutes the contested space of the policy process. Bardach (1977:3) succinctly describes public policy implementation as follows:

> "It is hard enough to design public policies and programmes that look good on paper. It is harder still to formulate them in words and slogans that resonate pleasingly in the ears of political leaders and the constituencies to which they are responsive. And it is excruciatingly hard to implement them in a way that pleases anyone at all, including the supposed beneficiaries or clients".

Bardach's articulation indicates that public policy implementation is confronted with a conundrum of factors that make it difficult to execute. These factors include political, economic and personal interests of stakeholders, lack of resources, ambiguities of policy goals, poor communication and power dynamics which create winners and losers. These factors can be identified through implementation analysis and addressed by an effective management and coordination of the implementation process. According to Brinkerhoff and Crosby (2002), all

the above factors notwithstanding, the management and coordination of public policy implementation, are of paramount importance.

2.3.3 The Imperative of Implementation Analysis and Evaluation

Implementation analysis and evaluation are diagnostic tools that help to explain why some policies fail while others succeed. Public policy implementation is not simply an administrative problem but a political one which is concerned with who gets what, when, how, where and from whom (Brynard, Cloete and De Coning, 2011). Public policy implementation, as pointed out, involves the interaction of multiple stakeholders with different interests, goals and strategies. Implementation analysis and evaluation consider the operational level of implementation in relation to the results produced. Patton (1997) makes a clear distinction between implementation analysis and implementation evaluation. However, this distinction is relevant at a theoretical level, but at a practical level these are two processes that are interactive and compliment each other (deLeon and deLeon, 2002:475). According to Patton (1997), implementation analysis provides information that explains what would have actually happened in the implementation process that can be linked to the outcome. It produces information that explains the specific aspects of a policy that worked or failed. Therefore, it links specific aspects of a public policy to its outcomes and also explains the unintended outcomes of the specific policy.

Implementation evaluation focuses on determining whether the policy has all the parts that are necessary for it to function, and whether the parts are functioning as they are supposed to or not. Implementation evaluation focuses on the policy's key characteristics, the people involved in the implementation process and whether they have the necessary skills or not. Ultimately, both implementation analysis and implementation evaluation are necessary steps of the implementation process. They have a salient importance of explaining why the policy produced or did not produce the intended outcomes. In addition, they determine whether the policy in question worked or not and explain why the policy produced "A" instead of "B" which was intended. The significance of implementation analysis and evaluation is that they both explain the multi-stakeholder problem of public policy implementation which Peter (2012:21) succinctly describes as follows:

> "Rather than a simple enactment of political decisions, implementation analysis suggests that the relationships within and between public agencies are highly complex and difficult to manage. What appears to be a neutral and straightforward

> mechanism to translate intentions into reality is in fact comprised of many public, quasi-public and private decision-making bodies, all of which are involved in the policy process and have considerable freedom to act, and whose leaders seek to realize their interests and values. These people seek to influence the content of policy as well as manage the details of its administration".

The above articulation exposes the multi-stakeholder problem of power dynamics inherent in public participation and public policy implementation processes. Each of the stakeholders seeks to influence the process and gain control of its administration. To this end, O'Toole (2000:266) asserts that, implementation represents "the multi-actor character of policy action" which plays out in the policy environment. O'Toole (2000:266) argues further that beneficiaries of a policy must be actively involved and be "among the parties who contribute towards implementation through coproduction or some other less direct fasion". deLeon and deLeon (2002:468) argue that, "the study and practice of policy implementation would be much better served were its practitioners to adopt a more participatory, more directly democratic orientation". This study is premised on the assumption that the bottom-up approach to the implementation of rural development policies in the post-1994 era in South Africa is more realistic and pragmatic to achieve the vision of 'a better life for all', especially for the poor living in the rural areas. In this regard, deLeon and deLeon (2002:478) assert that a bottom-up approach to policy implementation is more conducive for public participation than a top-down or command model. However, the challenge of public participation (i.e. multiple institutional actors, government departments, civil society organisations, community-based organisation, private businesses and individual citizens) is that the cooperation of different actors and their coordination is required and needs to be managed well.

2.3.4 The Imperative of Managing Public Policy Implementation

Brinkerhoff and Crosby (2002) argue that, public policy implementation largely fails as a result of poor management. The complex nature of public policy implementation can become a barrier to its success if it is not managed efficiently. Brinkerhoff and Crosby (2002:6) state that:

> "The policy implementation process is at least as political as technical, and is complex and highly interactive. Besides technical and institutional analysis, it calls for consensus-building, participation of key stakeholders, conflict resolution, compromise, contingency planning, and adaptation".

The existence of the numerous stakeholders compels, Brinkerhoff and Crosby (2002:6) to posit that "successful policy outcomes depend not simply on designing good policies but upon

managing their implementation". It is conspicuous from Brinkerhoff and Crosby's argument that public policy implementation is highly problematic and that good policy outcomes depend on a proper management of the implementation process. Logically, this indicates that failure to manage the implementation process well subsequently results in poor policy outcomes. For this reason Fox and Bayat (2006) argue that public policy implementation requires a planned and perceptive management effort.

Although Brinkerhoff and Crosby (2002) emphasise the importance of managing the implementation process, they also caution on the difficulties involved. Both scholars argue that the difficulties emerge when managing public policy implementation is contrasted with project management. Brinkerhoff and Crosby (2002:23)explain the many differences that they identified thus:

> "Policy implementation is hardly a linear and coherent process. In contrast, programmes and projects have a beginning and an end; they have specific time-lines; targets and objectives are clearly specified for each phase; and plans and actions are defined to reach those targets. In policy implementation, change is rarely straightforward because the process of policy implementation can often be multidirectional, fragmented, frequently interrupted, unpredictable, and very long term".

Although it is important to highlight these distinctions between managing policy implementation and managing projects and programmes, Van Baalen and De Coning (2011) point out that in reality, public policies are implemented through programmes and projects. Programmes consist of various activities of the government that need to be formally coordinated in order to deliver intended outcomes. Each government programme must have a programme head to manage and monitor the on-going activities to ensure that activities are carried out according to the plan and that resources are put to good use. Projects are designed to deliver the policy objectives within the given timeframe and budget allocation. Each project has a project manager who manages and integrates all aspects of the project to ensure that the project is completed on schedule and that the results are satisfactory (Burke, 2007; Portny, 2007). According to Van Baalen and De Coning (2011:171), "[A] policy is a relatively detailed statement of government objectives in a sector and a general statement of the methods to be used in achieving those objectives". Programmes and projects are used to bring policy objectives into reality via the implementation process. As a result, the implementation of public policies is managed through programme and project management processes. These processes

require competent programme heads and project managers to manage the various programme activities and projects to deliver the specific policy goals.

Despite the challenges of managing policy implementation, Brinkerhoff and Crosby(2002) delineate a set of tasks that need to be performed to help manage the implementation process better. These tasks include, policy legitimisation, constituency building, resource accumulation, organisational design and modification, mobilising resources and actions, and monitoring the progress (Brinkerhoff and Crosby, 2002:25). The task of lobbying for policy legitimacy is paramount and has to be carried out by public officials and policy makers who need to gain wider support for the particular policy. According to Brinkerhoff and Crosby (2002:25), for policy legitimacy to be achieved:

> "Some individual, group, or organisation must assert that the proposed policy is necessary and vital, even though it will present serious costs. This step involves the emergence or designation of a policy champion, some individual or group with credibility, political resources, and the willingness to risk that political capital in support of the policy".

The above articulation indicates that a public policy achieves its legitimacy when key stakeholders are convinced that the proposed policy is worth pursuing and when it gains grassroots support. This suggests that public policies must be marketed to relevant stakeholders and the public to establish strong constituencies that support it and participate in its implementation. Brinkerhoff and Crosby (2002:26) assert in concurrence that:

> "Policy managers or reformers should not assume that because a policy is sound or correct, support will automatically be forthcoming or that stakeholders will clearly and immediately see that it is in their interest to support the change. Development of strong constituencies requires that policy managers market the reform in language that makes the change both understandable and appealing to potential supporters".

It is clear that failure to establish strong constituencies that support a public policy is one of the factors that can lead to poor policy outcomes. It is essential that a public policy is supported by key stakeholders and those whose lives will be affected by the said policy, especially at grass-root level. It is easy for key stakeholders and the general public to support a policy or programme in which they contributed their input. Policies that are relevant to the local context stand a chance of being accepted and supported. Furthermore, strong constituencies allow policy managers, where feasible, to form public policy implementation partnerships with relevant government departments and other local organisations. This helps to avoid competing for scarce resources and the duplication of programmes in the policy environment.

2.3.5. Coordination of Public Policy Implementation

The imperative of coordinating the implementation of public policies was first highlighted by Pressman and Wildavsky (1984:133) in their statement that, "[N]o phrase expresses as frequent a complaint about the federal government as does 'lack of coordination'. No suggestion for reform is more common than 'what we need is more coordination". Similar sentiments were later expressed by Sproule-Jones (2000) as noted in his argument that all governments, government departments and public-private relations require coordination to deliver the desired outcomes. Furthermore, Leite and Buainain (2013) and Cohen (2003) underscore the significance of coordination necessitated the changes and reforms that have made the operations of the public-sector more complex. These changes have created a context in which the State is no longer the only actor in public policy management. The cross-cutting nature of social problems that governments have to deal with today require that governments to be more flexible and inclusive in managing public policies (Leite and Buainain, 2013; Kenis and Provan, 2006; Bakvis and Juillet, 2004; Bueren et al, 2003; Sproule-Jones, 2000).

According to Brinkerhoff and Crosby (2002), the multi-stakeholder and cross-sectoral nature of public policy implementation has created a situation where nobody is really in charge in the traditional sense. Instead, linkages are established between stakeholders with varying degrees of interdependence. The actions of interdependent stakeholders create a complex system, which requires coordination to eliminate fragmentation and increase cooperation for the purpose of delivering satisfactory outcomes. In addition, coordination addresses the problem of gaps in service delivery and helps to eschew unnecessary duplication of services (Gillespie, 1991). For Brinkerhoff and Crosby (2002), coordination involves information-sharing, resource-sharing, and joint action. Information-sharing takes place when one stakeholder or subunit, within the same organisation, informs the others involved in implementation about what would be going on. This could be done through the distribution of written reports, public hearings, or holding joint-meetings. Resource-sharing occurs when resources under the control of one actor or group are allocated to one or more organisations involved in the implementation of a particular policy. Joint action occurs when two or more organisations undertake an activity collaboratively, meaning that they act together, either sequentially, reciprocally or simultaneously (Brinkerhoff and Crosby, 2002; Alter and Hage, 1993). For example, joint action is manifested when different stakeholders plan and deliver services together in partnership and monitor implementation of programmes together.

Leite and Buainain (2013) identify two dimensions of coordination in the process of public policy implementation. The first dimension occurs at the interpersonal level and the second dimension is manifested at the organisational level. The first dimension reveals that individuals and their interactions are of paramount significance in the coordination process. The second dimension is concerned with the incentives and constraints that organisations present for coordination. These dimensions require further elaboration to understand the central role of coordination in public policy implementation.

The interpersonal dimension of coordination is built on the sociological understanding that individuals construct social reality through their actions (Chanlat, 1994). This construction takes place within the existing framework in which individuals interact with their environment. According to Leite and Buainain (2013:139), it is imperative to understand the context of interaction between individuals and their environment because:

> "…the characteristics of individuals such as their rationality, their symbolic universe and their interests and choices are all aspects that are especially relevant to a discussion on the coordination of policy implementation".

To this end, Simon (1947), argued that an individual's cognitive structure makes it impossible to achieve objective rationality because real human behaviour is characterised by many points of disconnectedness and is never congruent to the ideal form of rationality. Consequently, the decisions and choices that individuals make "are necessarily limited, as are the information and knowledge they can obtain and the extent to which they can assimilate the environment" (Leite and Buainain, 2013:139). The situation of the individual's limitation and behaviour was described by Simon (1982) as bounded rationality.

For public policy, this means that no policy maker can formulate a policy decision that covers all aspects and policy alternatives. This indicates that, there will always be gaps that allow "individuals or groups responsible for implementation to determine many elements of a public policy that are merely outlined during the formulation stage" (Leite and Buainain, 2013:140). In this respect, Lipsky (1980) and Goggin et al. (1990) argued that individuals in the local policy environment wield enormous power during public policy implementation, and in this way they determine public policy. It is essential that the interactions of the various actors involved in the implementation of public policies be coordinated although coordination can be difficult in situations where bad relationships exist between individuals or groups. However, interactions where good relationships exist between individuals or groups can increase chances

of implementation success. This indicates that hostility between individuals or groups involved in public policy implementation is another factor that could lead to poor policy outcomes. Leite and Buainain (2013:142) assert that "rivalry and the existence of cliques in an implementation team intensify information asymmetry and erode trust". Therefore, the interpersonal dimension of coordination is critical in the implementation of public policies.

Although it is important to coordinate individuals and their interactions, it is equally important to recognise that individual's actions and interactions can be restricted by the organisational structure to which they belong. The organisational environment consists of formal and informal rules which influence and shape individual's actions and interactions. Both the formal and informal rules can serve as incentives or constraints to the behaviour of the individual or group.[3] In this regard, Leite and Buainain (2013:141) argue that, "…the rule structure present in a particular environment significantly influences individual behaviour, social interaction and efforts to achieve goals". Goggin at el (1990) also note that incentives and constraints play an important role in influencing the behaviour and efforts of implementing agents who act within the formal and informal organisational framework. As a result, coordination takes place through formal and informal mechanisms (Leite and Buainain, 2013). Formal mechanisms include organisational design and hierarchical systems which are characterised by various relationships between superiors and subordinates at different levels. These formal relationships are guided by written rules and procedures. But this does not make the coordination of public policy implementation easier because problems of control and subordination will always emerge during the implementation process.

The formal mechanism of coordination involves the development of an action plan and communicating that plan to all the people and organisations involved in the execution of that plan. It involves getting all the parties involved to accept the plan before implementing it. But the real challenge of coordination lies with the actual implementation of the action plan. For the implementation of public policies to be effective, coordination must be done at the vertical and horizontal levels among the involved organisations and within them. According to Peters (2005), cross-sectoral coordination is essential during policy creation and implementation

[3] According to Milgram & Roberts (1992), organisational incentives and constraints include the presence of a career plan and projection, presence of financial incentives for performance, and punishments for poor performance.

because it improves efficiency and effectiveness of policies. It also helps to avoid policy contradiction and redundancy, and can maximize budgetary resources. However, Schout and Jordan (2005) caution that coordination can be difficult when different policy sectors and implementing agents have separate goals, which can cause conflict among the actors.

Coordination can help to achieve cooperation between individuals and implementing organisations. The interdependence between various implementing agencies and individuals requires more elaborate forms of coordination. According to Chisholm (1989), interdependence in the context of policy implementation establishes the common purpose for joint action. However, interdependent relations can be complex, which calls for the need for coordination to build the necessary convergence among different stakeholders (Leite and Buainain, 2013). As a result, O'Toole and Montjoy (1984) present three categories of interdependent relationships that exist in the intra-organisational context and these are: pooled, sequential and reciprocal interdependence.

Here, pooled interdependence occurs when the organisations involved in the policy implementation provide their own contributions without having to deal with each other in the process. Sequential interdependence occurs when the output of one implementing organisation or unit becomes the input of the other. O'Toole and Montjoy (1984) note that, organisations in a sequential interdependent relationship "are arranged in assembly-line fashion". Reciprocal interdependence creates opportunities for the other to act in a mutual manner to achieve the policy goals. These categories are helpful for illustrating the basic nature of inter-organisational relationships, but do not explain the various ties and connections between units or individuals. They also do not explain whether agents may act with a certain level of autonomy or not. Nonetheless, as Leite and Buainain (2013) explain, the different types of interdependence demonstrate the complexity of interactions that exist between various actors during policy implementation.

The literature reveals that coordination is not easily achieved, even where formal mechanisms exist. There are three problematic areas that need to be addressed for inter-organisational coordination to be effective. These are: threats to autonomy, lack of task consensus, and conflicting requirements from vertical and horizontal linkages (Brinkerhoff, 1991; Briknerhoff and Crosby, 2002).

Interdependence can easily become a threat to the autonomy of individual organisations who want to maintain their control over resources, inputs and outputs, as well as their operations (Leite and Buainain, 2013). Interdependence means that organisations cease to become entirely autonomous entities and become invariably dependent on other organisations to which they are linked. According to Lindblom (1965), interdependence means that actors become capable of influencing each other's choices and interests in a variety of ways. In addition, Brinkerhoff and Crosby (2002) argue that organisations become reluctant to engage in coordination should they believe that the coordination requirements impinge upon their independence. The threats to autonomy are increased by diverse interests of stakeholders, different operational procedures of cooperating agencies, scarcity of resources and complicated linkages between organisations. These threats can be alleviated and minimised through bargaining and negotiation. In addition, rules and regulations to safeguard the independence of actors can be formulated and agreed upon.

The lack of consensus among implementing agents regarding the task to be performed is another factor that makes coordination so important. For Brinkerhoff and Crosby (2002:120), lack of task consensus can be due to disagreement on "the client groups to be targeted, the actions to be undertaken, the services to be provided, the methodologies to be employed, and so on". Cooperation between implementing organisations is difficult to achieve when there is lack of task consensus. Nonetheless, lack of task consensus can be resolved through bargaining and negotiation until a workable consensus is reached.

Coordination is essential in order to achieve an effective public policy implementation. It is also evident from the surveyed literature that coordination of public policy implementation can be a mammoth task due to multiple actors. The factors that make coordination difficult to achieve are summarised by Brinkerhoff and Crosby (2002:121) in their statement that:

> "Most implementation actors belong to a variety of networks, some formal hierarchies in the case of sectoral ministry units, or more informal and lateral systems, for example, in the case of civil society groups or community associations. Frequently, coordination places actors whose actions are to be coordinated in a situation in which they are subject to conflicting demands. The most common conflict is between the requirements for participating in lateral coordinated activities at the field level and in vertical sectoral hierarchies. Some of the difficulties here arise from legal constraints imposed by enabling legislation and administrative statutes that place limits on an agency's margin for maneouver".

In addition, Brinkerhoff and Crosby (2002) point out that various countries' public administration systems put restrictions on the use of public resources or demand authorisation prior to utilisation of funds. In most cases, the approval for the use of funds takes place after long delays. These requirements limit the ability of organisations or department units to cooperate flexibly with other actors. Brinkerhoff and Crosby (2002) add that the situation is exacerbated by the diversity of actors some of whom may resist coordination if it diverts resources from the activities they want to maintain. Despite the challenges, coordination can be the solution to implementation problems. It can improve the implementation of rural development policies that involve the participation of various actors and are cross-sectoral. The approach adopted for policy implementation has a direct impact on its coordination. Brinkerhoff and Crosby (2002:118) assert that, a multi-actor policy implementation process "is not a question of command and control". This indicates that the approach adopted in public policy implementation should be flexible enough to accommodate the various actors with different interests. Hence, the approach should promote public participation in policy implementation, especially when implementing policies aimed at developing grass-root communities.

2.3.6 Approaches to Public Policy Implementation

There are various implementation approaches that have been mooted since the genesis of implementation studies in the 1970s. A survey of the literature on the evolution of implementation studies reveals the various attempts that have been made by researchers to construct a concrete implementation theory. These attempts are largely informed by the different approaches to policy studies and practice. According to Matland (1995), implementation research has evolved through three generations, with the first generation covering the period from the 1970s to the 80s; the second stretching from the 1980s to the 90s, and the third generation covering the period from the 1990s to current studies (quoted in Raj Paudel, 2009:38). Pressman and Wildavsky's (1973) work set the stage for the study of policy implementation in the 1970s. Their USA-based research focused on finding out why policy goals were difficult to achieve on the ground. As a result, they sought to understand why the good intentions expressed in Washington were not bearing the intended results in Oakland (Hill and Hupe, 2002:66).

An analysis of the generational research focuses is imperative. Sabatier and Mazmanian (1981) note that, the first generation of implementation research focused on identifying and

understanding the factors of policy implementation. In this regard, the researchers were able to identify factors in the policy environment such as size, intra-organisational relationships, commitment, capacity and institutional complexities and ascertain how such factors influence policy responses (Paudel, 2009).

The second generation of implementation researchers focused on analysing and describing the relationships between policy and practice (Paudel, 2009). These researchers identified the significance of time periods as a key factor in policy implementation (Paudel, 2009; Goggin, et al., 1990; Van Horn, 1987). The second-generation researchers emphasised the significance of considering both the historical period and duration of the time that the policy was implemented. Part of the achievements of the second-generation implementation researchers was the development of two analytical frameworks and these are: the top-down and bottom-up perspectives. Both distinct frameworks have dominated implementation studies to the extent that they form the basis for the subsequent implementation theories that have been mooted. Finally, the third generation of researchers were less concerned with implementation failure (Brynard, Cloete and De Coning, 2011). Instead, they focused on understanding how implementation works in general and what could be done to improve it. The major contribution of the third-generation researchers is their explanation of the factors that impact public policy implementation.

A survey of the vast literature on public policy implementation studies reveals that the debate is centred on the top-down and the bottom-up perspectives which have distinct characteristics as summarised in the table below.

Table 2: Differences Between Top-Down and Bottom-up Perspectives

Variables	**Top-down perspective**	**Bottom-up perspective**
Policy decision-maker	Policy makers	Street-level bureaucrats
Starting point	Statutory language	Social problems
Structure	Formal	Both formal and informal
Process	Purely administrative	Networking, including administrative
Authority	Centralised	Decentralised
Output/Outcomes	Prescriptive	Descriptive
Discretion	Top-level bureaucrats	Bottom-level bureaucrats

Source: Raj Paudel, 2009:40

The basic argument advanced by the proponents of the top-down perspective (Dunsire, 1990; Linder and Peters, 1987; Mazmanian and Sabatier, 1981; Edwards, 1980; Gunn, 1978; Van Meter and Van Horn, 1974) is that the policy process is rational and therefore amenable to intelligent management. In addition, it requires suitable conditions and mechanisms to be effective. The suitable conditions would include effective coordination between various stakeholders, adequate resources, clear lines of communication, effective management of the system and a single implementing authority (Hudson and Lowe, 2011; Palumbo and Calista, 1990). The assumption is that suitable conditions in the policy environment would guarantee implementation success. According to their line of thought, implementation failure can only occur as a result of human frailty. Hudson and Lowe (2011:247) note further that policy implementation fails because "the personnel involved did not do what they were told or managers made mistakes in designing the programme". The top-down approach is essentially prescriptive in nature and demands strict compliance to the rules of procedure. It also requires a watertight management and administrative system to ensure that policy goals and positive outcomes are achieved. However, the top-down perspective ignores the role and influence of the multiple actors involved in policy implementation at the grass-root level. It also underestimates the impact of various local factors on policy implementation. The approach creates the impression that local problems are solved when bureaucrats and public officials act on them unilaterally.

The top-down perspective assumes that the behaviour of bureaucrats and public officials can be controlled through rules and procedures designed to enforce compliance. This position is challenged by Lipsky (1980) and Goggin et al (1990) in their argument that, on the contrary, bureaucrats and public officials have enormous power and freedom to exercise their discretion in the policy environment. The researchers demonstrate that the behaviours of those who implement public policy at the grass-root level cannot be controlled entirely as the top-down model assumes. In addition, the role of independent stakeholders in the local environment and their behaviours and activities cannot be prescribed from top-down. Thus, the top-down perspective fails to recognise and integrate the local context, especially the agency of the poor in public policy implementation processes.

Other researchers, such as Mazmanian and Sabatier, made an attempt to refine the top-down model to accommodate the local context (Matland, 1995). They argue that policy implementation should consider the "degree to which the actions of implementing officials and

target groups coincide with the goals embodied in an authoritative decision" (Matland, 1995:146). The implementation of the authoritative decisions (ie. Policy) is done by centrally located actors who are seen as the most appropriate to deliver the policy goals. But still they failed to recognise the roles of various local actors and agency of the poor in the implementation process. Despite Mazmanian and Sabatier's efforts, the top-down approach remained fundamentally prescriptive and disregarded the multi-actor nature of public policy implementation.

The limitations of the top-down approach were exposed by other researchers who argued that the approach is too centred on policy and only represents the views of policy makers (Paudel, 2009; Younis and Davidson, 1990). These critics also pointed out that the top-down approach prioritises the use of statutory language that is reflected in Mazmanian and Sabatier's (1989) definition of implementation. In their definition of policy implementation, Mazmanian and Sabatier (1989) outline three sets of factors that can be used to determine implementation success.[4]Another critic of the top-down approach is Matland (1995) who identified and defined three basic sets of criticisms against the approach. The first criticism is that the model takes the statutory language as its starting point and ignores the initial actions taken in the policy-making process. This point is reinforced by Winter (1985 and 1986) who argues that most of the implementation barriers can be traced back to the initial stages of the policy-making process. This indicates the need to understand the whole gamut of the policy-making processes and factors in the local environment, which impact policy implementation.

The second criticism of the top-down approach is that it views implementation strictly as an administrative process. The approach does not consider the political and personal interests that impact it. To this end, Matland (1995) argues that it is almost impossible to separate politics from administration, and any attempt to do so may lead to policy failure. This indicates that implementation cannot be viewed purely as an administrative issue but one that involves the political and personal interests of different actors on the ground. As such, it cannot be adequately addressed by the top-down approach alone.

[4] Mazmanian and Sabatier (1989) defined implementation as 'The carrying out of a basic policy decision, usually incorporated in a statute but which can also take the form of important executive orders or court decisions'. The emphasis is put on the authoritative nature of the decision whose implementation must be coordinated from a central level, which indicates that there must be a clear chain of command to be followed. Mazmanian and Sabatier present three sets of factors and these are: (i) tractability of the problem, (ii) ability of statute to structure implementation, and (iii) non-statutory variables affecting implementation.

The third criticism addresses the emphasis that the model puts on statute framers as key actors of the implementation process. Local actors are viewed as obstacles to implementation and their conduct needs to be strictly controlled. But as already noted, it is the exclusion of local service delivers' expertise and knowledge of the local stakeholders that leads to implementation failure. Matland (1995) and Lipsky (1980) argue that the discretion of street-level bureaucrats and actions of local actors are too complex to be controlled by policy-makers. This indicates that the behaviours of various independent actors in the policy environment can only be ignored to the detriment of the implementation process. The top-down model presents the policy process in a hierarchical fashion, and gives minimal concern to what transpires at grass-roots level. Although it has its strengths, it is inadequate to implement rural development policies that seek to transform local communities and empower people at grass-root levels. The top-down approach represents a centralised system in which power is vested at the top and key decisions are made by public officials without the meaningful participation of the grass-root actors. It portrays the implementation of public policies as a process primarily concerned with getting people to do what they are told and keeping control over a sequence of stages in a system (Parson, 1995). In addition, the top-down perspective suggests that, implementation failure can only occur when those in the frontline fail to obey the prescribed rules and procedures of implementation.

The bottom-up approach to public policy implementation recognises the local context and the behaviours of independent local stakeholders with their diverse personal and political interests. The primary concern of the proponents of the bottom-up approach is the local terrain with its enormous energy and various local possibilities that it presents for implementation success. The bottom-up approach recognises that target groups in the local context and those tasked with delivering services have a role to play in the implementation of public policies (Matland, 1995). In this regard, the mechanisms used by frontline workers and other policy groups to get around policy or divert it to their own purposes determine the outcome of the implementation process. A host of the bottom-up exponents (Hanf, 1982; Barret and Fudge, 1981; Hjern and Porter, 1981; Nakamura and Smallwood, 1980; Elmore, 1979; Bernard, 1978; Lipsky, 1978; Scharpf, 1978) concur that both the informal and formal relationships of various policy actors are essential for successful policy implementation. According to Hudson and Lowe (2011:249) "the best known works that put a formidable challenge to the top-down perspective was that of Lipsky (1979). Lipsky's formidable argument is that public policy is not the product of policy

makers but the outcome of the activities of street-level bureaucrats, who operate at the front line of service delivery. Lipsky' study (1979) analyses the behaviour of front line workers who are responsible for delivering services directly to the public. These are largely government workers who are tasked with implementing policies in various situations on the ground. He argues that street-level bureaucrats interact directly with citizens and the general public experience policy as it is presented to them by these front line workers. Contrary to the top-down approach's sentiments, it is impossible for any central authority to have full control over the behaviour of the frontline workers nor over the independent stakeholders in the policy environment. Therefore, the outcomes of any public policy are determined not by the central authority but by those in the frontline of service delivery.

Lipsky's argument is taken up by other exponents of the bottom-up approach who prioritise the local context as the starting point for understanding the implementation of public policies (Hull and Hjern, 1987; 1982; Hjern and Porter, 1981; Berman, 1980). The bottom-up approach takes into account the perspectives of the target population, service deliverers and independent actors and how they impact the policy implementation process. Berman (1978) identifies two levels at which public policy implementation occurs: the macro-implementation level and the micro-implementation level. The macro-implementation level is where centrally located officials design government programmes, and it marks the beginning of policy implementation. In contrast, the micro-implementation level takes place at the bottom where service deliverers and local actors respond to the macro-level programmes by modifying them to suit their local context. The bottom-up approach represents a decentralised system that devolves power and recognises that public policy implementation is context bound. Unlike the top-down approach, it recognises the significance of factors in the local context and considers them as part of the key determinants of the implementation process. Thus, Matland (1995) posits that the problems of public policy implementation emerge when the policy encounters a local institutional setting that is not directly controlled by centrally located officials. Matland (1995:148) also posits that, "[C]ontextual factors within the implementing environment can completely dominate rules created at the top of the implementing pyramid, and policy designers will be unable to control the process". This indicates that, implementation is set to fail unless street-level bureaucrats and other local stakeholders are given the freedom to adapt policy to the local context, which is the observation that Palumbo, Maynard-Moody, and Wright (1984) also note.

There is a consensus amongst the proponents of the bottom-up approach that public policy implementation is largely influenced by various factors in the local context rather than adherence to the prescription of a central authority. It arises when policy interacts with the local setting and as such it is context bound (Matland, 1995; Maynard-Moody, Musheno, and Palumbo 1990). Hjern's study (quoted in Matland, 1995:149) on the micro-level of implementation reveals that, "central initiatives are poorly adapted to local conditions. Programme success depends in large part on the skills of individuals in the local implementation structure who can adapt policy to local conditions; it depends only to a limited degree on central activities". Hjern's findings clearly indicate the significant role that local people and the various local organisations can play in the implementation of public policies and in particular those that affect their lives. The findings reveal the need to devolve power to the grass-roots level in contrast to the top-down approach which favours a central system. However, the bottom-up approach is also inadequate when considered alone. A situation in which both the top-down and the bottom-up approaches are employed in a collaborative manner is more realistic and increases the chances of reaching the stated goals.

Attempts to make a synthesis of both the top-down and the bottom-up approaches were made by various researchers (Matland, 1995; Sabatier, 1991; 1988 and 1986; Elmore, 1985and 1982). A review of literature reveals an acknowledgement amongst researchers from both perspectives that combining both approaches could produces better policy outcomes. For example, Elmore (1985 and 1982) developed the concept of forward and backward mapping. Forward mapping is a top-down view that focuses on a detailed and clear description of policy objectives. It also defines the criteria by which each of the stages of the policy should be judged. In contrast, backward mapping represents the bottom-up perspective. It describes the behaviours to be changed at micro- level, and the actions to be taken in order to produce the desired change. Backward mapping can help to ensure that the concerns of micro-implementers and target groups are considered. Both the forward mapping and backward mapping are significant in that they encourage policy makers and implementers to use a combination of both approaches when designing and implementing public policies.

Sabatier (1986) engages in a critical analysis of both the top-down and the bottom-up approaches and attempts at developing a synthesis. His synthesis combined the best features of both models. According to Sabatier (1986), time is of essence in the policy process. He argues that a time-span of ten to fifteen years should be factored into the policy process to allow for a

fair amount of improvement on the part of both policy implementers and target groups (Sabatier, 1986:39). He notes further that a period of a decade or more would be necessary for policy objectives to be clarified and to engage in more research on casual theories. In addition, a period of a decade or more would provide opportunities for "policy learning by programme proponents, as they discover deficiencies in the existing programme and then develop strategies to deal with them" (Sabatier, 1986:39).

The top-down perspective is useful for identifying parameters within which policies operate over a period of time. Parameters that include socio-economic conditions, legal instruments, and government structures tend to remain relatively stable over a period of time. Sabatier (1986) recognises that the policy context consists of diverse policy actions involving various actors at the local level. He argues that the policy learning process is dominated by programme proponents while opponents of the programme are afforded minimal opportunity. The deficiencies of the top-down approaches are identified in the synthesised version of both approaches and addressed by incorporating techniques from the bottom-up approaches.

Sabatier suggests an advocacy coalition framework model for analysing and studying the actions of various groups that get involved in the policy process.[5]The coalition framework can be used as a tool to identify various partners from both the public and private sectors involved in the policy process, and establish the core beliefs that bring them together. It can also be used to analyse the strategies that various actors employ to deal with the issues consistent with their objectives. The feedback received from the various coalition partners can be used to enhance public policies and improve their implementation. Despite its positive elements, Sabatier's advocacy coalition model is criticised by Matland (1995) who views it as incongruent with his own definition of implementation.[6]

A more recent attempt at synthesising the implementation literature and reconciling the top-down and bottom-up approaches is done by Matland (1995). Matland's work focuses on what he terms 'the theoretical significance of ambiguity and conflict for policy implementation'. The thrust of Matland's argument is that some factors that are identified as crucial to public policy implementation are determined by varying degrees of 'a policy's ambiguity and conflict level'.

[5] Advocacy coalitions are various policy advocates from both the public and private sector organisations who share certain policy goals and objectives. These groups have the capacity to influence and shape policy direction by lobbying for their interests, views and solutions to be accepted.

[6] Matland adds that Sabatier himself did not see his advocacy coalition model as an implementation model but rather, as an approach to the study of public policy (Matland, 1995:152).

He divides the policy's ambiguity and conflict levels into four categories and these are: i) low conflict-low ambiguity, ii) high conflict-low ambiguity, iii) high conflict-high ambiguity, and iv) low conflict-high ambiguity. Each of the four categories focuses on the level of ambiguity and conflict inherent in a policy. Thus, Matland submits that he relied largely on the works of organisational theorists and decision-making scholars who demonstrate how conflict and ambiguity affect decision making. Matland's analysis (1995:156) reveals that conflict amongst the implementing agents and policy ambiguity have a direct impact on the implementation of public policies. Policy conflicts arise where there is interdependence of relationships. Policy conflicts also occur "where more than one organisation sees policy as directly relevant to its interests and when the organisations have incongruous views" (Matland, 1995:156). It also occurs as a result of disputes over programmes that need to be carried out to reach policy goals.

Furthermore, Matland notes that, policy conflict affects the implementation process directly and yet, what matters is the level of conflict. At low levels, conflict can make access to the implementation process relatively easy while at higher levels the challenges become more complex. Mechanisms to resolve conflict also vary according to the level of the conflict. For example, mechanisms at low level that include persuasion or problem solving are commonly employed while at high levels of conflict bargaining and coercion would be deemed more appropriate.

Policy ambiguity arises from two basic sources and these are: policy goals and policy means. The proponents of the top-down approach view clarity of goals as essential for policy success while ambiguity of goals is often viewed negatively. On the contrary Matland (1995) argues that policy ambiguity is not always negative as there are situations where ambiguity can help new policies to get passed at the legitimation stage. In addition, he asserts that policy ambiguity can bring a degree of flexibility to the implementation process and increase the prospects of implementation success. It also broadens the space for diverse policy interpretation and programmatic activities of implementation. Furthermore, Matland explains that policy ambiguity exists in policy means "when there are uncertainties about what roles various organisations are to play in the implementation process" (1995:158). Ambiguity in policy means also exist when a complex environment makes it difficult to know which tools to use, how to use them, and what the effects of their use will be. Unlike the ambiguity of policy goals, the ambiguity of policy means impacts directly on the implementation process in a significant way and can decrease the chances of implementation success. Therefore, Matland (1995)

suggests that the implementation process be limited to those who understand how policy actions occur and possess the instrumental means to achieve them in order to avoid ambiguity in policy means. Nonetheless, limiting policy actions to a few would also limit the scope of policy learning and leave some important questions unanswered. There is also a risk of excluding and disenfranchising other actors in the local environment who could contribute to implementation success.

Matland's work shows that there is room for the two approaches to work together and improve the implementation of public policies. The notion of conflict is inevitable because of the involvement of multiple actors in the implementation processes. Nonetheless, Matland points out that, policy conflict and ambiguity do not always lead to negative results, and can create new opportunities for learning and improving implementation processes. The bottom-up approaches provide the theoretical basis needed for promoting public participation in policy implementation processes. The bottom-up approaches recognise the realities of implementation on the ground and the roles played by various stakeholders in the policy environment. Specifically, bottom-up approaches are more appropriate in implementing policies such as rural development which require the participation of the poor on the ground to achieve sustainable goals.

2.4 THE NEED FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

This section examines the concept of public participation in relation to rural development. As a concept, public participation has gained rapid popularity in the development discourse, and it augurs well with policy implementation that involves multiple stakeholders (Theron 2012; Ambert 2000). Public participation is a multi-dimensional phenomenon which occurs in a variety of ways and in different contexts. It can provide the opportunity for the top-down and the bottom-up approaches to converge in policy making and implementation processes. The multi-dimensional nature of public participation has resulted in the meaning remaining elusive. This section discusses the different definitions of public participation and its various forms. It argues in support of the need for public participation in policy implementation processes, especially in rural areas.

2.4.1 Explaining Public Participation

In public participation literature, the term 'public' includes individual citizens, community organisations, interest groups, the business community and government institutions (Masango,

2001:107; Thomas 1995:1). Thomas (1995:55) also defines the 'public' as "all organised and unorganised groups of citizens or citizen representatives who could: (a) provide information about consumer preferences that might, for example, be useful in resolving an issue, or (b) affect the ability to implement a decision by accepting or facilitating implementation". From this preceding explanation of the public, it can be deduced that public participation is a process in which the public as individual citizens, community organisations, interest groups or community representatives deliberately get involved in public issues that affect them. For the purpose of this study, the public includes rural people themselves as individual citizens, non-governmental organisations who occupy the rural space, traditional institutions, interest groups and the business community. All these occupy the rural space and are affected by rural development policies and their implementation. Public participation occurs when these various 'publics' deliberately take part in the rural development policy making and implementation processes.

The World Bank (1996:3) defined public participation as "a process through which stakeholders' influence and share control over development initiatives and the decisions and resources which affect them". This definition considers participation based on who should be involved and the extent of their involvement. In addition, it points out key areas, such as local control over development initiatives, decisions and management of resources, which should require the involvement of local people. Lewis and Kanji (2009:72) note that, public participation is about empowering ordinary people to play a meaningful role in the decision-making and implementation processes so that they are not merely "acted upon" by outsiders in the name of development and progress. In essence this means that people themselves and their local representatives become experts in understanding their problems and play an active role in working out strategies and solutions to transform their situation. Thus, public participation has also been viewed as "an interaction between government and the public, ranging from informing and listening at one end, to implementing jointly agreed solutions at the other; and in between there is dialogue, debate and analysis" (European Urban Knowledge Network, 2013:2). In addition, public participation is important for both the development of policies and the sustainability of their implementation. It also allows citizens, once they have been adequately empowered, to take over service delivery in the local context. Siphuma (2009) and Theron (2005) maintain that public participation is the first building block of development and an important component of human growth. Therefore, a genuine participation practise should

allow the beneficiaries of development to share in, influence and direct the process of development.

The International Labour Organisation (ILO), which runs Participatory Organisations in poor rural communities, notes that the grass roots strategies to public participation have helped develop the following definition of public participation (cited in Rahman 1993:150, and Theron 2012:115):

> "What gives real meaning to participation is the collective effort by the people concerned in an organised framework to pool their efforts and whatever other resources they decide to pool together, to attain objectives they set for themselves. In this regard participation is viewed as an active process in which the participants take initiatives and take action that is stimulated by their own thinking and deliberation and over which they can exert effective control".

This definition indicates that the primary concern of public participation is to get people at the grass-roots level involved in the policy making and implementation initiatives that seek to improve their conditions of living. This indicates that participation enables citizens at the grass-roots level to define their destiny. Public participation can therefore work well if, there exist legislative structures, mechanisms and institutions established to facilitate and promote the inclusion of all people and various organisations in policy implementation at grass-roots level.

Swanepoel and De Beer (2010) add that public participation is about involvement of people under certain conditions and making people become part of the decision-making and planning of and prioritisation of development interventions aimed at ameliorating their conditions. This means that participation ensures that the public plays an active role in the policy making and implementation processes. In addition, the public can also monitor and evaluate development interventions in their locality. Nonetheless, people need to be empowered with various skills in order for meaningful participation to take place. Public participation is therefore, also viewed as a process that empowers and builds capacities of citizens so that they can engage in social justice issues and contribute to their own development. In this way, it promotes human growth and builds the self-esteem of citizens, especially the poor at the grass-roots level.

Public participation is also a key component of democracy. Actually there exist a symbiotic relationship between public participation and democracy.[7] A review of the literature on public

[7] The word democracy originates from the two Greek words: *demos*, meaning the people, and *kratein*, meaning ruling power. It refers to the type of government in which the power to rule resides with the people. Specifically, the word democracy originally referred to the governmental system of Athens at the time of Pericles (Rejai

participation indicates that the practice of public participation is the *sine qua non* of a democratic society (Masango, 2001). Clapper (1996) argues that public participation is an end in itself in the sense that it is viewed as a prerequisite to entrench and preserve democracy. Democracy is defined by Ranney (1971:73), as a system of government in which citizens participate in an array of government activities.[8] This definition shows that there is an intrinsic connection between democracy and public participation. Democracy creats space for individual citizens, interest groups, community organisations, civil society organisations, government institutions, traditional institutions and other stakeholders to participate in policy making and implementation processes. There are different forms of democracy, which include participatory democracy, democracy by proxy, direct democracy and representative democracy.

Participatory democracy promotes and emphasises the importance of individual citizens to participate in all aspects of public life in order to develop their capacities and also benefit from associating with others in the pursuit of common goals. In other words, participatory democracy allows both the individual and the community to benefit "through a shared purpose" (Masango, 2001:40). In addition, it espouses populist ideals of organising citizens and conscietising them about their situation.

Democracy by proxy is premised on the belief that the size of modern society makes it almost impossible to practice participatory democracy. To this end, Kay (1985:88) asserts that, "it is possible that a man (sic) may have a vision of the common good and yet not take part in government". As a result, citizens allow their leaders to make policies and implement them on their behalf. This form of democracy is anchored on the trust that citizens place in their leaders and government to serve the common good. This indicates that citizens do not see their direct participation as necessary since they believe that the commom good can be better served by their leaders and government.

1991:150). In this system, all important decisions affecting the citizens of Athens were made by the people at a face-to-face assembly of all citizens. Ranney (1971:73) defines democracy as 'a form of government organised in accordance with the principles of popular sovereignty, political equality, popular consultation, and majority rule.

[8] Johnson (1984:164) defines citizen participation as "a process wherein the common amateurs of a community exercise power over decisions related to the general affairs of a community". The common amateurs are ordinary men and women "without any paid office, wealth, special information, or other formal power source beyond their own numbers". Included in this definition of citizen are grass-roots organisations that represent the interests and are concerned about the well-being of the general public.

Direct democracy is a political system in which citizens participate directly in the policy-making processes. Citizens actually make policies themselves and do not rely on other people to make policies on their behalf. Direct democracy is practiced in smaller populations of groups which can be managed easily (Masango, 2001:53). For example, Switzerland is one of the few countries in which direct democracy is practiced. In a direct democracy, laws are proposed by citizens and approved by the majority of voters. On the contrary, representative democracy which is a form of democracy being practiced in South Africa is a political system in which citizens elect or choose a government official to represent them in the policy-making process. The elected officials or representatives make policies based on the interests of the public that they are representing. "Representative democracy is exercised through those who are democratically elected by the people and is exercised through regular elections" (Phooko, 2017:519). Botha (2017:227) adds that the exercise of holding regular elections is the foreground of representative democracy and it legitimises public power. Furthermore, representative democracy allows citizens, civil society groups and opposition political parties to participate in processes that are "designed ro promote democratic values of openness, accountability and representativeness" (Botha, 2017:227).

Public participation is paramount in the practice of democracy and good governance. For Kamlage and Nanz (2018:4) and Fung (2015:2), public participation is important for strengthening the "three major democratic values: legitimacy, justice and effectiveness of government decision-making". These democratic values get enhanced when the 'public' becomes part of the governance system by participating in the decision-making and implementation processes. This indicates that public participation is essentially about citizens as individuals, interest groups, elected representatives and an array of other stakeholders getting involved in matters of governance with the aim of improving service delivery, development and fostering accountability.

However, Brinkerhoff and Crosby (2002), warn about the simplistic thinking and excessive expectations surrounding public participation. The positive vibes that the notion of public participation stimulates can easily evoke unrealistic expectations from the public, especially the rural poor.

Furthermore, scholars such as Theron (2012), Meyer and Theron (2008), and Theron and Ceasar (2008) point out some of the problems inherent in the public participation approaches.

These scholars argue that some public participation approaches tend to be *ad hoc*, incremental, unstructured, unbalanced and uncoordinated to the extent that some even appear as mere window dressing. For example, Theron (2008), argues that, in some contexts, the concept of public participation is used as a buzz word to describe strategies that in reality have little to do with the authentic participation of the poor. This is why some researchers think that the rhetoric of public participation creates a misunderstanding and exaggerates the expectations of the poor and other stakeholders. Theron (2012) notes that, both as concept and strategy, public participation has many faces which are good when well- intended, and bad when poorly executed. Despite its limitations, public participation provides a terrain for the top-down and bottom-up approaches to collaborate in the policy making and implementation processes. It creates space and opportunities for public officials and the rural poor, and other stakeholders from the local context to work together.

According to Midgley (1995), public participation emerged as a result of the growing frustration with government led projects and inability to spearhead social development from the top.[9] To this end, Gaventa (2007) provides insights on the declining patterns of public participation in processes of representative democracy. The decline was caused by the realisation that participation through elections alone has little impact on shaping government policies and their implementation, and this led to diminishing trust in governments (King, Feltey and Susel, 1998). Gaventa (2007) delineates three approaches which explain the role of citizens in the governance of their affairs. The first approach is called "deliberative democracy" and is based on the traditions of participatory democracy. Its basic argument is that, democracy cannot be confined to the electoral processes alone but should encompass processes in which citizens can exercise control over decisions which affect their lives. Fishkin (2011) elaborates that the evolution of democratic processes has brought power to the people but under conditions that do not afford an opportunity to the people to think about the power that they exercise. The second approach is based on neoliberal principles which support a combination of decentralisation and privatisation, with limited state involvement. In this second approach, Gaventa (2007:xii) explains that, "citizens are often reduced to consumers, who express preferences through market choices and perhaps through co-provising of services at the local

[9]Lewis and Kanji (2009:73) explain that the notion of participation emerged during the 1960s and 70s due to growing frustration with governments' failure to promote social development. The failure was partly due to the creation of large bureaucracies, the selection by donors of wasteful projects and corruption created by development aid.

level". In essence, citizens have insufficient power to influence government policies. To this end, Dryzek (2002) argues that the ligitmacy of democracy lies in the fact that, those affected by a decision should participate in its deliberation and should be critical of established power.

The third approach which Gaventa (2007) explains developed out of the liberal representative model which emphasises the importance of strengthening the institutions of representative democracy and outlining the prosedures accurately. Apart from improving the mechanisms of representation, the third approach does not dwell on public participation beyond the electoral process. In other words, it does not endeavour to address the question of what happens after the elections. That notwithstanding, this researcher contends that, public participation offers a vision of development practice in which citizens at the grass-root level and various local organisations could play a meaningful role in their own development. For Bhargara (2015:5):

> "…political leaders are coming to realise that those in power ignore citizens' pressure at their own peril. Donors are realising that the projects best pursued are those that genuinely respond to public demands and concerns. Increasingly, development policy and practice are emphasising listening to citizens and building projects that meet their demands".

As a concept and strategy, public participation has the capacity to yield good outcomes when executed according to plan (Theron, 2012). But if it is only used as a catch phrase by those in power, the results can be disappointing and frustrating for other stakeholders who genuinely want to play a meaningful role in policy making and implementation. The daunting challenge is how to make public participation work in practice, and in a way that empowers and builds the capacities of the rural poor.

According to Sithole (2004:4) cited in Siphuma (2009:51), public participation has numerous benefits for the poor and these include the following:

- Provides the opportunity to address the concerns of all interested and affected parties.
- Encourages citizen focused service delivery.
- Allows citizens to contribute to the designing and shaping of local public service.
- Develops a clear sense of direction for local communities.
- Facilitates the utilisation of a whole range of resources in the local communities.
- Allows citizens and public officials to identify alternatives when addressing issues of public concern.
- Improves municipal credibility with the public.

- Reduces levels of misconception and misinformation about development projects.
- Creates a better understanding of a project and its objectives.
- Enhances transparency and accountability at local government level.

The benefits of public participation make it a favourable approach to the implementation of rural development policies. Apart from empowering and building capacities in rural communities, it provides a platform for the rural people and public officials to form partnerships and collaborate in policy implementation processes. In additional, public participation indicates that public policy implementation is not the preserve of public officials alone, but that citizens at the local level, especially in rural contexts have a role to play in their own development. In other words, it provides people at the grass-root level, especially the poor and the marginalised with the opportunity to be involved in the governance of their affairs. To this end, Imparato and Ruster (2003:20) define public participation as "a process in which people, and especially disadvantaged people, influence resource allocation, and policy and programme formulation and implementation". A common feature of public participation is the involvement of people in the governance of issues which affect their lives. For example, Imperato and Ruster (2003:20) point out that, the public could be involved at "different levels and degrees of intensity in the identification, timing, planning, design, implementation, evaluation and post-implementation stages of development projects". To this end, Naidoo and Ramphal (2018:83) define public participation "as a process by which potential interested and affected particies are given an opportunity to comment on, or raise issues relevant to, an application". However, researchers (Theron, 2012; Meyer and Theron, 2008; Theron and Ceasar, 2008; Brinkerhoff and Crosby, 2002) warn that, the concept of public participation can be misused by politicians and public officials to manipulate citizens or exclude those considered ineligible or undesirable. Wherever it is purported to be practiced therefore, it must be critically analysed to determine whether citizens participate meaningfully or the concept is being used as a political gimmick.

2.4.2 Different Approaches to Public Participation

There are different approaches to public participation that have been outlined by different scholars. These approaches explain the way public participation is approached and practiced in different contexts at the grass-roots level. Some of the approaches are identified and elucidated by Glaser, Yeager and Parker (2006) in their analysis of various organisations that usually get

involved in public participation processes at the local level. Their argument is that there is no government that has successfully implemented development policies without bringing citizens on board. They argue that failure by government to engage citizens in development praxis creates a rift between government and citizens. The gap between the government and citizens at the grass-roots level is one of the reasons for implementation failure, especially in rural contexts. The rift between government and rural communities can be reduced through the local government leadership's designing of pragmatic ways of engaging citizens in decision-making and policy implementation processes. As a result, Glaser, Yeager and Parker (2006) identify two basic approaches of public participation and these are: neighbourhood-based participation and government-based citizen engagement.

The notion of neighbourhood-based participation is focused on various organisations that are community based. These organisations are autonomous and independent of government. They are part of the broad civil society family of organisations, which are well positioned to promote cooperation in local communities. The assumption is that neighbourhood-based organisations have a better understanding of the reality and concerns of communities on the ground. Anderson (2011), notes that, these organisations promote participatory democracy and have considerable influence and support over development programmes at the grass-root level. The advocates of neighbourhood-based participation (Glaser, Yeager and Parker, 2006; Glaser, Jacob and Lank, 2005) point out that it is extremely difficult for government to have or mobilise enough resources to meet the challenges of policy implementation, especially in rural communities. However, the existence of neighbourhood-based organisations and private businesses provide the resource base that can be harnessed to supplement local government's efforts to deliver services and improve the living conditions of the rural poor.

In addition, the approach clearly articulates the potential of grassroots organisations to spearhead and lead development initiatives at grass-roots level. Glaser, Yeager and Parker (2006:182) note that, "Neighbourhoods and NBOs are potentially powerful forces for organizing and applying the resources of community through coproduction". Glaser, Yeager and Parker (2006:179) note further that, NBOs have "the ability to bring community resources to the table that are generally not available through agencies that are extensions of the arms of government". Non-Benefit Organisations (NBOs) occupy the vacant space in the micro-implementation environment and need to be recognised as agents of change in their own right. Their proximity to local communities gives them a unique advantage to play a major role in

the implementation of development policies, especially in rural areas. The absence of NBOs in rural areas, therefore, is a huge deficiency for rural development, especially when it comes to mobilising resources which are often scarce.

The other approach is largely driven by government. Glaser, Yeager and Parker (2006), describe it as the extension of the arms of local government.[10] Here public participation is controlled and organised within the parameters of a defined framework. This means that citizens only participate under certain conditions defined in a policy document. Thus, Glaser, Yeager and Parker (2006:179) argue that, "[A]ccordingly, citizen participation is organised around vehicles that maximize efficiency in information exchange by placing limits on agenda setting and the degree of influence that citizens can have on any particular decision". The model is prescriptive and only provides limited space for robust citizen participation in the local context. The exponents of government-based citizen engagement argue that citizens elect public officials to represent them and promote public interests. A broader engagement from the grassroots is therefore not necessary. This suggests that broader citizen engagement is viewed as time wasting and costly, unlikely to improve the quality of decisions or service delivery. This attitude towards public participation can lead to situations where the concept gets thrown around by public officials for public relations purposes or simply as a political gimmick (Theron, 2012).

The citizen participation organisations (CPOs) model is anchored on the top-down approach. It also prioritises the investment of public resources in ways consistent with the judgement of professionals rather than meaningful participation at grass-root level. The approach considers public officials and professionals (government workers) as the key players who possess sufficient power to make decisions. Public officials believe that it is their mandate "to make the best use of public funds and to protect public interest" (Glaser, Yeager and Parker, 2006:179). It is doubtful that public officials and professionals can sincerely engage citizens in a meaningful way through organisations that are controlled by government (Glaser, Yeager, and Parker, 2006; Majer and Nachmias, 1990; Crosby, Kelly and Scjaefer, 1986). The approach is prescriptive, paternalistic, restricts the level of citizen participation and gives limited power to citizens to influence decisions and determine their destiny. In addition, it creates the impression that the organisations that act as the arms of local government are not designed to

[10] The organisations that are the extensions of the arms of local government are referred to by Glaser, Yeager and Parker (2006) as Citizens Participation Organisations (CPOs).

empower local people through participation but that local situations have to be acted upon by government with public organisations taking the centre stage. In this respect, the aim of public organisations, viewed as the arms of government, is to manipulate ordinary people, especially the rural poor who lack sophistication, into believing that they are genuinely participating in decision-making and implementation processes while in reality they are not.

The two approaches described above provide a framework to understand public participation through grass-roots organisations and agencies that are community based and independent, and through organisations that are extensions of local government. Notwithstanding the obvious strengths and limitations of both approaches, citizens and their organisations cannot participate meaningfully without power to influence decisions and actions. Power is defined here as the ability to direct or prevent the current or future actions of individuals or other groups. Therefore, participation without power to influence decisions or change the state of affairs would be meaningless or non-participation. This indicates that meaningful participation is determined by the degree of power that the poor have to influence policy decisions and their implementation, and to hold public officials accountable. Rural development, which is the subject of this study, involves the empowerment of rural people so that they can engage in collective action to transform their situation. De Beer and Swanepoel (1998:24) note that, "…empowerment releases people from the poverty trap. Release comes about not through conformation, but through transformation". Furthermore, De Beer and Swanepoel (1998:28) state that "[T]ransformation efforts do not aim to bring relief to people in the trap, but to free them from the trap so that they can gradually improve the situation themselves as free and self-reliant individuals". This indicates that rural development is not limited to the development of physical infrastructure as it also includes the non-material aspects such as empowerment of rural people to believe in themselves and act as free agents to improve their conditions. Rural development is multi-dimensional, hence empowerment is an integral part of it.

2.4.3 Frameworks for Analysing Public Participation

The practice of public participation in any given situation needs to be analysed to ascertain its credibility and authenticity. Power is fundamental to the practice of meaningful public participation. Gaventa (1980) provides a detailed description of the dynamics between power and participation in decision-making processes. In the case of rural development, public participation must be analysed to ascertain the extent to which rural people are empowered to influence key decisions that affect their lives as well as the management of their local resources.

In this regard, participation without the necessary power to influence policies and their implementation at the grass-roots level cannot be construed as genuine and meaningful. This analyitical framework draws mainly fro the works of Arnstein' (1969) and Brinkerhoff and Crosby (2002). Brinkerhoff and Crosby identify the goals of participation that must be clarified as a precursor to participation. This indicates that the objective for participation must be identified and clarified to justify why participation should be promoted. Although Arnstein's ladder of participation in governance was developed in the 1960s, it remains one of the most cited and influenctial work in the field of public participation (Quick and Bryson, 2016). For example, a survey of public participation conducted by the Vreative Commons (2012: Online), reveals that about 36 public participation mpdels have been developed between 1969 and 2012. Masiya, Davids and Mazenda (2019:28) recognise that the 36 models "are a variation of Arnstein's (1969) seminal work on the ladder of Citizen Participation". For this study, Arnstein's ladder of participation is relevant because it provides an appropriate tool for analysing public participation at the local government level. In particular, it is relevant for analysing the distribution of power in the various stages and degrees of participation at the municipal level. Arnstein (1969) classifies the levels of participation and non-participation into hierarchies and these are depicted in the form of a ladder with eight rungs. The eight rungs are: manipulation; therapy; information; consultation; placation; partnership; delegated power; and citizen control. The rungs symbolise the nature of participation that moves incrementally from non-participation to tokenism and finally reach maturation at the highest level of citizen power.

Furthermore, Brinkerhoff and Crosby (2002) identify five participation mechanisms: information-sharing mechanism; consultative mechanism; collaborative mechanism; joint decision-making mechanism; and empowerment mechanism, which they link to the objectives that should be achieved through public participation. The earmarked objective should be stated from the beginning through the aforesaid participation mechanisms. According to Brinkerhoff and Crosby's framework, citizens and community organisations can utilise any of the five forms of participation to achieve their goals. The idea of clarifying the reasons for participation is imperative as participation without clear goals would be a waste of time and resources. The two typologies are summarised schematically in the Table below:

Table 3: Typologies of Participation

	Arnstein	Brinkerhoff & Crosby
Citizen-Power	Citizen Control	
	Delegated Power	Empowerment
	Partnership	Joint Decision-Making
	Placation	Collaboration
	Consultation	Consultation
	Informing	Information-Sharing
Non-participation	Therapy	
	Manipulation	

Sources: Arnstein 1969; Brinkerhoff and Crosby 2002.

For Arnstein (1969), participation is incremental in the sense that there is a clear movement from a position of powerlessness to the highest level where citizens have the power to influence decisions and their implementation. The first two rungs at the bottom of the ladder (manipulation and therapy) represent a position where citizens have no power to influence any decision or change their situation. At this stage, citizens are either coerced or placed on advisory committees for the purposes of rubberstamping decisions that are presented to them by those with power (Theron, 2012). This manipulation is termed non-participation by Arnstein. The second rung of therapy portrays powerlessness like a mental illness that is treated when citizens are subjected to a group therapy by experts (Gates & Stout, 1996). It is clear from Arnstein's typology that participation occurs at its basic form at the third, fourth and fifth rungs. It is at these three rungs that power begins to flow at a minimal level to citizens or communities through information sharing, consultation and placation. But even with information sharing the process tends to be on a one-way stream from officials to citizens (Gates & Stout, 1996). Citizens are often not afforded the opportunity to negotiate or influence any decisions, and not all citizens are treated equally.

This is where Arnstein's model falls short because it fails to recognise public participation outside the formally defined structures. For example, when citizens get frustrated due to the lack of service delivery or being excluded from formal decision making processes, they find ways to express their ange and dissatisfaction which sometimes turn into violent protests. This researcher contends that violent protests against lack of service delivery and other public concerns are forms of public participation. In South Africa, these types of protests are common. However, these types of public participation are not accounted for in Arnstein 's ladder of

participation which was constructed in a different context. Nevertheless, this researcher contends that Arnstein's ladder of citizen participation is still relevant and appropriate for analysing public participation in formally defined structures but falls short in other contexts. In this study it is relevant for the nature of public participation at the local government level to ascertain whether people are participating meanginfuuly or not.

Consultation through surveys or public meetings renders participation a window-dressing ritual that does not guarantee that citizens' input and concerns will be considered by the power-holders (Gates & Stout, 1996). However, citizens only begin to have some degree of influence at the placation level in which a few handpicked members of the community become members of public bodies. Gates and Stout (1996) add that the degree to which citizens are propitiated depends on the nature of technical help they would have received to present their needs and how the community has been organised to demand their priorities. This indicates that citizens' power to influence important decisions and their implementation will remain curtailed if they do not possess the necessary technical skills to articulate their priorities. For Arnstein, the three rungs (informing, consultation and placation) represent tokenism which is a symbolic expression of participation.

Meaningful participation occurs in the last three rungs (partnership, delegated power and citizen control) in which power is distributed and shared with citizens through capacity building mechanisms. Partnerships are formed when power is redistributed between power-holders and citizens through negotiation. Both citizens and power-holders (public officials) agree to share decision-making and implementation responsibilities through established structures. Partnerships take place where citizens have been adequately empowered to influence key decisions and monitor their implementation. Empowered citizens can negotiate and bargain with public officials about matters of public interest. At this stage the public can identify development programmes relevant to their context and in some cases, form partnerships with government or even manage the implementation of development programmes. In addition, citizens at the local level can hold public officials to account and demand control over local institutions such as schools or take full charge of the management of local resources and service delivery.

Arnstein's ladder of participation has been used by other researchers to illustrate different levels of partnership in development interventions that move, from less to more community

controlled interventions (Taylor, 2003). However, it is not immune to limitations. Guijt and Shah (1998) argue that Arnstein's ladder of participation lacks dynamism and tends to oversimplify the distinction between participants and outsiders. They point out that Arnstein presents participation as an ideal process in which everyone participates and fails to acknowledge the diversity of communities (quoted in Taylor, 2003). Furthermore, they posit that citizen control is presented as the highest level of participation and yet there is no adequate elaboration on what happens once citizens have obtained control. However, despite the identified limitations, Arnstein's typology provides a useful framework for analysing public participation in policy making and implementation processes. It is helpful for analysing the different approaches to policy implementation. In particular, it is appropriate for analysing public participation in the implementation of rural development policies which recognise the agency of the rural poor. Meaningful participation takes place when power is devolved to the grass-root level so that citizens can influence decisions that affect their lives.

Further research perspectives are significant here. Levy (2014) notes that, meaningful participation facilitates and promotes transparency and accountability in public sector organisations. It also allows independent local organisations to play a significant role in public policy implementation processes and service provision. In addition, Arnstein's ladder of participation suggests that sustainable rural development cannot be achieved without the meaningful participation of the rural people.

Brinkerhoff and Crosby (2002), also note that public participation is central to policy implementation but it is not incremental in character. In other words, it is not a movement from one position to another as is the case in the ladder of participation. Rather it is determined by the reasons and objectives that must be clearly defined before demanding participation. Therefore, the five participation mechanisms identified by Brinkerhoff and Crosby can guide citizens to identify and clarify the reasons for demanding participation in policy making and implementation processes.

It should also be noted that, Brinkerhoff and Crosby (2002) do not use the same categories, as Arnstein,to measure the degrees of power. Nonetheless, an analysis of the following participation mechanisms reveals the amount of power that citizens have in each case:

i) **Information-sharing mechanisms**: this is regarded as the most basic form of public participation. Here, information is disseminated from government

departments to the public through various channels such as written documents, newspapers, radio and television. The information can also flow from the public to various government departments through opinion surveys, toll free telephone hotlines or by responding to questionnaires (Brinkerhoff& Crosby, 2002). Information-sharing mechanisms are used for feedback or to get public opinion on certain issues but are quite limited because they do not give space for exchange of views. The power to make the final decisions is concentrated in the hands of public officials or the government. However, information sharing is central to all mechanisms of participation because it enables different stakeholders to elaborate and explain their concerns.

ii) **Consultative mechanisms**: information flows in a two-way process in this type of participation and through discussions and exchange of views. Brinkerhoff and Crosby (2002:66) note that, consultation includes "participatory poverty assessments, town hall meetings, focus groups, national conferences, round tables, and parliamentary hearings". Here, consultation is used as a mechanism for collecting feedback from other stakeholders and measuring public's reaction towards certain proposals and issues. Nonetheless, the final decisions are again made by public officials and there is no guarantee that the views of the public will be considered when final decisions are made. This indicates that citizens at the local level do not have the real power to influence policy decisions and their implementation even if they are consulted. However, Brinkerhoff and Crosby (2002:66) note further that, there are few instances where "successful policies outcomes have been linked to consultative policy making and implementation, where civil society, labour, and private sector actors have had opportunities for input and oversight".[11] This is only possible in situations where communities have already been adequately empowered with skills and functional structures in the local context.

iii) **Collaborative mechanisms**: collaboration is defined by Jackson (2001) as one of the highest forms of public participation. Here public-private partnerships are

[11] Brinkerhoff and Crosby (2002) make reference to East Asia where public-private deliberation councils such as Korea's monthly export promotion meetings, Thailand's National Joint Public and Private Consultative Committee, and the Malaysian Business Council, have been established to serve as mechanisms for providing feedback, information sharing and coordination (Brinkerhoff and Crosby, 2002:67).

formed to deliver services, monitor and evaluate policy implementation. Brinkerhoff and Crosby (2002:67) explain that collaborative mechanisms apply in situations where "public sector cannot achieve particular policy goals without bringing in the capacity and knowledge of external partners". Collaboration can take place in the form of joint committees consisting of stakeholder representatives, joint working groups and joint task forces. Nonetheless, government officials still retain the power and authority to make final decisions even in collaborative mechanisms.

iv) **iv) Joint decision-making mechanisms**: these mechanisms of participation allow for an equal sharing of control over decision-making between government officials and the various participating stakeholders. The implication is that joint decision making mechanisms address the aspect of power between the participating stakeholders. Brinkerhoff and Crosby (2002:68) explicate that, "Shared decision-making mechanisms allow stakeholders not simply to develop policy options but to engage in the choice of options and participate in carrying them out". In addition, joint decision making mechanisms increase the level of commitment and ownership of development interventions at the local level. Decision making mechanisms take various forms that include "the periodic use of temporary structures such as workshops, discussion forums, or task forces" (Brinkerhoff and Crosby, 2002:68). The objective of such mechanisms is to share decision making powers and seek agreements over priorities. Jackson (2001) regards shared decision making as one of the highest forms of public participation in which power is shared amongst the participating stakeholders.

v) **Empowerment mechanisms:** Brinkerhoff and Crosby (2002:69) describe empowerment as the highest level of participation in which power is shared equitably and one that enabled disadvantaged groups to attaina higher level of political awareness. These mechanisms allow public officials to delegate power to the participating groups to achieve their objectives. The objective of empowerment mechanisms is to build the capacity of independent stakeholders, strengthen their legal and financial status, and support their initiatives. Another objective of empowerment mechanisms is to increase the power of independent stakeholders so that they can "exert more clout in their interactions with public officials to assure

that policies are adhered to and services delivered" (Brinkerhoff and Crosby, 2002:69). Thus, empowerment mechanisms enable independent stakeholders to hold public officials accountable for their decisions and or lack of action. Empowerment mechanisms also enable citizens to take control of their affairs and reduce the involvement of government officials to monitoring and support when it is necessary.

The five participation mechanisms explained by Brinkerhoff and Crosby reflect the milestones to be achieved through public participation. Each mechanism is linked to a specific milestone with the milestone determining the mechanism that will be more appropriate in a given situation. It is significant to note that according to Brinkerhoff and Crosby's theory, the milestone to be achieved has to be identified in order to establish clearly how it will benefit the participating groups.

Apart from identifying and explaining the milestones to be achieved, the question of who should participate in policy making and implementation needs to be addressed. This indicates that public participation is not an open and uncontrolled process. The process can be gainful after a careful selection of the citizens and groups that will participate in the process. This suggests that there are some groups or individuals who are excluded from participating. Brinkerhoff and Crosby (2002:63) outlined the following list of key questions to guide the selection process of participant groups:

i) Who are the policy's stakeholders and what are their interests?
ii) What does each participating group have to offer in terms of support, new insights and technical information?
iii) Will the support or input offered by the group significantly improve the quality of policy implementation?
iv) Will the group's participation attract other groups to support the policy and reduce opposition?
v) Will failure to include the group and respond to its demands cause implementation problems, policy failure, or problems in other areas such as criticism in the media, or social unrest?

vi) What will be the cost of incorporating a new group into the policy coalition, and can the group's expectations and demands be balanced with other interests supporting the policy?

The questions outlined by Brinkerhoff and Crosby indicate that the process of participation needs to be planned and coordinated if it is to achieve its objective. In addition, they reveal that relevant stakeholders must be carefully selected for participation to be meaningful and those who will not add value excluded. For example, the key questions would be helpful to identify negative stakeholders whose agenda could be to oppose or stall good policy decisions and their implementation for political gains. In this regard, the questions could be used to assess the political and personal interests of different groups. In addition, they can be used to screen the participating groups and individuals to avoid delayed decisions and wasting of time caused by failure to reach consensus.

Although the key questions can be helpful in the selection of stakeholders for participation, there is a danger that the selection process could be prejudiced against some groups especially those in rural settings. The rural poor are disadvantaged in many ways with the use of the aforesaid questions to guide the selection process likely to result in the exclusion of many people living in rural areas. For example, it is difficult to see how public participation could be effectively promoted in rural areas where there is poor institutional capacity and lack of resources. According to Masango (2001), it is difficult to promote public participation in rural areas because of factors such as political and tribal divisions, lack of sophistication and illiteracy amongst the rural population. Kakonge (1996) reiterates that public participation in rural contexts is hampered by factors such as lack of consultation, lack of effective communication between local government and local people, lack of legal framework to facilitate and promote the practice, and the lack of political will to promote it in rural settings. These allegations are tested empirically in the case study of this current research in the context of local government in South Africa, to determine how they affect rural development processes.

2.5 CONCLUSION

This chapter conceptualised the key concepts of this study: the rural, rural development, rural poverty, public policy implementation and public participation. It was noted that these concepts are interrelated and context-bound. The literature survey conducted here revealed that the aforementioned concepts are subjective and multifaceted. It was clarified that rurality is often used to describe small villages that have low population in the countryside and characterised

by poor infrastructure and limited access to quality services. It was pointed out that inadequate infrastructure in rural areas hampers the delivery of quality services in various sectors such as education, health care, water, electricity, road and telecommunication. Rural areas are also characterised by high rates of poverty, inequality and unemployment. For some researchers, rural is synonymous with poverty because rural people reside under impoverished conditions and limited economic opportunities. It was argued that this description of rural areas fits the situation of the African context and does not apply to rural areas elsewhere in the world especially in Europe where rural areas have well developed infrastructure and better service delivery.

In the African context, there are small farming towns between the bigger cities and rural areas. But unlike in the European context, these small farming towns usually lack the capacity to provide adequate employment and economic opportunities to the rural population. As a result, large numbers of economically active people migrate to big cities in search of opportunities. The phenomenon of rural-urban migration has contributed to the impoverishment of rural areas and also exacerbated urban poverty.

It was noted that the concept of rural poverty has two dimensions, the material and the non-material aspects. While the material dimensions explain poverty in terms of variables such as lack of income, lack of resources and adequate infrastructure, the non-material aspects are difficult to decipher. The non-material dimension focuses on the aspects of human life such as capabilities, well-being and empowerment. The non-material poverty of the rural people therefore, includes being economically, socially and politically deprived of a chance to live a dignified life and participate gainfully in the mainstream economy. The non-material poverty of the rural people also manifests itself in their exclusion from decision-making processes and their implementation. Therefore, the conceptualisation of development took into account both the material and non-material aspects of the conditions of the rural poor. To this end, Todaro and Smith (2011:16) argued that development:

> "Must represent the whole gamut of change by which an entire social system, turned to the diverse basic needs and evolving aspirations of individuals and social groups within that system, moves away from a condition of life widely perceived as unsatisfactory toward a situation or condition of life regarded as materially and spiritually better".

Although development can mean different things to different people, this chapter has provided a broader vision of development that includes both the material and non-material aspects.

Powerlessness was identified as an element that epitomises the non-material poverty of the rural people. The chapter argued that the rural people lack the necessary power to own and control land which is supposed to be the most readily available resource to them. It was argued that, with access to adequate land, rural people can establish small farms and cultivate different crops and keep livestock for their consumption. Access to land can offer rural people opportunities to be economically independent and create their wealth. Although land is perceived to be readily available in rural areas, the majority of rural people lack full ownership in the form of title deeds. For most rural people land is a common property with fluid boundaries which are continuously adapted to suit people's social needs. The lack of land ownership means that most rural people cannot sell or use the land they occupy as collateral to get loans from financial institutions such as banks. While the chapter acknowledged land as the most important resource for rural development, it asserted that the lack of proof of ownership severely curtails the options of rural people. Powerlessness is a form of poverty that is also manifested in situations where rural people are excluded from decision-making processes and where they have no control over their local resources.

The concept of public policy implementation was analysed in relation to rural development. The examined literature revealed that the implementation of public policies does not occur automatically. Instead, policy implementation depends on a number of factors that include the availability of human and financial resources and political will. The multi-actor and sectoral nature of policy implementation demands that the process of implementation must be managed meticulously to create synergy between the actors. Lack of coordination of the activities of various actors was identified as a key factor that could lead to implementation failure. When managed well, coordination can promote cooperation amongst the different implementing agents and prevent the duplication of programmes and wastage of scarce resources. Therefore, the chapter asserts that implementation failure is often the result of poor coordination. This indicates that the availability of resources alone does not guarantee effective implementation of public policies.

Furthermore, the chapter argues that, rural development policies must be subjected to implementation analysis and implementation evaluation. These are two important exercises that can generate vital information to explain why policy implementation succeeded or failed. Therefore, it is argued that before a policy can be discarded, modified or continued, it is

imperative to conduct implementation analysis to generate information that will justify the decision of the policy makers.

The chapter also reviewed the literature focusing on the top-down and the bottom-up approaches to public policy implementation. It was revealed that both approaches have strengths and limitations. An effective implementation of rural development policies is possible through the use of an approach that promotes the participation of the rural people. However, it was revealed that in reality, it can be extremely difficult to use one approach and totally exclude the other. Therefore, a situation where there is a degree of collaboration between the two approaches would yield better policy results. In this regard, the works of researchers (Matland, 1995; Sabatier, 1991; 1988; 1986; Elmore, 1982) who have attempted to synthesise the two approaches was examined. Although their work did not lead to a universally accepted implementation theory, it has immensely enriched implementation studies.

This chapter proposes an approach to policy implementation in which the top-down and bottom-up approaches converge. It argues that sustainable rural development cannot be achieved without the meaningful participation of the rural people. The top-down approaches are essentially prescriptive and do not recognize the role that local actors can play in policy implementation. Failure to recognise the agency of the poor and independent local organisations is one of the barriers of policy implementation. Therefore, the chapter argues that public participation, although it is not a panacea to policy implementation, can provide the opportunity for the two approaches to enhance each other. The typologies of Arnstein (1969) and Brinkerhoff and Crosby (2002) revealed that the highest form of public participation is the empowerment of citizens especially the poor through capacity building processes. In a democratic context, public participation provides space in which both the material and non-material aspects of rural poverty can be addressed. It empowers the rural poor to be agents of their own change. Burkey (2002:56) succinctly describes public participation as follows:

> "Participation is an essential part of human growth; that is the development of self-confidence, pride, initiative, creativity, responsibility and cooperation. Without such a development within the people themselves all efforts to alleviate their poverty will be immensely more difficult, if not impossible. This process, whereby people learn to take charge of their own lives and solve their own problems, is the essence of development".

Finally, the chapter considered the works of Arnstein and Brinkerhoff and Crosby, which provide tools on how to analyse public participation and various mechanisms for participation.

The chapter noted the importance of analysing the different forms of public participation in order to distinguish between situations where citizens participate meaningfully with power and those where public participation is used as a gimmick by public officials. The typology of Arnstein's ladder of participation is used in this current study to analyse public participation in the implementation of rural development policies in South Africa. The participation mechanisms explicated by Briknerhoff and Crosby are also used to analyse whether the objectives of participation are defined and achieved or not. It was argued in this chapter that public participation which is essentially a bottom-up approach has the potential to bring government and the local people, especially in rural areas into dialogue and partnership. One of its key objectives is to empower citizens to hold public officials accountable for their decisions and actions.

CHAPTER THREE: TRACING THE DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT POLICIES IN POST-1994 SOUTH AFRICA

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter aims to contextualise rural poverty and rural development in South Africa. It argues that the context of rural poverty and rural development in South Africa goes back to the colonial and apartheid eras. The thesis focuses on rural development in post-apartheid South Africa. However, it argues that while colonialism and apartheid affected patterns of rural development and rural poverty, these became more pronounced in the twentieth century with the passing of key Acts prescribing land occupation and ownership. The chapter demonstrates how racially and sexist discriminatory policies affected and defined patterns of rural development and poverty in South Africa. It argues that, although rural areas share similar characteristics across the globe, rural areas in South Africa are unique as a result of colonialism and the apartheid system. The apartheid policies of racial segregation and the creation of homeland regions indeed disenfranchised the majority of Black people and entrenched poverty in rural areas.

The policy responses in post-1994 South Africa seek radical transformation of rural areas in order to achieve a better life for all rural people. An analysis of the post-1994rural development policies reveals the democratic government's conceptual understanding of rural areas, rural poverty and rural development. Although it was not easy to agree on a working definition of the aforementioned key concepts, that did not deter the government's commitment to address the problem of rural poverty and isolation of rural areas. As a result, the chapter argues that South Africa has succeeded in designing some of the most forward looking and sustainable rural development policies in the world. The challenge, however, has been the effective implementation of those policies in order to transform rural areas. Implementation is the critical phase of the policy making process and is addressed in detail in the next chapter of this study.

The chapter presents a historical narrative of the causes of rural poverty in the pre-1994 era and a descriptive narrative of the policy environment responses to rural poverty in the post 1994 era. Land is presented as an essential element of rural development and that land reform and rural development in South Africa are fundamentally linked to each other. Therefore, the successful implementation of land reform that encompasses equitable distribution and security

of tenure has a positive impact on rural development as a whole. Adversely, failure of land reform has a negative impact on rural development and it amplifies the effects of rural poverty.

3.2 BACKGROUND OF RURAL AREAS IN SOUTH AFRICA

While there are common defining elements of rural areas across the globe, the historical context of rural areas in South Africa makes them unique in a number of ways. Rural areas in South Africa were deliberately impoverished and segregated by the colonial and apartheid regimes. The 1913 Natives Land Act, which was designed by the Union of South Africa three years after its formation, laid the foundation for the apartheid system and territorial segregation on the basis of race (Kloppers and Pienaar, 2014). The Act restricted African land occupation to scheduled areas which represented about 8% of the total land of South Africa. The scheduled areas were called tribal reserves because the different African tribes would be confined in these areas. The 1913 Natives Land Act was followed by the Beaumont Commission, which was formed to investigate the question of land delimitations.[12] After the investigations, the Commission made recommendations in a report of 1916 and recommended more land to be designated for occupation by Africans. However, Changuion and Steenkamp (2012:151) assert that the land was instead "reduced from 8 million morgen to 7 million morgen. This represented 7% of South Africa's land for 68% of South Africa's population".[13] A number of researchers have pointed out that the land designated for African occupation was not ideal for settlement or agricultural purposes (Kloppers and Pienaar, 2014; Sibanda, 2008; Pycroft, 2002; Wilson and Ramphele, 1991). Furthermore, there were no financial facilities available to assist Black African people in rural areas to develop their land and improve its productivity.

The 1913 Natives Land Act defined rural areas as the official dwelling places for various African tribes in South Africa and laid the foundation for the apartheid system and territorial segregation. In addition, it served the interests of farmers, mine owners and other wealthy landowners, and largely disadvantaged the majority of Black people in the countryside. The associated overcrowding and deprivation resulted in a decline of rural economies and a huge increase in rural poverty. Scores of people left rural areas in search for jobs in the big cities, which reshaped rural areas into reliable source of cheap and surplus labour for the mines, industries and the colonial and apartheid farming sector. To this end, Ngcukaitobi (2021:22)

[12] South African History online, (accessed: 2016/04/15).
[13] According to Changuion and Steenkamp (2012:151), the composition of South Africa's population in 1921 was as follows: 68% Black, 22% White, 8% Coloured, and 2% Indian.

writes, “SANAC recommended that Africans’ access to land and farming should be curtailed to proletarise Africans in order to induce large numbers to enter low-paying wage labour”. Ngcukaitobi (2021:22) adds that, “The Chamber of Mines was empowered to recruit migrant labour in the African reserves (and in neibouring countries), while White farmers were given the power to ecvict African sharecroppers, suatters and tenants who would not submit to the full control of their time and labour by the landowner”. The exodus of economically capable people from the already impoverished rural areas amplified the vulnerability context of rural communities. Molapo (2014:4) notes that, the 1913 Natives Land Act was the major cause of rural poverty in South Africa. As a result, the rural areas suffered while the colonial and apartheid economic sectors flourished.

Further colonial legislation was enacted in order to strengthen the racial land divisions in South Africa. Kloppers and Pienaar (2014) and Changuion and Steenkamp (2012) note that the government of the Union enacted The Native Trust and Land Act 18 in 1936 to consolidate the policy of racially based territorial occupation and further limit Black land ownership. This Act made provisions for the establishment of the South African Native Trust, which was a state agency formed to administer the settlement and material welfare of Black people in the Union. In addition, the Act prohibited individual land ownership by Black people and introduced trust tenure through the creation of the South African Development Trust. The Trust was responsible for purchasing additional land in released areas for Black settlement (Kloppers and Pienaar, 2014). Furthermore, the Act restricted the land that could be owned by the Trust to scheduled native areas or released areas. Both the Native Trust and Land Act 18 of 1936 became formidable instruments to enforce racial segregation. These instruments deprived Black people of their right to own land and to settle outside designated areas that were already over-populated and impoverished.

The National Party Government that came into power in 1948 inherited an already established system of racial segregation and developed it further. It consolidated the existing segregation by adopting more legislation that lead to the establishment of the apartheid system. These new laws include: the Group Areas Act 41 of 1950 and the Group Areas Act 36 of 1966. The Group Areas Act 41 of 1950 sanctioned a second wave of evictions as it was used by the National Party Government to forcibly remove Black, Coloured and Indian people from areas that were designated or zoned as White areas (Klopper and Pienaar, 2014; Schoombee, 1985). The Group Areas Act also identified three racial groups: Whites, Natives (sic), and Coloureds and

established areas for exclusive use and occupation based on the three distinct groups. In essence, the Act automatically disqualified persons who were not of the same group from occupying any land or premises except when a valid permit had been issued. In this way, the majority of Black people were confined to rural areas which were reserved for the various African ethnic groups. Commenting on the Group Areas Act of 1950, Schoombee (1985) states that, "group areas legislation functions essentially through the control of ownership of immovable property, and of the occupation and use of land and premises, on the basis of race"(quoted in Klopper and Piennar, 2014:685). The chief aim of the Act was to control the acquisition of immovable property, and occupation of land and premises according to the defined racial groups. The Act (Act No. 41 of 1950) also served as the basis for separate development during the apartheid era in South Africa.

The Group Areas Act 36 of 1966 completed the agenda of racial segregation in relation to immovable property ownership, land use and its occupation. The Act exhibits numerous similarities with the Group Areas Act of 1950. In particular, it reiterated the creation of the three racial groups for the purposes of controlling the acquisition of immovable property and the occupation of land. For example, Section 13 of the Act prohibited the acquisition of immovable property in controlled areas while Section 20 reiterated the restrictions prescribed in the Act of 1950 regarding the occupation of land in controlled areas. In this respect, section 17 (1) of the Group Areas Act of 1966 stated that:

> "No person who is a member of any group shall occupy and no person shall allow any such person to occupy any land or premises in a specified area which was not lawfully occupied, except under the authority of a permit".

The significant thing about the Act (Act 36 of 1966) is that it clarified situations where it would not be unlawful for a person to occupy land or premises.[14] In addition, the Act gave the State President powers to proclaim through the *Government Gazette,* areas for exclusive occupation or ownership by members of a specific racial group. Klopper and Pienaar (2014) also state that, the Act gave the South African Police Force at the time, extensive powers to enforce the law. For example, section 43 (1) of the Act empowered the police to enter any premises without warrant when investigating a suspected offence in terms of the Act. Researchers estimate that

[14]There were exceptions where it was unlawful for a person to occupy land or premises and it included where a person was a *bona fide* servant or employee of the state; or a *bona fide* visitor for a total of not more than ninety days in any calendar year of any person lawfully residing on the land or premises; or where a person was a *bona fide* scholar of a school aided or controlled by the state (Klopper and Pienaar, 2014).

about 3.5 million people were forcibly removed between 1960 and 1983 as a result of the four Acts discussed (Klopper and Pienaar, 2014; Robinson, 1997). Black people were the most affected as they suffered the loss of land and other property and trauma of cutting ties with places they had regarded as their ancestral estates.

The aforementioned Acts (Natives Land Act of 1913; The Native Trust and Land Act 18 of 1936; The Group Areas Act 41 of 1950; and The Group Areas Act 36 of 1966) provide the historical background of rural areas in South Africa and outline how the homelands or *Bantustans* system was created. The scheduled areas, which were initially called tribal reserves, were deliberately shaped by the four Acts into what came to be known as homelands or *bantustans*. The policy of territorial homelands or *bantustans* was directly linked to that of White supremacy. Khapoya (1980:28) states that the policy of White supremacy "essential intimates that each African ethnic group has its own homeland, and that the White minority government has the duty to guide these homelands to the point where they can assume political independence as sovereign states". The Black population was thus divided into ten territorial homelands, based on their language and culture.[15] Of the ten homelands that were created, four of them, namely (Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda and Ciskei) .became independent, and this effectively rendered Black population groups in those territories foreigners in their own country. Ntsebeza (2013:55) and Khunou (2009) explain that homelands or *bantustans* were placed under "the control of Tribal Authorities which were dominated by chiefs and headmen". The institutions of Tribal Authority were imposed on rural areas by the apartheid regime in order to keep the homeland areas under control. The establishment of the homeland system resulted in land reserved for Black people falling under the direct control of the Tribal Authorities. These maintained a limited access of Black people to land. Wilson and Ramphele (1991) explain that the forced removals from urban areas designated for Whites only and from White farms in the 1970s exerted much pressure on homeland territories and resulted in landlessness and environmental degradation. It is clear that rural poverty and rural development in South Africa are directly linked to the effects of apartheid. The provision of government subsidies to the homeland regions, service provisions and infrastructure development were largely influenced by the discriminatory policies. As a result, the majority of Black people in

[15] The ten homelands that were created consist of Qwa Qwa for Basotho, Bophutha Tswana for Batswna, Ciskei and Transkei for the Xhosa people, Gazankulu for the Shangani people, KwaNdebele for the Ndebele people, KwaNgwana for the Swazi, Labowa for the Pedi, Venda for the Venda people and KwaZulu for the Zulu people (Khunou, 2009; Khapoya, 1980).

the homeland regions experienced absolute poverty as they had limited access to essential resources to satisfy their basic needs. In addition, Black people suffered from political and economic exclusion and lack of freedom of movement, which deprived them of the freedom to influence their world politically and economically.

Rural poverty and state of rural development in the pre-1994 era are therefore directly linked to the Acts which the colonial and apartheid regimes used to enforce racial segregation. The 1913 Natives Land Act is the major cause of rural poverty as it contributed to the collapse of the reserves' economy in the 1930s and made it very difficult for many people in rural areas to sustain their livelihoods (Molapo, 1987). The migrant labour system that developed as a result of racial and territorial segregation caused the disintegration of families in rural areas and amplified rural poverty. Furthermore, the consequences of racial and territorial segregation are that, fewer resources were committed to the homeland regions, a situation that resulted in inadequate infrastructure and poor service provision in rural areas. Finally, the non-committal of resources to develop rural infrastructure, as well as the political, economic and social exclusion of Black people in rural areas, undermined rural development and entrenched rural poverty in the homeland regions.

3.3 RURAL AREAS IN POST-1994 SOUTH AFRICA

Mahlati (2011) describes traditional rural areas in South Africa as characterised by beautiful countryside views and valuable natural resources. These areas are fraught with numerous problems owing to poor infrastructure, substandard communication networks, poor roads and transport services, poor access to clean water and sanitation, and poor health care facilities (Allan and Heese, 2008). As already described in the previous section, the democratic government that came into power in 1994 inherited rural areas in which poverty and deprivation are deeply entrenched. Although the problems that Mhlati describes are common in most rural areas, especially in Africa, those in South Africa are to a great extent the direct result of both the colonial and apartheid systems. Rural areas in South Africa refer to areas in the countryside with spatially dispersed populations and characterised by poor infrastructural development that, are specifically located within the homeland territories which were deliberately designed for Black African people. Mahlati (2011:57), therefore states that rural areas in post-apartheid South Africa "continue to be racially, spatially, and from a gender and class perspective, a place of the poor with high inequalities and imbalances because of their historical background".

The homeland system was unique to South Africa because it was designed to achieve the agenda of racial and territorial segregation, and to accommodate the various African ethnic groups.[16] To this end, the Native Administration Act (Act No. 38 of 1927) formed the foundation of how Black populations were to be governed in South Africa during the colonial era. The Act (Act No. 38 of 1927) gave the "Govenor Genral of the Union of South Africa powers to appoint traditional chiefs and headmen who were willing to cooperate with the government in the administration of their areas" (Changuion and Steenkamp, 2012:157). In this regard, traditional authority became entrenched to the extent that it remains part of the characteristics of rural areas in South Africa. The unique situation of rural areas in South Africa is succinctly described in the policy document, *The Integrated Sustainable Rural Development* of 2000:

> "The demographics of rural South Africa reflect past policies and the hurdles impeding efforts of rural people to maintain intact families. The legacy of former homeland system is one of enduring planned and deliberate poverty. Because of the past policies, rural South Africa also has high density population areas and dislocated settlements where people live in abject poverty. Many rural people live in these ghettos isolated from economic opportunities, necessitating high costs of transport for jobs and to accomplish basic tasks of daily life" (ISRDS 2000:7).

The understanding of the concept of rural areas in South Africa became complex in the post-1994 era because of a change in territorial demarcations. The freedom of movement afforded by multi-racial democracy also resulted in scores of people relocating from the former homelands regions to the periphery of cities and small towns in search of opportunities. The development of this new phenomenon brought confusion to the concept of rural areas to the extent that it became difficult in policy documents whether to classify these new settlements as rural in the traditional sense or not. However, the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, which is the supreme law of the land provides for three spheres of government namely: national, provincial and local governments (Mokgopo, 2020:107). In terms of the Constitution, the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act (Act No. 27 of 1998) was adopted to give effect to Section 155 of the Constitution which prescribes how the various categories of municipalities are to be established. As a result, the Municipal Demarcation Bpard (MDB) was

[16] Rural areas in South Africa are concentrated in the former homeland regions that include: the former Transkei and Ciskei which are now part of the Eastern Cape Province, KwaZulu which is now part of KwaZulu-Natal Province, KwaNdebele and KaNgwane which are now part of Mpumalanga Province, Lebowa, Venda and Gazankulu which are now part of Limpopo Province, Bophuthatswana which is now the North West Province, and Qwaqwa which is part of the Free State Province (Stats, 2003; Presidency, 2009).

established in terms of the Act (Act No. 27 of 1998). The MDB is described as a "juristic person, independent, impartial and must perform its function without prejudice, fear or favour" (Section 3 of Act No. 27 of 1998). The most important function of the MDB is to determine the dermacation of the boundaries of the three categories of municipalities (Category A, B and C) (Jeeva and Cilliers, 2021:84; Mokgopo, 2020:108). According to SALGA (2018:4), the main reason for demarcating the boundaries of municipalities in the post-apartheid era is "to create a more coherent, rational, non-racial and integrated system of municipal government with municipalities encompassing single tax bases". However, the reality on the ground shows that the majority of people in municipalities that fall under the former homeland regions continue to face similar challenges, such as lack of infrastructure and poor service delivery, as those in the former traditional rural dwellings.

Although the literature on demarcation in South Africa refers to the three spheres of government rather than urban or rural areas, a survey of government documents on rural development in the post-1994 era reveals some inconsistences and confusion in the terminology used to distinguish between rural and urban areas. For example, the 1996 Census, (Stats SA 1996) makes reference to urban and non-urban areas only. Other reports by the CSIR (2007), the Presidency (2009) and Vink and Van Rooyen (2009) use a different terminology as well, with such words as metropolitan (metro) and non-metropolitan used to distinguish between areas depending on the size of the population and the level of economic activities in the area in question. More interestingly, former Bantustans/homelands are used specifically in reference to rural areas without indicating their geographical proximity to cities or urban centres or what category of municipality they fall under. This researcher contends therefore that, in addition to defining rural areas as areas with low populations in the countryside, the aspect of traditional authority should be integrated into the definition of rural areas in South Africa where chiefs and headmen still play a key role in the administration of communal land. Traditional leaders have a great influence on development interventions under their jurisdiction and their cooperation in decision making and implementation processes remains an imperative.

Although rural areas in South Africa are historically located in the former homelands regions, it is inaccurate and misleading to confine the term to those regions alone. This is because the transformation of local government after apartheid was guided by two basic points which are: the re-demarcation of municipal boundaries and removal of the administrative distinction between urban and rural areas. This was done to create inter-linkages between urban centres

and the countryside in order to pave the way for greater integration between both. The traditional rural areas that had been historically excluded would benefit from the inter-linkages created between urban centres and the countryside. The re-demarcation exercise in post-1994 South Africa resulted in the distinction between urban areas and rural areas that is based on classification of municipalities. According to Section 155 (1) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act No. 108 of 1996), there are three categories of municipalities in South Africa.[17]

The three categories do not distinguish between rural and urban areas. However, the following table clearly makes the distinction between the different municipalities and the category to which they belong for easy analysis.

Table 4: Classification of Municipalities into Categories for Analysis

Class	**Characteristics**	**Number of Municipalities per Category**
Metros	Category A municipalities	8
Secondary Cities (B1)	All local municipalities referred as secondary cities	19
Large towns (B2)	All local municipalities with an urban core. There is huge variation in population sizes amongst these municipalities and they do have a large urban dwelling population.	27
Small towns (B3)	They are characterised by a small town as the core urban settlement. Typically, these municipalities have a relatively small population, a significant proportion of which is urban and based in one or more small towns. Rural areas in this category are characterised by the presence of commercial farms, as these local economies are largely agriculturally based. The existence of such important rural areas and agriculture sector explains its inclusion in the analysis of rural municipalities.	108
Mostly rural (B4)	These are characterised by the presence of at most one or two small towns in their areas, communal land tenure and villages, scattered groups of dwellings and are typically located in former homelands.	72

[17] The municipalities are constitutionally classified as: Category A, which are municipalities with exclusive municipal and legislative authority; Category B, which consist of local municipalities that share municipal executive and legislative powers in its area with category C municipality in whose area it falls, and Category C municipalities that have municipal executive and legislative authority in areas that include more than one municipality (Act No. 108 0f 1996, section 155(1)).

Districts (C1)	District municipalities that are not water service providers	23
District (C2)	District municipalities that are water service providers	21

Source: Stats South Africa (2016)

As noted in the Table above, rural areas fall under category B3 and B4. None of the municipalities classified under B3 have any large town as their core as they have small towns and commercial farms that serve as the back-bone of their economies. A significant part of the population in these areas resides in the small towns. A smaller proportion of the population resides in rural areas that are basically located on the farms. The municipalities classified under B4 constitute most of the traditional rural areas that are located in the former homelands. There are a few small towns in these areas that provide minimal economic support and services. The majority of the population under B4 municipalities reside in villages in which traditional leaders still exercise great influence in decision-making processes and development. According to the Local Government Budgets and Expenditure Review (LGER) report (2011), rural municipalities classified under B3 and B4 are concentrated in KwaZulu-Natal, Eastern Cape, Northern Cape and Limpopo provinces respectively. However, a few of the rural municipalities are also found in the Free State, North West, Mpumalanga and the Western Cape provinces.

Although the constitutional classification of municipalities into three categories helps to distinguish between urban and rural municipalities, it does not clarify what constitutes a rural area in the post-apartheid era. However, the DRDLR (2010:4) defines "rurality" as "a way of life, a state of mind and a culture which revolves around land, livestock, cropping and community". The DRDLR's definition includes all traditional communal areas, farmlands, peri-urban areas, informal settlements and small towns where people can live from the land (2010). Land is conspicuously central to rural life as a source of livelihood, and a base for developing rural economies. However, its use and value varies for those in the peri-urban settlements and small towns who need it for residential purposes rather than for farming. The definition of "rural" as articulated by the DRDLR (2010) does not address the two issues of communal land tenure and traditional authority which are specific to tradional rural areas. Other characteristics of rural areas notwithstanding, land tenure and traditional authority clearly distinguish rural areas from urban areas or cities where traditional authority has no relevance and land is privately owned. The demarcation of municipal boundaries and categorisation of municipalities into three (Category A, B and C) is silent on these issues.

Although the issue of integration was intended to create beneficiary linkages between urban and rural areas, it made the definition of rural areas more complicated. For example, peri-urban areas and informal settlements are largely the result of rural people migrating to urban areas and big towns in search of economic opportunities. Such informal settlements cannot be classified as rural because their way of life is more urban than rural. As already argued, the use and value of land is different in the peri-urban and informal settlements from the rural areas where land is used for farming and communal purposes. Notwithstanding, a definition and classification of rural areas based on specific characteristics is essential for developing appropriate policies and intervention strategies in order to tackle the problem of rural poverty and rural development in post-apartheid South Africa.

3.4 CHARACTERISTICS OF RURAL AREAS IN POST-1994 SOUTH AFRICA

The characterisation of rural areas is essential for identifying the human, socio-economic, political and environmental aspects of development. An in-depth understanding of these aspects impacts directly on both the content and direction of rural development policies. According to Mahlati (2011), it is imperative to unpack factors such as the location, space and place to appreciate livelihood activities, demographics, structures and systems prevalent in rural areas. Although rural areas in South Africa have been described as unique because of their origin and causes of poverty, they share similar characteristics, such as those described in chapter two of this study, with rural areas elsewhere. A distinguishing feature of rural areas in South Africa is that they were deliberately created by the colonial and apartheid regimes using racial segregation policies and the homelands system. The rural development framework (1997) outlines that rural areas of a post-1994 South Africa have the following characteristics:

- Sparsely populated areas in which people farm or depend on natural resources, including villages and small towns that are dispersed throughout these areas.
- Areas that include large settlements in the former homelands, which depend on migratory labour and remittances as well as on government social grants for their survival, and typically have traditional land tenure systems.

These areas have a long history of poor service delivery and infrastructural problems (Mahlati 2011, Allan and Heese 2008). Thus, Perret, Anseeuw and Mathebula (2005) argue that, “rural black people have long been denied their birth-right, i.e. decent houses, water, electricity and other services, during apartheid”. In addition, the long history of deprivation and economic

exclusion has meant that, traditional rural areas remain vulnerable to challenges that include poverty, and the HIV and AIDS pandemic (Donovan and Mather, 2004). These areas are also characterised by high levels of unemployment and inequality, which continue to drive scores of economically active rural people into urban areas in search of employment.

The other characteristic of rural areas in South Africa is that power is still vested in traditional leaders who are regarded as the custodians of tradition. Electoral politics is not efficient to understand the dynamics of power in those traditional rural areas. Elected political officials such as local councillors have to contend and share space with traditional leaders who still command enormous influence in rural communities (Galvin, 2010). Tradional rural areas are therefore, subjected to a dual leadership challenge. The situation is different in the new settlements which do not fall under the jurisdiction of traditional authority and where local power dynamics are determined by electoral politics. The absence of traditional authority in these new settlements allows elected local councillors to dominate the power stage and exercise their political influence over local communities. However, local communities in the new settlements can also exercise their power to influence decisions as provided for by the constitution of the Republic of South Africa.

Rural areas under B4 municipalities (see Table 4) are characterised by low economic activity and low levels of infrastructure. These are traditional rural areas in the former homeland regions which have been integrated into the local sphere of government and where poverty, inequality and unemployment are directly linked to the apartheid policies of racially-based territorial segregation and economic exclusion. According to Stats South Africa (2015), 42.5% of the population of South Africa resides in the rural areas under B3 and B4 municipalities, but there are significant variations in settlement types in these municipalities. In B3 municipalities, 52% of households are located in small urban settlements, 38 per cent on farms, and only 10% on tribal land. In B4 municipalities 83% of households are located on tribal or communal settlements, while only 17% are found on farms and small towns (National Treasury, 2011). Women account for 52% of the population in B3 municipalities, and 54% in B4 municipalities. This indicates that women bear the brunt of rural poverty in South Africa.

It is apparent that the democratic Government inherited massive rural poverty, inequality and unemployment from the past apartheid regime. According to the Department of Land Affairs (1997), rural poverty stood at 74.7% in 1993. The democratic dispensation offered hope for a

better life to the previously disenfranchised majority of Black people, especially for those in the rural areas. The challenges associated with rural areas' conditions and the country's democracy are evident in Mbeki's (1999) statement that, rural areas represent the worst concentration of poverty and no progress can be made towards a life of dignity for the people of South Africa as a whole unless rural areas are developed. As a result, the South African Government undertook massive policy reforms since 1994 to address rural poverty and rural development. The result is the formulation of various rural development policies aimed at creating an enabling environment for rural development and the eradication of rural poverty. One of the key issues to be addressed by policy reforms was the definition of the concept of rural development in the context of a democratic South Africa. A working definition of rural development needed to be agreed upon to guide the vision of a better life for all rural people.

3.5. RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN POST-1994 SOUTH AFRICA

An analysis of the literature on rural development in post-apartheid South Africa presents some interesting interpretation of how rural development is currently perceived and defined. Ashley and Maxwell (2001:395) view rural development as a failed and deplorable project because the problems of rural development are not well understood and therefore, lack a convincing policy narrative. They point out that:

> "Put briefly, it is that the crisis in rural development reflects a loss of confidence in the rural development 'project' which has for long been central to the development effort. In policy terms, rural development has lacked a convincing narrative, offering manageable and internationally agreed solutions to clearly well-understood problems" (quoted in Mahlati 2011:77).

The struggle to define rural development and articulate problems that rural areas face compromised the process of formulating rural development policies and led to the prescription of inappropriate solutions. The ISRDS document (2000) highlights how the lack of an agreed definition of rural areas affected the rationale and planning of rural development policies in post-apartheid South Africa. A review of the literature on rural development policies also reveals how policy makers struggled to capture the complexity of rural areas and their problems in post-apartheid South Africa. For example, the RDP base document (1994:14-15) only prescribed what needed to be done to achieve social transformation including the development of rural areas. In addition, the RDP base document (1994) considers rural development along the improvement of the quality of rural life. It identifies land reform and the creation of easy access to health care, education, welfare services, the courts and promotion of capacity-

building programmes as the key areas to address in attempts to reduce rural poverty and improve the quality of life in rural areas. The RDP base document also notes that, rural development is essentially about service provision and transfers, and about opening up space for rural people to participate in the policy making processes as well as the implementation of development programmes (RDP, 1994:14). Finally, rural development also includes the democratisation of rural areas so that rural people can elect their own representatives and participate in matters that affect their life.

Building on the ideals of the RDP, the ISRDS (2000) developed a more comprehensive definition, which describes rural development as a multi-dimensional process that encompasses:

> "…improved provision of services, enhanced opportunities for income generation and local economic development, improved physical infrastructure, social cohesion and physical security within rural communities, active representation in local political processes and effective provision for the vulnerable" (ISRDS 2000:23).

This description of rural development is in sync with the vision and objectives of the RDP base document, which focuses on transforming rural environments and creating opportunities for rural people. Rural development is interpreted as a process that seeks to empower people living in the countryside to determine their destiny and take control of their lives. This is broader than poverty alleviation through social programmes and transfers. Thus, rural development is perceived as a process that facilitates change of environment, motivates rural people to invest in themselves, and identifies opportunities and acts on them to ameliorate the affected citizens' livelihoods. Motebang's (2005) view that rural development in post-apartheid South Africa is perceived as a multifaceted process that seeks to improve service provision and infrastructure in rural areas is instructive here. Rural development indeed seeks to develop rural economies and create opportunities for income generation, and a process that empowers rural people to play a meaningful role in political and decision making processes.

Similarly, the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform (DRDLR) in its Strategic Plan of 2010-2013 defines rural development as a process that enables rural people to take control of their destiny and deal effectively with poverty through proper use and management of natural resources. The strategic plan also describes rural development as a participatory process through which rural dwellers learn, over time and through their own experiences, how to adapt their indigenous knowledge to their changing environment (DRDLR, 2010-2013). As

a participatory process, rural development fosters a change of attitude within the rural people and motivates them to both get actively involved in their development and take full ownership of the process and its outcomes. The DRDLR (2010-2013) asserts that, rural development requires the support and commitment of various spheres of government, various stakeholders from both the private sector and civil society organisations, and the rural communities themselves to achieve the vision of a better life for all people living in rural areas.

The broader definition of rural development incorporates variables such as empowerment of the poor, freedom, participation, determination of one's destiny and taking ownership and control of local resources (Korten, 1999). In this way, rural development programmes address both the material and non-material aspects of rural poverty and development. As a result, Todaro and Smith (2011) describe development as a movement away from a condition of life widely perceived as unsatisfactory toward a situation or condition of life regarded as materially and spiritually better. The condition of life that is regarded as materially and spiritually better here constitute the vision of rural development policies of the post-apartheid era.

Rural development in post-apartheid South Africa is largely presented as a reconstruction of rural areas. Its core objective is the socio-economic development that seeks to create opportunities for rural people and, improve service provision, infrastructure and social cohesion (DRDLR, 2010-2023). In its strategic plan of 2010-2013, the DRDLR identifies agriculture as the key economic driver of sustainable rural development. It presents agrarian reform as the key driver of rural development because it relates to rapid change in the use of land, livestock, cropping and rural communities. In this regard, land reform includes:

> "…the establishment of rural business initiatives, agro-industries, co-operatives, cultural initiatives and vibrant local markets in rural settings, the empowerment of rural people and communities (especially women and youth), and the revitalisation of old, and revamping of new economic, social, information and communication infrastructure, public amenities and facilities in villages and small rural towns" (DRDLR, 2009:3).

The South African Rural Development Quarterly (2014) describes rural development as "the advancement of rural communities through the improvement of rural institutions and systems, expansion of rural infrastructure, and growth in rural economic activities". The current interpretation of rural development is broader in the sense that it addresses different sections of rural life. It recognises the role that people living in rural areas play in identifying various economic opportunities and development programmes that can benefit them the most. The

agency of the poor living in rural areas and their indigenous knowledge systems form part of what constitutes rural development.

The current interpretation of rural development as it is understood in post-1994 South Africa was officially adopted by the DRDLR when it was established in 2009. The interpretation incorporates the various elements that reflect different sections of rural life that need to be transformed. The DRDLR also provides a framework for implementing rural development policies (Nkwiti, 2014). Prior to 2009 this department was known as the Department of Land Affairs (DLA). The establishment of the DRDLR makes the policy responses to rural poverty and development to be more focused.

The next section provides a timeline and analysis of the policy responses to rural poverty and rural development in post-apartheid South Africa. It also considers the challenges faced in the rural development programmes.

3.6 RURAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY FRAMEWORK

The post- 1994 era has witnessed massive policy reforms aimed at addressing the challenges of rural poverty and rural development inherited from the past apartheid regime (Perret, Anseeuw, and Mathebula, 2005). Rural development during the apartheid era focused on promoting a minimum standard of living for the people living in the rural areas. However, the policy reforms of the post-1994 period aimed at reducing rural poverty and inequality by developing rural infrastructure and creating economic opportunities. To a large extent, the post-apartheid rural development framework constructed a vision of rural development that is premised on the mantra of a better life for all rural people. Consequently, the rural development policy reforms prioritised land reform, infrastructural development and improved institutional capacity in order to deliver services to the rural communities. The literature shows that infrastructural development and improved institutional capacity in rural areas have been viewed as a prerequisite to the provision of health care, education, water, electricity, housing, sanitation, transport and communication.

The post-1994 rural development policy reforms have sought to promote an integrated approach to rural development so that there is mutual benefit between rural areas and the big cities. The policy assumption is that an integrated approach would create inter-linkages between urban and rural economies, which would result in job creation in rural areas and mitigate against the problem of rural-urban migration. The available literature on rural

development indicates that the policy's reforms have passed through various stages that have helped to clarify the policy direction and refined the vision of rural development in a democratic South Africa. The literature also indicates that the reform of rural development policies is on-going and context bound.

3.6.1 The Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) – on Rural Development

The RDP (1994) base document served as the basis for a broad reform agenda and articulated the vision for a new democratic society. As such, it was defined "as an integrated, coherent socio-economic policy framework" that sort to mobilise all South Africans and the country's resources toward the eradication of the remnants of apartheid and reconstruction of a democratic, non-racial and non-sexist society. The RDP base document established a new policy trajectory and provided the framework for addressing the injustices of the past apartheid regime. The African National Congress (ANC) used the RDP base document as its election manifesto in 1994 as it stood out as a policy document that captured the socio-economic and political demands at the heart of the majority of Black people. The RDP base document focuses in its response to the challenges inherited from the past, on pertinent issues such as land restitution, health facilities, education, housing, water, and sanitation. It also made a commitment to reduce inequalities and rural poverty. Ultimately, the RDP base document identifies the following four key areas that needed urgent attention and restructuring in order to achieve a new society: i) meeting the basic needs of all people, ii) development of human resources through education and training, iii) building the economy, and iv) democratisation of the State and society.

The RDP base document was widely accepted amongst the formerly disadvantaged communities to whom it promised a better life and access to economic opportunities. It was widely viewed as a bottom-up approach that prioritises the needs of the poor at grass-root level. According to Hirsch (2005:59), the RDP base document "represented the participation, not only of formal members of the ANC's alliance- ANC, COSATU and the SACP, but also the civic federation, SANCO whose main cause was housing". It was broadly accepted because it was the result of a broader consultation drive and is able to link economic growth to development. It recognises that economic growth is not synonymous with development, but that it is necessary for development to be achieved. This suggests that rural development would be impossible to achieve without economic growth. The RDP base document was later amended and adopted as a "White paper on Reconstruction and Development" by the

Government of National Unity (GNU). It became an instrument of guiding the agenda of social, political and economic transformation in the post-apartheid era.

Although the RDP was not a rural development policy, it set the stage for the broader policy reform agenda which situated rural development within the vision of social and economic transformation of a post-apartheid South Africa. It made a clear commitment to improve the quality of life in the former homeland regions that were predominately rural and poor. It also proposed a massive increase in the delivery of social services and transfer of substantial funds from the central government to rural areas in order to meet the needs of the rural people (ANC, 1994:84). The RDP recognises and highlights the plight of rural women who constitute the majority of small-scale farmers and bear the brunt of poverty and hunger in rural communities. In many ways, it resonated with the poor and previously disadvantaged groups.

Despite its promise of a better life for all, especially the poor in rural areas, the RDP is criticised by various researchers such as Perret, Anseeuw and Mathebula (2005) who argue that it raised hopes and created unrealistic expectations, particularly from the people living in rural areas who had been disenfranchised for long. The RDP resonates with the poor in general and yet it is described as too ambitious and burdensome for a small economy. South Africa had a narrow economy at the time, when the RDP was adopted and did not have a strong institutional capacity nor the required skilled human resources, especially skilled Black managers and technicians to manage and implement the RDP programmes. The lack of financial resources and skilled personnel, as well as weak institutional capacity undermined the likelihood of meeting the objectives of the RDP. As a result, the RDP was replaced in 1997 by the Growth, Employment and Redistribution Strategy (GEAR), a macro-economic policy. According to Perret, Anseeuw and Mathebula (2005), GEAR became one of the principal instruments for realising the policy objectives contained in the RDP. As a macro-economic policy, GEAR's fundamental objective was to grow the economy to the level where it could support the huge public expenditure bill. GEAR was designed to grow the economy by attracting both foreign and domestic direct investment. Wessels (1999:240) adds that GEAR allowed the government "to escape from the threatening impact of African socialism" which had failed to achieve macro-economic growth. As a macro-economic strategy, GEAR was envisaged to "guide the government programmes such as the growth in export production, infrastrural development, the restructuring of state assets, deceasing the budget deficit, human resource development, and a comprehensive policy for labour relations" (Wessels, 1999:240). In essence, GEAR's

priority was to grow the economy along neo-liberal economic principles which allow market forces to play a major role, with the state playing an enabling role and less control of the economy.

The RDP is significant for rural development in the post-apartheid era because it laid the foundation for general policy reform. It clearly describes the areas that needed to be tackled to address rural poverty and rural development. It served as a key point of reference for rural development policy framework. As a result, the evolution of rural development policies in the post-apartheid era has been imbued with the ideals of the RDP. Various RDP programmes for rural development were even inherited and adopted by different government departments for implementation within the framework of GEAR. The trend has continued with the various policy responses aiming to address the same rural development challenges identified in the RDP. As such, the vision of the RDP for rural development can be described as work in progress at both theoretical and practical levels.

3.6.2 The National Rural Development Strategy (1995)

The National Rural Development Strategy (NRDS) of the Government of National Unity was an attempt at constructing a clear policy to guide rural development. It was crafted by the RDP office in 1995 and it reiterates the observation made by the RDP White paper that rural people, and rural women in particular were the most affected by poverty in South Africa. In addition, it highlights the central role that rural people could play in the strategy to eliminate rural poverty and improve rural life. As such, it strongly emphasises the importance of public participation in rural development processes. The NRDS sort to solicit input from different individuals and organisations across the country, particularly from rural people (Government of South Africa, 1995). It reiterated the GNU's commitment to address the challenges of rural poverty by providing rural areas "with basic services such as clean water, sanitation, access to schools and clinics, road development and energy provision" (Phuhlisani Solutions, 2009:24). In line with the ideals of the RDP, the NRDS sort to address the problems of inequality and poverty in rural areas as a matter of urgency. To this end, it outlines concrete ways that needed to be undertaken to develop rural areas.

The first priority of the NRDS was to create democratic institutions at the local level to serve as the bedrock of local government whose task would be to spearhead rural development. Through local government, the NRDS envisages that rural people and their elected

representatives in rural District Councils and Local Councils would identify and prioritise local development initiatives. Thus, it placed the responsibility for rural development in the hands of local government together with rural communities and their elected representatives. In addition, the NRDS emphasises the need for local government officials to learn the RDP business planning processes and train rural people so that they could benefit from government funding and make the NRDS work for them. Furthermore, the NRDS prioritises projects managed locally by people living in rural areas themselves as the driving force of rural development. Therefore, the NRDS envisaged arobust participation by rural dwellers and other stakeholders in programme identification and implementation processes.

The NRDS reiterates the vision of the RDP of improving services to small scale farmers and entrepreneurs, developing rural infrastructure, education, health, skills development and building the capacity of people living in rural areas (Government of South Africa, 1995b). It proposes the employment of skilled Community Development Facilitators (CDFs) who would train the poor people in rural areas to get their concerns considered during local negotiations on service delivery and infrastructure development issues. The role of the CDFs would include animating local communities and empowering them to participate meaningfully in decision-making processes.

The NRDS tries to incorporate most of the ideals of the RDP and outlines the clear goals for rural development. It also appears to be an appropriate response to rural poverty and the challenges of rural development. However, it was not adopted as an official rural development policy. Instead, it was abandoned after the closure of the RDP office in 1996. The Centre for Development Enterprise (CDE) (1996) considers it as unrealistic and argues further that it was not grounded on socio-economic realities of rural areas. In this regard, Perret, Anseeuw and Mathebula (2005:13) argue that the NRDS failed to "address the key issue of the actual potential of the rural economy in areas that were left under-developed by the past apartheid regime". Vaughan (1997:35) describes the NRDS as a "wish list" that failed to identify opportunities and constraints in rural development. However, it should be understood that the NRDS argued for the creation of a coherent system of local government in post-apartheid South Africa, and promoted the implementation of various RDP programmes. Furthermore, it was the first attempt to develop a policy response that focused specifically on the problem of rural poverty in the post-apartheid era.Its recognition of the need to train local government officials and local people on how to develop an RDP business plan and guide them to access government

funding is commendable. The NRDS also identifies the need to employ skilled Community Development Facilitators who could train people in the rural areas on how to present their concerns during negotiations for service delivery. These are important aspects which could have enhanced rural development initiatives if implemented. Although the NRDS was not officially adopted as a policy, it formed the basis for developing the Rural Development Framework of 1997.

3.6.3 The Rural Development Framework (1997)

The Rural Development Framework (RDF) of 1997 was based on the objectives of both the RDP White paper (1994) and the RDS (1995). It reiterates the Government's commitment to work with rural people to build sustainable rural communities. As a discussion document, the RDF identifies specific areas that needed to be addressed and strengthened in order to pave the way for rural development. For example, it identifies the development of rural infrastructure as a priority area. In this regard, it focused on the construction of roads, water and sanitation, energy and housing. The document recognises the development of rural infrastructure as a prerequisite for the provision of essential services to rural areas and to reduce poverty and unemployment. Furthermore, it identifies public administration, local government and rural non-farm employment as the key areas to be capacitated in order to achieve sustainable rural development (RDF, 1997). The issues articulated in both the RDP and the NRDS are re-emphasised in the RDF. For example, the development of local government, the strengthening of public administration institutions in rural local government and creating new economic opportunities in rural areas are some of the key issues already proposed in both the RDP and the NRDS (RDF, 1997; Phuhlisani Solutions, 2009).

The RDF's key points include the need to co-ordinate the different sectoral programmes at both national and provincial levels to achieve better policy outcomes. Although the co-ordination of rural development programmes could be done by the local government, the RDF indicates that few of the rural municipalities had the capacity to do so. Therefore, it proposed that co-ordination be done at the national and provincial levels of Government as these have more resources and a better institutional capacity. However, entrusting the coordination of rural development programmes to the national and provincial Governments is not in sync with the principle of public participation which the framework claims to promote. Instead it would perpetuate a top-down approach, which limits the involvement of the local communities and promotes the status quo.

The RDF is quite descriptive in nature and more detailed in outlining crosscutting rural development activities and responsibilities. One of the RDF's major contributions is in the formulation of a working definition of rural areas in a democratic South Africa. The RDF (1997:2) defines the rural as "the sparsely populated areas in which people farm or depend on natural resources, including the villages and small towns that are dispersed through these areas". Rural clusters without an economic base that existed in the former homeland regions are included in this definition. The RDF acknowledges the limitation of the definition which included households from both urban and rural categories that rely on a range of resources for their income. Notwithstanding the limitations, the definition highlights the complexity of rural areas in a post-apartheid South Africa. Rural areas became complex as a result of the transformation of local government in the post- apartheid era. The post-apartheid transformation of local government was done through the process of re-demarcating municipal boundaries. The re-demarcation process involved the elimination of administrative distinctions that existed between urban and rural, and aimed at creating inter-linkages between the urban and countryside. Local Government Budgets and Expenditure Review (2011), notes that, the re-demarcation of municipal boundaries complicated the administrative determination of what constitutes a rural area and, by extension, what constitutes a rural municipality. The RDF's definition of rural areas was used as a working definition by various government departments. In addition, it focuses the rural development discourse to specific geographical contexts and challenges that need to be tackled to eradicate rural poverty in the post-apartheid South Africa. Nonetheless, it should be noted that, although it shows the complexity involved in addressing rural development, it was not confirmed as an official rural development policy.

Furthermore, the RDF uses statistical data from the past apartheid regime to demonstrate the distribution of poverty between urban and rural areas. The table below shows the magnitude of rural poverty inherited by the new Government in 1994. It is indeed a desperate situation that needed effective policy responses and political will from the new administration.

Table 5: Distribution of Poverty between Rural and Urban Areas (1993)

	Poverty Shares, (%) (Where are poor people?)		Poverty Rates (%) (What proportion of the Population is poor?)	
	Poor	Ultra-poor	Poor	Ultra-poor

Rural	74.6	80.7	73.7	43.5
Urban	15.7	14.1	40.5	19.8
Metropolitan	9.8	5.3	19.7	5.8
All	100.0	100.0	52.8	28.8

Source: Department of Land Affairs, 1997

The poverty share in percentages refers to all poor people who live in a given area. The table indicates that, 74.7% of the poor in South Africa lived in rural areas in 1993, while only 15.7% lived in urban areas. The poverty rate refers to the percentage of people in a given area who were poor, such that, 73.7% of the rural population was poor in 1993. These figures compare the reality of poverty between rural areas and urban areas before the democratic elections of 1994. It is this statistical data that was used in the RDF of 1997 because the data from the 1996 census was not available (Department of Land Affairs, 1997).

The 1994-1996 is described by Everatt and Zulu (2001) as the learning curve period because it marks the first phase in which the democratic government learnt to deliver services and define the overall programme direction. They also point out that various public servants in this period were new in their jobs and lacked the skills to manage and implement new programmes effectively. Some of the new public servants were recruited from the NGO sector, and as such they brought new ideas and energy in readiness to deliver services speedily to the poor. However, despite their wealth of experience from the NGO sector, they were faced with the challenge of learning and understanding how the public sector functionsandmaster the rules of government (Everrat and Zulu, 2001). The problems were compounded by the lack of certainty regarding the role of the RDP office and the roles of the national and provincial departments in relation to service delivery and programme implementation.

The implementation of rural development programmes between 1994 and 1996 was largely experimental. The main approach to rural development was the Community Based Public Works Programme (CBPWP) used by the Independent Development Trust (IDT) (Everrat and Zulu, 2001). An analysis of the implemented programmes, such as the CBPWP and the Community Employment Programme (CEP), indicates a bias in favour of community-based development. Everrat and Zulu (2001) note that, the early stages of rural development were characterised by a willingness to learn from mistakes, and the sense that the government was

acting as a partner rather than a manager. Nonetheless, the experimental nature and learning from mistakes approach resulted in less progress being made.

The period between 1996 and 1997/8 was more focused on the evaluation and refining of the programmes. Everrat and Zulu (2001) assert that some rural development programmes were substantially refined and new objectives set with some that were unrealistic. What is significant about this period is that a lot of innovation was encouraged and different models of institutional arrangements were introduced. The introduced models include outsourcing some programmes to independent stakeholders for implementation. It was also a period of refining policy responses through evaluation of previous programmes, learning from the previous mistakes, and experimenting on various approaches. The RDF of 1997 provided guidance for the development and implementation of rural development programmes for almost three years. Unfortunately, there was a bit of stagnation regarding the construction of a clear and official rural development policy. Thus, stagnation prompted some advocacy groups such as the Rural Development Initiative (RDI), to urge the government to address the issue of rural development (Perret, Anseeuw and Mathebula, 2005).

3.6.4. Integrated Sustainable Rural Development Strategy (ISRDS) 2000

The available literature considers the various programmes designed to deliver rural development under the auspices of the RDP, the NRDS and the RDF as fragmented and unfocused due to the lack of an official rural development policy to guide the process. Mahlati (2011:96) points out that "[a] range of fragmented initiatives emerged from different departments which were not based on a specific set of targets or common indicators, but aimed at addressing important elements of rural development". The lack of an official rural development policy that defined the scope and direction of rural development meant that rural poverty remained a concern for the people living in the rural areas who had been promised a better life. Sentiments were raised by some advocacy groups, prior to the general elections of 1999, urging the government to focus specifically and explicitly on rural development. As a result, the government drafted the Integrated Sustainable Rural Development Strategy (ISRDS) 2000. The ISRDS relies heavily on the preliminary work done by the Department of Land Affairs and other key line Departments after the RDF (Perret, Anseeuw and Mathebula, 2005). The ISRDS was approved by the Cabinet as an official policy response to rural poverty and under-development, and it was published in the Government Gazette of November 2000. It was later turned into a programme to highlight its operational objective.

The ISRDS rejuvenates the Government's initial commitment to rural development. It is a fairly broad strategy to cover various challenges of rural development. For example, it takes into account the local and diverse contexts of rural areas, and also emphasises the eradication of rural poverty as a priority on its agenda. It also drew lessons from different rural development approaches employed by other developing countries in different parts of the world. Notably, it takes cognisance of input from various stakeholders and information generated through evaluation of the rural development programmes that had been implemented since 1994 (ISRDS, 2000). It identifies the lack of coordination in the implementation processes as the major reason that led to the fragmentation of rural development programmes and lack of progress. It articulates its vision as the development of:

> "…socially cohesive and stable communities with viable institutions, sustainable economies and universal access to social amenities, able to attract and retain skilled and knowledgeable people who are equipped to contribute to growth and development" (ISRDS 2000:1).

The programme set districts and Local Government (LG) as the key drivers and locationsfor the achievement of an integrated sustainable rural development. The role of LG in rural development is discussed later in this chapter. What is important to note is that, although the LG was identified as the key driver of rural development, the programme acknowledges the weaknesses of local municipalities, and consequently preferred to focus on districts. This point is explained further in the discussion on the role of LG in rural development.

The ISRDS is viewed as a creative and ambitious attempt to address the problems of institutional capacity and lack of resources that were hindering the implementation of rural development programmes (Motebang, 2005). The plan sought to implement the programme in phases over a ten year period starting from 2001. One of the strengths of the programme is that it was a result of research and previous experience. The research had identified the centralised system of governance as contributing to poor performance of rural development programmes elsewhere. Consequently, it favoured a decentralised, empowered and trained rural local government system as the most appropriate to drive rural development in post-apartheid South Africa. Thus, the ISRDS focused on 13 selected nodes spread over rural areas across the country. Three pilot nodes were selected initially and ten more nodes added later. Perret, Anseeuw and Mathebula (2005) note that, 12 of the selected nodes superimposed district demarcations. Nonetheless, the programme aimed to promote integrated service delivery through coordinated planning and resource allocation in the nodal areas. It also sought to

encourage better collaboration between programmes implemented by the government and independent actors in order to fast track service delivery and improve the quality of life of rural people in the nodal areas (Mdaka, 2009).

The selected nodal areas provided an opportunity to address the challenges that impacted negatively on the previous rural development programmes. The challenges include: poor coordination, poor consultation, weak participation, poor data and planning, weak institutional and regulatory mechanisms, slow delivery and weak sustainability (ISRDS, 2000; Phuhlisani Solutions 2009). These are clearly identified and delineated in the programme and there is an explicit commitment to address them.

As a result, the ISRDS was inaugurated at a time when many local municipalities were ill-equipped to play a meaningful role in the agenda of rural development. As such it was designed to enable both the national and provincial levels of Government to support municipalities that were poorly resourced. The Independent Development Trust (IDT) was appointed to work with municipalities in the designated nodes to facilitate the integration of their projects and to prepare a nodal operational plan. The Integrated Development Planning (IDP) model was adopted as the core tool for delivering the objectives of the programme. The IDPs were designed to bolster local capacity for people's involvement in the matters of local government (Motebang, 2005).

The ISRDS hoped to achieve the vision of building socially cohesive and stable rural communities with viable institutions and sustainable economies within the timeframe of ten years. It aimed to achieve universal access to social amenities in rural areas and empower rural people to contribute to the growth and development of rural communities. This vision could only be realised after the establishment of both a strong institutional capacity at the local level and relevant infrastructure had been established. It is evident that there was need for strong institutional capacity and relevant infrastructure to enable the LG to fulfil its obligation of driving rural development in the post-apartheid epoch. Thus, the ISRDS recognizes institutional capacity at LG level as a prerequisite to achieving sustainable rural development in the post-apartheid period. This strongly suggests that weak and dysfunctional LG institutions at both district and local municipality level will fundamentally undermine the role of local government in rural development. The reduction of rural poverty and intensification of rural development essentially depends entirely on strong and functional LG institutions. The

mandate of LG in relation to rural development in the post-1994 era has been clearly defined, and there exists a basket of pieces of legislation to support it.

3.6.5 Local Government and Rural development

The apartheid legislations which enforced racially-based settlement patterns resulted in the creation of independent Homelands, or Bantustans, where Africans lived under the leadership of chiefs (Stanton, 2009). The Bantustans were considered to be independent, although they were within the boundaries of the Republic of South Africa. The declaratory mapping of the Bantustans independence enabled the apartheid regime to renounce its responsibility to provide adequate infrastructure and basic services to the African people who resided in those territories.

The concept of local government did not, strictly speaking, apply to the Bantustans which were predominantly rural and under the control of traditional authority. Local government applied to settlement patterns in and around urban areas, which translated into areas reserved for whites only and the townships that were designated for Black people. Stanton (2009:59) notes that, although "different types of local government authorities were set up in respective areas to execute a series of central government administrative functions", they remained accountable to the national government instead of the local constituencies. This indicates that the various types of local government authorities established during the past apartheid regime were not autonomous and lacked the power to manage and control their own local affairs. Stanton (2009) points out further that all areas outside townships were administered by white-elected councils. In some cases committees, which permitted Indian and Coloured people to offer their input, were established. However, in some cases committees in which Black representatives played an advisory role were established in the townships (Stanton, 2009; McCarthy, 1992). As a result, white areas became more developed and well-serviced compared to the Black townships. In this respect, Stanton (2009:60-61) describes the phenomenon of the local government under the apartheid regime as follows:

> "Beyond these suburbs, further away from town, Indian and Coloured people were allowed to reside. These areas tended to be in or near industrial zones. Expanding further outward, land was allocated to African people. These areas had minimal infrastructure, no or little employment opportunities and were provided with minimal basic services. In addition, these areas were highly overpopulated, often forcing people to live in squalor. Growing squalor reinforced underdevelopment, creating vast disparities between developed, well serviced local government in White areas and underdeveloped, non-serviced local government in African areas.

> The result was an easily identifiable urban city, predominantly White, well-developed and separated from African, underdeveloped township areas".

The above indicates that the structure of local government designed by the apartheid regime did not accommodate rural areas which constituted a big chunk of the Bantustans. As such, the local government had no direct role in the development of rural areas under the leadership of chiefs. However, this scenario changed in the post-1994 era of the democratic dispensation. A reformed LG was mooted by the RDP base document and later the RDP White paper (1994) as the most ideal system of governance to democratise society and drive socio-economic development at grass-root level. The RDP proposed the re-demarcation of boundaries of the previous local government to ensure that informal settlements on the outskirts of towns and cities, and urban settlements displaced behind homeland boundaries are all incorporated into the new LG. The RDP put it unequivocally that rural development would be spearheaded by the LG through their delivery of services to all rural areas including those under traditional authority. The RDP also articulated the role that the LG, through rural district councils and local municipalities, would play in rural development in post-apartheid South Africa.

The vision of a reformed LG in the post-apartheid South Africa is enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act No. 108 of 1996). Chapter seven of the Constitution defines the duties and objectives of the LG as well as the categories of municipalities which must be established in the Republic of South Africa, and procedures and powers for each category (Act No. 108 of 1996, section 151 (1)). The three categories of municipalities were discussed earlier in this chapter (see Table 4) as a way of clarifying where rural areas are located. The Constitution established the three spheres of government that are "distinctive, interdependent and interrelated" (Act No. 108 of 1996, section 40). The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act No. 108 of 1996) stipulates areas of legislative capability to each of the three spheres of government. For example, schedule 4 and 5 of the Constitution delineates functional areas for each of the three spheres of government and specifies "the concurrent functions between national and provincial government" (SALGA, 2015:5). Schedule 4, Part A of the Constitution identifies "Urban and Rural Development" as a functional area that is concurrent to the national and provincial governments respectively. However, Part B of schedule 4 indicates that "Municipal Planning" falls under the competence of the local government. It is important to note that, while various functional areas of competence are outlined and allocated to the three spheres of government under schedules 4 and 5 of the Constitution, they are not clearly defined. According to SALGA (2015:5), the

question of what constitutes "municipal planning" and whether "municipal planning" is an esclusive function of local government or a concurrent functional area between the provincial and local government had to be clarified by the Constitutional Court in 2010". The Constitutional Court confirmed that "municipal planning"is indeed an exclusive functional area of the local government (SALII, 2010).

Althogu there is no constitutional obligation on the part of the local sphere of government to respond to rural development, the local government plays a significant role of delivering services to rural communities and driving rural development. In this regard, the Constitution confirms the pivotal role of the LG in both driving the social and economic development, and promoting democracy at the local level. The LG was constitutionally established as an autonomous sphere of government that is administered by Municipal Councils that are locally elected and have executive powers and legislative authority to run their affairs. A series of Acts of Parliament were enacted to provide the necessary legislative framework for the LG to fulfil its constitutional mandate. The Municipal Structures Act (1998), the Municipal Systems Act (2000), the Municipal Demarcation Act (1998), and the Municipal Financial Management Bill (2003) are all important pieces of legislation designed to build a reformed LG in the post-apartheid South Africa. Each of these legislations focuses on specific aspects of the functioning of LG.

The Local Government: Municipal Structures Act (Act No. 117 of 1998) defines the different categories of municipalities. The Municipality Demarcation Act (Act No. 56 of 2003) provides the framework for setting up Demarcation Boards to determine municipal boundaries and realise the objective of integration so that weak municipalities can be supported by the well-resourced ones. The Municipal Structures Act delineates various structures that are necessary to build local government. The core objectives of the Act (Act No. 117 of 1998) are defined as:

> "To provide for the establishment of municipalities in accordance with the requirements relating to categories and types of municipality; to establish criteria for determining the category of municipality to be established in an area; to define the types of municipality that may be established within each category; to provide for an appropriate division of functions and powers between categories of municipality; to regulate the internal systems, structures and office-bearers of municipalities; to provide for appropriate electoral systems; and to provide for matters in connection therewith"(Act No. 117 of 1998:2).

The Act also describes the various structures that should constitute the LG at municipality level and defines their powers. It stipulates how the various LG structures are regulated in order to function efficiently. It also reiterates the LG's constitutional obligation to the people, which is:

> "To ensure sustainable, effective and efficient municipal services, promote social and economic development, encourage a safe and healthy environment by working with communities in creating environments and human settlements in which all people can lead uplifted and dignified lives" (Act No. 117 of 1998:2).

In addition to driving the social and economic development of local communities, the Act explains that another role of the LG is to enhance democracy by promoting public participation in local municipalities. The importance of developed structures and institutions to achieve rural development has already been pointed out. The indication here then, is that Municipalities with weak and dysfunctional structures cannot provide services and successfully drive the agenda of social and economic development in rural areas. As a result, the Municipal Structures Amendment Act of 2000 acknowledges the limitations of local category B municipalities which are mostly rural and underdeveloped. Thus, infrastructure development, bulk supply and theprovision of services were re-located from the weak local municipalities to category C municipalities, which are districts, in order to remedy the situation. Davids (2001), Perret and Lhopitallier (2000) argue that districts are the *de facto* developmental and infrastructural operators and service providers in rural areas of South Africa. The implication of this is that districts are given power over local municipalities under their jurisdiction, and are responsible for building the capacity of local municipalities where necessary.

The Local Government Municipal Systems Act (Act No. 32of 2000) defines the processes and operational features of the LG. It defines the LG's core objective as:

> "To provide for the core principles, mechanisms and processes that are necessary to enable municipalities to move progressively towards the social and economic upliftment of local communities, and ensure universal access to essential services that are affordable to all; to define the legal nature of a municipality as including the local community within the municipal area, working in partnership with the municipality's political and administrative structures; to provide for the manner in which municipal powers and functions are exercised and performed; to provide for community participation; to establish a simple and enabling framework for the core processes of planning, performance management, resource mobilisation and organisational change which underpin the notion of developmental local government; to provide a framework for local public administration and human resource development" (Act No. 32 of 2000:2).

The Act provides a broad framework for establishing the LG with clear systems and procedures that are responsive to the local needs. Most importantly, the Act made Integrated Development Planning the point of departure for municipalities, which means that the development planning, budgeting, allocation of resources and evaluation of performance is guided by the IDP processes. A key feature of IDP is that it must be community-driven, hence the imperative of public participation. For the rural areas, the IDP processes provide an opportunity for bringing rural development and local governance together. As Perret, Anseeuw and Mathebula (2005) observe, IDPs aim at harnessing and bringing national and provincial means and capacity to the local level. This implies that many municipalities, which include large tracts of rural and underdeveloped areas could benefit through IDPs.

The IDPs became the focus of the ISRDS and are supposed to be driven from the grass-roots level. Existing studies on the ISRDS reveal that the programme failed because it was designed with no specific budget for its implementation. This indicates that the IDPs failed to harness and bring the national and provincial means and capacity to poor rural municipalities. Instead the ISRDP relied on the budgets of line departments that had included the Municipal IDPs in their own operations (Phuhlisani Solutions, 2009:27). The observations by Mahlati (2011) state that, the ISRDS failed to impress because it relied on a governance system riddled with fragmentation and protection of turf that complicated the situation. Cousins (2003), also questions the feasibility of the ISRDS in the absence of strategic planning and sectoral prioritisation necessary to address the systemic and structural constraints that were already hindering rural development. Other critiques raised concerns about the execution capacity of the programme at the LG level (Cousins, 2003; Everatt and Zulu, 2001; Pieterse, 2001). The argument of poor execution capacity suggests that those districts with large tracts of rural and underdeveloped areas lacked structures and functional institutions to effectively drive the ISRDPs. This is contrary to what former President Mbeki (2001) pronounced at the launch of the ISRDS when he stated that, "[T]he Government is now in a position to implement a rural development programme for the integrated development of rural areas. This will bring together all government departments and all spheres of government, including traditional leaders". The poor performance of the ISRDS indicates that the existence of a solid legislative framework has been of little impact as the LG in rural municipalities still struggle to establish functional structures and systems to enable it to fulfil its constitutional mandate. The issue of structures and systems is linked to the availability of resources and other factors such as the competency

of personnel to manage and coordinate programmes. These factors also compounded the challenges of the LG and weakened its capacity to effectively address the problems of rural poverty and under-development.

Other researchers, such as Gwanya (2013) point out that the ISRDP remained for too long at District Municipality level and failed to address local municipalities at the ward and village levels. This again indicates that District Municipalities with many rural local municipalities under their jurisdictions were too overwhelmed to render support and build the capacity of those weak local municipalities. The suggestion is that the IDPs of rural local municipalities are compromised since they depend on District Municipalities for guidance and technical support in this regard. Therefore, while the legislation framework on which the LG is built exists on paper, functional structures and systems that are supposed to enable the LG to deliver its constitutional mandate, remains a major challenge especially in rural municipalities. According to the Public Affairs Research Institute (PARI, 2020:1), the fiscal framework for local government which was designed in the post-1994 era was to ensure "that municipalities have the ability to raise significant amount of their own revenue". It was assumed that municipalities could "raise about 73% of revenue through property rates and service charges" (PARI, 2020:1). On the contrary, research shows that many municipalities are financially distressed and this inhibits their ability to deliver quality services to citizens. This suggests that if local government is to fulfil its mandate to spearhead developmet at the grass-roots level, the fiscal framework needs to be reviewed. Fincial distress at the local government level has a direct impact on rural development as it reduces the capacity of local government to implement rural development programmes effectively. Nonetheless, the ISRDS was prematurely aborted and replaced with the War on Poverty campaign at the ANC Policy Conference in 2007.

3.6.6 The War on Poverty Campaign and Rural Development

The War on Poverty (WOP) campaign was launched against the backdrop of the poor performance of the ISRDS. The ISRDS had failed to produce impressive results leaving the rural population dissatisfied with the lack of development and poor service delivery in rural areas. The ANC led government could not risk going into the general elections of 2009 with a disgruntled rural electorate who constitute its strong support base. The WOP campaign sought to appease the rural electorate which was getting agitated due to the unfulfilled promises of a better life for all. It was designed to fast track rural development and the provision of services in order to "reduce poverty on the most deprived wards in all nine provinces" (BuaNews, 2008:

Online). This study has shown that the most deprived wards are situated in the poor rural municipalities. As a result, the poorest households would be identified during the campaign's steps at reducing poverty and they "would be visited periodically by teams of professionals and community workers who would identify their needs, accelerate their access to government services, and provide safety nets" (BuaNews, 2008: Online). The underlying assumption was that the campaign would deliver positive results faster than the ISRDP, and to this end, it offered new hope to the rural poor.

However, it is important to note that the 'war on poverty' mantra did not originate in South Africa. It was popularised by President Lyndon B. Johnson of the United States of America at his State of the Union address on 8 January 1964. Johnson made the war on poverty the centrepiece of his speech in which he declared that: "Our aim is not only to relieve the symptoms of poverty, but to cure it and, above all, to prevent it" (quoted in Walsh, 2014:2). Johnson's proposed programme to win the war on poverty included the creation of job corporations and various other programmes that would provide work training and work-study options for the disadvantaged. Walsh (2014:2) also notes that, the war on poverty programmes would also include:

> "Funding for Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA), a domestic Peace Corps; loans to facilitate hiring the unemployed; a Community Action Programme to empower and encourage local communities and citizens to fight poverty with federal help; and the creation of an Office of Economic Opportunity to coordinate the whole anti-poverty campaign".

Johnson further requested Congress to approve a big tax cut in order to stimulate the economy and provide sufficient funds to build more houses, schools, libraries, and hospitals (Walsh, 2014). The campaign would also include the provision of more government aid to education, housing, health care and food stamps for the poor. He believed that his vision of a great society could be achieved within a short space of time. Despite its promise for a better life for all Americans, especially for the poor, the campaign was deemed to be too ambitious, complicated and ineffectual. It also created too much dependency on the government and provided unlimited space for the federal government to meddle in society. Thus, Eller (2014:1) comments that:

> "Appalachia is not part of some 'other America' but is in fact a reflection of America. Anti-poverty programmes did little to address problems of inequitable

> land ownership, capital outflow, or political cronyism in Appalachia[18]. Programmes designed to provide jobs and to develop the region's economy concentrated resources in middle-class growth centers, failed to protect the landscape and water quality, encouraged the growth of consumer dependency, and facilitated the outmigration of youth".

Clearly, the war on poverty campaign was not a success story in America. The campaign failed to achieve the intended vision of eradicating poverty. Eller (2014:13) argues that the war on poverty failed "because of the lack of national will to build a fair and equitable society and because of the failure of government programmes to create a level playing field".

The war on poverty mantra was first echoed in South Africa by the then President, Nelson Mandela in a statement on 17 October 1996 during the International Day for the eradication of poverty in which he declared his government's ' war on poverty'. The declaration of war on poverty was in line with the ideals of the RDP whose vision was to tackle poverty and provide a better life for all, especially for the majority of the formerly disadvantaged people, the majority of whom still languished in abject poverty in rural areas. Nonetheless, the ANC-led government abolished the RDP and adopted GEAR in 1996. The GEAR strategy was criticised from within the tripartite alliance and civil society organisations who viewed it as a home-grown version of the World Bank's Structural Adjustment Reform programmes (SARPs) that had amplified poverty in most of the developing countries (Turok, 2008).

However, on 28th July 2008, former President Mbeki, after a three day Cabinet meeting, announced the launch of a nationwide campaign to reduce poverty amongst the country's poorest. The long-term goal of the war on poverty campaign in South Africa was to enable the poorest households to receive assistance and support in a co-ordinated and sustainable manner (BuaNews, 2008: Online). Like in the case of America, a national "war room on poverty" was established in the office of the Deputy President to lead the campaign. An Anti-Poverty Inter-Ministerial Committee was constituted to co-ordinate and integrate service delivery across different spheres of government and social partners. The WOP campaign tasked all levels of government to align their businesses towards the implementation of a rural development agenda. Finally, the campaign encouraged each household to make its own contribution to the struggle against poverty.

[18] Appalachia was the focal point of the war on poverty campaign in America in the 1960s. Eller (2014) describes it as a 'Big White Ghetto, a vast moribund matrix of Wonder Bread-hued towns and villages stretching from northern Mississippi to southern New York, a slowly dissipating nebula of poverty and misery'.

Again, as in the case of America, the WOP campaign revived hope for the poor in South Africa, but it hardly succeeded in its promise to empower and transform lives at grassroots level, particularly in rural areas. Instead of helping to increase the poor's capabilities to meet their needs, the strategy seemed to do the opposite. It promoted dependency and put more pressure on the State. This was highlighted by Zille (2010:2) in her criticism of the WOP campaign in the statement that:

> "After my experience 'on the ground' in Bitou, I believe the 'war on poverty' approach is decreasing capability and increasing dependence. It is actually preventing people becoming active agents of their own destiny, and entrenching their bondage".

Zille also argued that community profiling would have been a useful tool to identify precise intervention strategies that could facilitate the development of each poor household and empower it to defeat poverty. However, vital information was in most cases missing and this resulted in the proposed interventions undermining the key purpose of building the poor households' capacity. Furthermore, Zille asserts that most of the identified poor households never received the proposed interventions because the State simply lacked the capacity to follow-up on the scale required.

Furthermore, Desai, Maharaji and Bond (2010:13) note that, the WOP campaign could not succeed in South Africa "given the balance of forces, the leadership, the chosen weaponry and the economic terrain upon which the battle" was launched. Furthermore, these authors argue that the failure of the WOP campaign was largely evidenced by the lack of information on its status. By 2010, newspapers had almost stopped reporting on the WOP campaign programmes because nothing was happening at the grass-root level that merited reporting.

Although the WOP campaign did not improve the conditions of the poor, it created awareness of the situation of poverty, particularly in rural areas, and outlined what needed to be done to reduce poverty across the country. It emphasised the need to improve co-ordination and the integration of anti-poverty initiatives, especially in rural areas. It also prioritised the creation of economic opportunities and the development of human resources as part of the government's agenda to eradicate poverty. Above all, the strategy recognised the need to build partnerships across society in order to make the war on poverty everyone's responsibility. Thus, Gumede (2008:2) notes that, "[T]he government is of the conviction, informed by experience, that the fight against poverty requires everyone's effort". The indication is that, campaign should focus

on mobilising and galvanising government, communities and social partners to take joint responsibility for the liberation of poor households from the yoke of poverty. The socio-economic profiling of households and communities revealed the need for a more comprehensive approach to tackle rural poverty. The Rural Development Overview document (2011) also notes that, the WOP campaign resulted in a new policy direction. It served as the direct forerunner for the Comprehensive Rural Development Programme (CRDP) which was inaugurated in 2009. In addition, the WOP campaign managed to accelerate the delivery of services to the poor on a large scale, and assisted the government and policy-makers to gain a better appreciation of the reality of poverty in rural areas. It indeed prompted the government to re-commit itself and opt for a more comprehensive approach to rural development andthe eradication of rural poverty.

It is noteworth that the ISRDS (2000) and the WOP campaign are not the only interventions to address the problem of poverty between 2000 and 2009. There are a number of government strategies aimed at advancing rural development across South Africa between year 2000 and 2009 (Olivier, Van Zyl and Williams, 2010:122). Some of the key strategies at the national level include the Strategic Plan for South African Agriculture (SPSAA) of 2001; the Integrated Food Security Strategy for South Africa (IFSS) of 2002; and the Drought Management Plan (DMP) of 2005. Olivier, Van Zyl and Williams (2010:123) add that provincial departments also designed sector-specific policies that were linked to rural development.

3.6.7 The Comprehensive Rural Development Programme (2009)

The comprehensive rural development programme (CRDP) was priority number three in the government's Medium Term Strategic Framework of 2009. Its goal was to achieve social cohesion and rural development by improving access to basic services, focusing on enterprise development and the industrialisation of rural areas to create economic opportunities for rural people. It is built on the premise that rural areas in South Africa have the potential to be developed in a way that would create jobs and create economic opportunities. It is assumed that such a comprehensive programme would also address the problem of rural-urban migration, which is increased urban poverty and informality (May and Meth, 2007; The Presidency, 2009). As a result, the CRDP proposed the diversification of rural economies and emphasised the importance of taking into account the prevailing conditions in different rural contexts. The CRDP (2009:3) was designed to transform rural areas in South Africa into "vibrant, equitable and sustainable rural communities". This could be achieved by:

> "Contributing to the redistribution of 30% of the country's agricultural land; improve food security of the rural poor; creation of business opportunities, de-congesting and rehabilitation of over-crowded former homelands areas; and expanding opportunities for women, youth, people with disabilities and older persons who stay in rural areas" (CRDP, 2009:3).

The CRDP's vision is evidently broad and ambitious and would require huge investments, various resources and functional institutions to be achieved. Its strong point is that it identifies three priority areas that need to be addressed to achieve sustainable rural development, and these are: agrarian transformation, rural development, and land reform. These three areas are intrinsically linked.[19]. Each of these three components covers a wide spectrum of issues that must be dealt with comprehensively in order to achieve the vision of building "vibrant, equitable and sustainable rural communities". [20] Consequently, failure to address agrarian transformation and land reform impedes rural development. This makes land reform and agrarian transformation integral to the agenda of rural development in South Africa.

The history of land dispossession in South Africa was discussed earlier in this chapter in relation to the various pieces of legislations that were designed to systematically dispossess and disenfranchise Black people. Land is essential for farming purposes, infrastructure development, the provision of dwelling space and other economic activities that can create employment in rural areas. Thus, the democratic government needed to institute a land reform programme to address the landlessness of Black African people and redress inequalities as part of rural development. In this regard, the RDP base document (ANC, 1994) proposed a national land reform programme that would drive rural development. The programme would focus on two key aspects of the land question: land redistribution and land restitution. This would ensure that those who needed residential and productive land, but could not afford it, had access and

[19] The three components were premised on the resolutions taken at the 52nd Conference of the National African Congress held at Polokwane in 2007. The three components were identified as the critical pillars for creating vibrant, equitable and sustainable rural communities.

[20] According to the CRDP (2009), agrarian transformation is a rapid change in relation to land use, livestock, copping and community. It includes the establishment of rural business, agro-industries, co-operatives, vibrant local markets in rural areas, the empowerment of rural people and communities, the revitalisation of old, and revamping of new economic, social and information and communication infrastructure, public amenities and facilities in villages and small rural towns. Rural development is understood as the enabling and empowerment of rural people to take control of their destiny, and deal effectively with poverty through the optimal use and management of natural resources. It is also understood as a participatory process through which rural people learn, through their experiences and initiatives, how to adapt their indigenous knowledge to their changing world. Land reform in the context of the CRDP focused on reviewing the Restitution, Redistribution and Tenure Reform Programmes.

ownership of land. It would also assist those who had lost land as a result of apartheid laws have their land returned to them.

The land redistribution process would need to address the issue of property rights and secure land tenure in rural communities. This is imperative since the issue of land ownership is one of the obstacles to rural development. De Soto (2000) argues that most of the land in rural areas is "dead capital" because it is not officially registered and cannot be sold or used by rural people as collateral for accessing loans from banks. The lack of land title and secure tenure makes it difficult for rural people to develop land and make it more productive. It also discourages investment on and off the land.

The RDP base document defines and identifies the land for redistribution. The identified land includes vacant government land, land already on sale and land acquired by corrupt processes from the apartheid state (ANC, 1994). Where applicable, the democratic government should expropriate land and pay compensation in terms of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act No. 108 0f 1996, section 25).

In addition, the democratic government would establish a land claims court through which land would be restored to those from whom it was dispossessed by the discriminatory policies since the 1913 Native Land Act. The RDP base document proposed 30% of agricultural land would be redistributed within the first five years of the land reform programme in order to achieve the objectives of the land reform programme (ANC, 1994). The envisaged land reform programme was supposed to benefit rural women more because they bear the brunt of discrimination and have limited access to land. The proposed land reform programme includes the development of rural infrastructure such as roads, safe rural water and basic healthcare facilities. The intrinsic connection between land reform and rural development in post-apartheid South Africa is clear in all the post-apartheid policy documents on rural development.

The CRDP (2009), in particular presents the land reform as a national priority that needed to be addressed urgently as part of rural development. The CRDP defines land reform as consisting of land restitution, land redistribution and land tenure programmes. The processes of settling land claims would be improved to fast-track land restitution. In addition, the CRDP proposes the work of the Land Claims Commission (LCC) to be rationalised within the DRDLF. The CRDP would develop alternative models that are cheaper and review policies and legislation that apply to both land redistribution and land tenure (DRDLF, 2009).

The CRDP defines the core purpose and objective of agrarian transformation as the establishment of:

> "… rural business initiatives, agro-industries, co-operatives, cultural initiatives and vibrant local markets in rural settings, the empowerment of rural people and communities (especially women and youth),and the revitalisation of old, and revamping of new economic, social, and information and communication infrastructure, public amenities and facilities in villages and small rural towns" (CRDP, 2009:3).

The CRDP is a three-pronged strategy that seeks to integrate rural development, land reform and agrarian transformation in order to achieve social cohesion and development in rural areas. According to the Rural Development and Land Reform Yearbook (2010/11), the CRDP is premised on three phases. Phase one focuses on meeting of basic needs as its driver; phase two focuses on large-scale infrastructure development; and phase three envisages to develop rural industries and credit financial sectors to support small, micro and medium enterprises and markets in rural small towns. Although the CRDP is a comprehensive programme of rural development, it can only be judged as a success story or failure based on how it has been implemented on the ground.

The CRDP is the first policy document that clearly articulates and prioritises the land question as an integral part of rural development in the post-apartheid era. Land is an essential factor in both rural and urban development. It is at the centre stage of development and focus of life. Therefore, the successful implementation of the CRDP would put to rest the contentious question of land in South Africa and achieve the vision of a better life for all. It would address the triple challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequality that are more pronounced in the rural areas. However, although land reform has been identified as a priority issue in rural development, there is strong evidence to suggest that landlessness in urban areas has become a challenge. The United Nations (UN) has projected that a massive 71.3% of South Africa's population will be living in urban areas by year 2030 as a result of rural-urban migration (Mlambo, 2018:63). The influx of rural people into big cities in search of economic opportunities has increased urban poverty, and created more informal settlements in the peri-urban areas. This suggests that urban areas also need land to cater for the various needs of the growing urban population. Therefore, land reform in South Africa needs to be broadened to include urban areas where land is needed for different purposes than in rural areas.

The rural development agenda suddenly became promiment after the ANC's policy conference which was held in Polokwane in 2007. After the national elections of 2009, the Ministry and Department of Rural Development and Land Reform (DRDLR) were created to focus specifically on rural development and implement land reform programmes. The DRDLR brought focus and commitment to the rural development issues in the post-apartheid era. It incorporated the former Department of Land Affairs and expanded its scope to include a broader vsion of rural development and the interventions needed to bolster rural economies and create employment in rura areas (Mare, 2016:7). The DRDLR was created specifically to handle the rural development agenda in terms of policy development and implementation[21]. It is envisaged that it would not work in isolation but collaborates with other government departments and independent entities. Its core task is to initiate, facilitate, co-ordinate and act as a catalyst for any rural development intervention (Government of South Africa, 2009). It is the prerogative of the DRDLR to define the policy direction and provide a framework for implementation (20 Years of Democracy, 2014). Furthermore, the CRDP acknowledges public participation as the cornerstone of sustainable rural development. Although it is largely accepted as a good policy document that speaks to the reality of rural poverty, the biggest challenge is how to translate it into reality to achieve vibrant, equitable and sustainable rural communities. The next chapter examines the implementation of the various rural development policies that are discussed here and also considers the fiscal framework of rural development.

3.7 CONCLUSION

This chapter outline the development of policy responses to the problems of rural poverty and underdevelopment in post-apartheid South Africa. It noted that the RDP base document which was later amended and adopted bt the GNU as a White paper was established as part of the steps at developing policies that aimed at addressing the injustices and inequalities caused by the apartheid laws, particularly in rural areas. The key concepts of rural areas, rural poverty and rural development had to be redefined in the context of a post-apartheid South Africa. An analysis of the first phase of policy response revealed that the lack of a working definition of the key concepts compromised the development of policies that could address the legacy of rural poverty in a comprehensive manner. As a result the first five years into democracy were

[21] Before 2009, the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform was known as the Department of Land Affairs. It was after its transformation into the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform in 2009 that the department embarked on an intensive process of conceptualising and defining what rural development should entail in the context of South Africa.

used for learning and experimenting with various strategies to reduce rural poverty. The chapter revealed that the construction of a working definition for the key concepts helped to develop policy response that focused on the whole gamut of rural poverty and identified what needed to be done to facilitate rural development in post-apartheid South Africa.

The chapter argued that, while rural areas have similar characteristics in general, rural areas in South Africa are unique because they are part of local government and subjected to a dual leadership challenge. The majority of Black people were confined to rural areas where they were disenfranchised and excluded from economic opportunities. As a result, poverty became deeply entrenched in rural areas largely located in the Bantustans or Homelands. Hence, that the above-observed historical context account for the continued entrenchment of rural poverty in the country's four provinces of KwaZulu-Natal, Eastern Cape, Limpopo, Northern Cape and North West, where large tracts of the former homeland regions are located.

The chapter has demonstrated that a well-developed policy framework that is guided by the Constitution has been put in place to respond to the problem of rural poverty and underdevelopment. The LG has a constitutional mandate to deliver services and promote socio-economic development at the grass-roots level. It is obligated as the sphere of government that is closer to the people, by the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa to drive the agenda of rural development. It was also noted that a policy framework was developed for the re-demarcation of municipal boundaries to create inter-linkages between towns and the countryside (National Treasury, 2011). The re-demarcation is aimed at integrating rural areas and urban areas in order to establish a symbiotic relationship that creates economic benefits for rural areas.

The chapter noted that rural areas are located in municipalities that are classified under B3 and B4. Category B4 municipalities consist of traditional villages that are typically located in the former homelands and have communal land tenure system. The re-demarcation of municipal boundaries has ensured that category B4 municipalities have not remained isolated nor disadvantaged. Although integration has been viewed as a positive development, 'it has complicated the administrative determination of what constitutes a rural area and, by extension, a rural municipality' (National Treasury, 2011). Hence, the chapter has also pointed out the lack of strong and functional structures and institutions at the LG level as the major challenge for rural development. The ISRDP for example, identified the LG as the key player and driver

of integrated rural development, but the programme failed to deliver on its promises due to inadequate infrastructure and weak institutional capacity. The problem was also compounded by the lack of a specific budget for the programme.

The chapter also revealed that the ANC government has over the past two decades developed a number of policy responses to address rural poverty and underdevelopment. The most comprehensive was the CRDP whose strategic vision is to build "vibrant, equitable and sustainable rural communities and food security for all". The CRDP is a three pronged strategy anchored on three priority areas: rural development, land reform and agrarian transformation. The CRDP is largely accepted as satisfactory and comprehensive response to rural poverty. It is imbued with the ideals of the RDP. The CRDP explicitly placed agrarian transformation and land reform at the centre of rural development. Thus, the chapter outlined that the DRDLF, which authored the CRDP, realised that, the vision of building "vibrant, equitable and sustainable rural communities" without agrarian transformation and land reform. Nonetheless, such a vision can only be realised when the CRDP is translated into action through effective implementation. A good programme, such as the CRDP, could fail to deliver on its promises as was the case with various previous rural development programmes despite the availability of resources. The next chapter examines the implementation of rural development policies in the post-1994 era in South Africa.

CHAPTER FOUR: EXAMINING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT POLICIES IN POST-APARTHEID SOUTH AFRICA

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter demonstrated that over the past two decades South Africa has developed comprehensive policies on rural development yet rural poverty still persists. Makhaya (2014) notes that various studies, including those conducted by the ANC government attribute poor policy outcomes to factors such as capacity weaknesses, corruption and shoddy implementation, rather than any constitutional impediment. Makhaya's observation also reinforces the view that good and forward-looking policies are not automatically translated into reality. Effective implementation strategies are required to ensure that the good policies produce the desired change.

This chapter analyses the implementation of the different rural development policies at the local government level in the post-apartheid era. It identifies the challenges of implementing rural development policies in post-apartheid South Africa and endeavours to explain why rural poverty persists despite the existence of comprehensive rural development policies. In addition, the chapter examines how the various implementation challenges have been addressed to improve the implementation of rural development policies. The chapter for example, examines how implementation frameworks and plans prescribed in policy documents have been utilised in the implementation of rural development policies. This is because implementation frameworks and plans define the implementation structure and the institutional arrangement for effective policy implementation, as well as the amount of resources required to make policy implementation more effective.

Rural development policies in post-apartheid South Africa have prioritised public participation as an appropriate approach to rural development in order to address the legacy of racial segregation and exclusion. The need to empower rural people and citizens to play an active role in rural development is evident in all rural development policies. The chapter therefore, analyses various mechanisms for public participation and how they have been utilised to facilitate public participation in the affairs that affect citizens, particularly at the local government level where rural areas are situated. The aim of this study is to investigate why rural poverty and underdevelopment persist in the post-apartheid era in South Africa despite

numerous policy interventions. In addition, the study aims to show the imperative of public participation in the endeavour to achieve sustainable rural development.

4.2 THE RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (RDP)

The RDP base document and later the RDP White paper recommended the creation of effective RDP structures and institutions within national, provincial and local governments to monitor the implementation of the RDP programmes (ANC, 1994). More importantly, the RDP recommended the establishment of a national framework of implementation to guide provincial and local governments and the devolution of power to these levels of government to enable them to function efficiently. Wessels (1999:235) asserts that it is one of "the most comprehensive and detailed plan of action ever written in respect of government policy in South Africa". Although this sounds like a exaggeration, the RDP formed the basis of transforming the social, political and economic landscape of the post-apartheid South Africa. The effective implementation of the RDP would ensure that the old order of the apartheid past was replaced in its entirety by a new order built on democractic values.

An RDP office was established in the Office of the President to facilitate and monitor the implementation of the programme. Jay Naidoo, a former leader of COSATU was appointed minister without portfolio and entrusted with spearheading the implementation of the RDP.[22] Dr Bernie Fanaroff was entrusted with the responsibility to run the RDP Office. Thus, the implementation of the RDP was primarily vested on the two individuals, both from COSATU.

Although the RDP White paper did not prescribe specific roles on specific departments and the policy aspect that they would implement, it encouraged every individual citizen, local communities and various stakeholders to play a role. The role of the national office of the RDP was to provide leadership and co-ordinate implementation between different departments to ensure great efficacy of programmes. In essence, this meant that various government ministries and their departments were to design programmes in line with the ideals of the RDP, and implement them to address the gross social and economic inequalities inherited from the apartheid regime. Nonetheless, Jeffery (2010) notes that, the establishment of the national RDP office created a complex hierarchy of institutions that made the co-ordination of the

[22] Jay Naidoo was a former secretary general of COSATU while, Dr Bernie Fanaroff was one of COSATU'S most senior organisers and strategists. It is not clear why the RDP and its implementation was entrusted to the two senior officials from COSATU, but it could be because the RDP was fully endorsed by COSATU because of its pro-poor outlook and it sort to address the concerns of workers.

programmes almost impossible to achieve. Jeffery (2010) delineates the various institutions and their functions as follows;

- A special cabinet committee (responsible for setting priorities, allocating funding, and monitoring implementation);
- An RDP core committee (to support the work of the cabinet committee);
- Standing committee in both the upper and lower houses of Parliament (to promote RDP-related legislation and monitor the impact of the programme);
- Provincial premiers and relevant MECs (to co-ordinate RDP implementation at provincial and local levels);
- An inter-governmental forum (to co-ordinate between different tiers of government);
- Local RDP forums (to monitor implementation at local level); and
- RDP task teams (to encourage inter-governmental co-operation and advise the special cabinet committee on strategic priorities).

The various sector departments and institutions were to implement the RDP programmes under the guidance and coordination of the RDP national office. The national office needed a strong institutional capacity to ensure that its subordinate institutions all contributed to the effective implementation of its array of programmes. Turok (2008:90) points out that, institutional capacity to implement the RDP at the three spheres of government remained a problem. In addition, there was a serious shortage of human resources with the necessary skills to manage and implement the RDP. The main weakness of the RDP was, as noted earlier, was its failure to stimulate economic growth. However, the implementation of the RDP programmes made major advances in addressing the socio-economic imbalances inherited from the apartheid regime (ISRDS, 2000:13). It addressed the massive shortfall in the provision of social services across the country, especially in rural areas. Therefore, visible RDP-related advances were made in the areas of housing, the provision of clear water and sanitation, electrification, health care provision, education, road construction and public works.

Furthermore, there are competing statistics on the impact of the RDP programme's results. It has been estimated that, about 12 million people living in poor and mostly rural communities had no reasonable access to clean and safe water when the new government assumed power in 1994. However, by the beginning of 1998, standpipes had been installed within 200 metres of the households of about 1.3 million rural people (Lodge, 2002:57). By August of 1998, the

minister of Water Affairs at the time, Kader Asmal announced that more than 2.5 million people had access to clean and safe drinking water in the rural areas and informal settlements. In addition, a total of 236 water projects had been completed by year 2000 and these provided clean and safe drinking water to nearly 4.9 million people in the rural areas of the former homelands areas of KwaZulu-Natal, Eastern Cape and Limpopo provinces. Olivier, Van Zyl and Williams (2010:121) note that during the period 1994-1999, Eskom completed 1.1 million electrical connections in rural areas and also provided electricity to 3 891 rural schools. However, critics such as Lodge (2002) question the reliability of these statistics and argue that they do not seem to reflect the reality of the situation on the ground. For example, Lodge (2002) points out that, most water projects faced severe design faults and this resulted in unworkable bureaucratic messes on the ground. Lodge (2002) states further that, the percentage of rural households relying on rivers, streams and dams actually increased slightly between 1995 and 1999.

Further statistics and comments are instructive here. Zondi (2000) notes that, an estimated 1, 75 million homes countrywide were connected to the national electricity grid between 1994 and 2000. Another 600 000 new connections had been planned for the next three years. The first phase of electrification saw the proportion of rural homes with electricity growing from 12% to 42% in the first five years into democracy. Lodge (2002:58) confirms that, most of the electrification programmes were directed at rural areas in the former homelands regions. Nonetheless, Lodge (2002) argues that the electrification statistics look impressive and yet they do not represent the scope of change on the ground since the majority of the rural population could only afford to use power for very limited purposes despite more houses being connected to the national grid.

In the area of primary health care provision, the Department of Health Annual Report of 1999/2000 indicates that around 500 new clinics were built in rural areas around the country between April 1994 and December 1998. This indicates that about 5 million rural people had access to primary health care facilities. In the same period, 77 000 people had their eye sight restored through cataract operations (Republic of South Africa: Department of Health Annual Report, 1998/9). By 2000, eight million children had been vaccinated under the polio-hepatitis programme that began in 1998, thereby eliminating both polio and measles (Lodge, 2002). There was a decline in infant mortality from 51 per thousand in 1994 to 45 per thousand in 1998, which was a result of free access to maternity and immunisation programmes

implemented from 1994 onwards. There was a general public perception that public health care facilities had improved since 1994, and that more rural people were able to access health care. The RDP as a government policy managed to reform the public health care system ro address the historical inequalities and allow the poor to access health care for free in public hospitals and clinics (Lomahoza, 2013:5). However, the gains made were eclipsed by the AIDS pandemic and the spread of more virulent strains of malaria and tuberculosis (TB). The consequences of HIV and AIDS were devastating to the entire health care system and the South African population, especially the rural poor. The official estimates of HIV infection rates stood at 4.7 million in 2001, which was ten times more than in 1990. As a result, the life expectancy of South Africans dropped by almost twenty years since democracy, leading to an increase in the maternal, neonatal, and child mortality cases (Delobelle, 2013:160). However, this drastic change in the state of affairs in the health sector must be understood in the context of the HIV and AIDS policy of the time under former President Mbeki's leadership, which failed to prioritise and respond effectively to the pandemic. It is "estimated that more than 330, 000 lives were lost as a result of the government's failure to implement antiretroviral treatment (ARV) programme" between the year 2000 and 2005 (Delobelle, 2013:160).

Another of the key areas that the RDP sought to address was land reform which was prioritised as a key component of rural development. The vision was that land reform would lead to rural development. This was a hard fact that the ANC government had recognised and accepted when it came into power in 1994. It recognised that land was at the centre of the liberation struggle, and that it could not ignore this sensitive issue without betraying its promises to the rural masses. The RDP base document stipulates that the new government should commit to redistribute 30% of commercial land within five years. However, only 39 000 rural families had been re-settled on 355 000 hectares of land by the beginning of 1999 (Karriem, 2016:10; Lodge, 2002:58). In practical terms, this meant that only 250 000 people had received their land under the Claims Land Court. In addition, the RDP had initially promised to resettle families on 3 000 000 square kilometres of land within the first five years of multi-racial democracy, but in reality only 1% of the targeted land had been acquired and occupied by resettled people. Thus, the biggest challenge of rural development has been the failure to effectively address the land question, which continues to be a sticking point in the South African political land scape and development. In addition, the RDP had articulated a vision of land reform which included

infrastructure development, security of tenure and skills development to make the land more productive.

Although the RDP was short-lived, it performed favourably in the area of employment creation in the first five years. The community-based Public Works programmes that were established as part of implementing the RDP created employment for about 240 000 people who worked in road building schemes, installation of sewage, sanitation facilities, water supplies and electricity mainly in the provinces of KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape (Lodge, 2002; Goldin and Heymans, 1999). The Public Works programmes started on a positive note as it created permanent employment for some and provided skills for many others and thus made them more employable. By March 1997, more than a thousand municipalities across the country had benefited from infrastructure projects implemented through the Public Works programmes. In the area of education, about 2 500 schools had been renovated and more than 1000 new ones built by 1999 (Galdin and Heymans, 1999). In addition, one major social achievement of the RDP was the establishment of "a universal pension provision and to raise African pensions to the same level as other population groups" (Francis, 2006:6). As a result, all elderly people have a regular income to which they are entitled every month. The social security or welfare system was expanded to include disabled, children in need, foster parents and many others who are too poor to meet their basic social needs on their own, and it continues to benefit the poor. This backdrop indicates that there was substantial investment expended in rural development programmes during the implementation of the RDP policy between 1994 and 1999. However, Narsiah (2002:5) argues that when the RDP was adopted as a government policy, "it showed a significant shift from the basic principles of the RDP base document". This indicates that, not everyone in government supported a socialist policy that promotes redistribution. To this end, Narsiah (2002:5) adds that Jay Naidoo who had been tasked to implement the RDP was "powerless as he faced resitance from government ministers who fiercely guarded scarce resources". This explains why the RDP was replaced with GEAR policy which marked a break with the basic needs oriented RDP in 1996.

The RDP was a people-centred approach that sought to promote public participation in decision-making and implementation processes. Davies (2005:31) states in comments on public participation as explained in the RDP base document and the RDP White paper that, "[T]he birth of a transformed nation can only succeed if the people themselves are voluntary participants in the process towards the realisation of the goals they have themselves helped to

define". In addition, Davies (2005) argues that, it was imperative for the democratic government to embrace and promote public participation owing to South Africa's history of disempowerment and exclusion. Development through public participation therefore became the mantra of the RDP. In this respect, the ANC (1994:5) states that, "[R]egardless of race or sex, or whether they are rural or urban, rich or poor, the people of South Africa must together shape their own future. Development is not about the delivery of goods to a passive citizenry. It is about active involvement and growing empowerment". Thus, the adoption of public participation as an approach to development was envisaged to achieve the following:

- Empower people in such a way that they could become self-reliant in the long run;
- Build local capacity through skills development programmes and development support;
- Initiative development programmes and projects using participatory approaches that animate communities at grass-root level.

Davis (2005) points out that for public participation to be effective in practice, it must be spearheaded by organisations freely formed by the people at the grass-root level. These organisations should include different interest groups present in the local community. The RDP provided the framework to develop appropriate strategies to increase people's involvement at all spheres of government, particularly at the local government level (Theron, 2012:114). According to Siphuma (2009) and Davies (2005), the issue of public participation received a major boost from the RDP, since people at grass-root levels were encouraged to set up RDP forums to facilitate development programmes in their areas. It also encouraged the formation of partnerships between different stakeholders involved in the implementation of rural development policies. The involvement of NGOs and other CBOs would have helped to develop policy interventions that addressed the development needs of the people living in the rural areas. It would also allow different stakeholders to monitor implementation and lobby for strategies that resonate with the rural context.

The principle of public participation implies that the government cannot make congruent and consistent policies that speak to the situation of the poor at the local level without involving them. As such, public participation processes provide the platform for people at the local level, their representatives, grass-root organisations and government to come together, engage in dialogue and find solutions to their problems.

The RDP was generally accepted as a pro-poor programme because it valued public participation and it spoke to the reality of the poor. The biggest implementation challenge that the RDP faced was the coordination of its programmes. Hirsch (2005) notes that, the RDP Office's dissolution and relocation of its programmes to other departments laid bare the reality of some of its failures such as the inability to spend much of the funds allocated for the programmes. It was also discovered that the RDP Office was duplicating the functions of individual departments as a result of poor coordination. The shortage of financial resources was not a challenge to the implementation of the RDP as the problem lay with the poor management and coordination of the functions of multiple departments and independent actors involved. In addition, the shortage of skilled black managers and technicians undermined the successful implementation of the RDP. This indicates, as pointed out earlier, that South Africa lacked adequate infrastructure and institutional capacity to effectively implement the RDP at the time. The case of the RDP demonstrates that effective policy implementation does not only depend on the availability of financial resources but on other factors such as a coordinated approach that prevents duplication and the availability of appropriate human resources.

4.3 THE INTEGRATED SUSTAINABLE RURAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY, 2000

The ISRDS emerged as a result of the Government's self-criticism and commitment to improve the lives of rural people. The strategy sought to correct the mistakes made in the implementation of the RDP programmes and to create more space for the rural people to participate in their own development. Specifically, it sought to revise and redesign some elements that had proven problematic in the implementation of the RDP programmes. The strategy (ISRDS 2000:29) sought to:

> "…build immediately on existing programmes of government that have the possibility of wide impact and replicability, while initiating and developing selected new programmes. The strength and success of the new programme will be derived from the well-coordinated bottom-up approach in a rural local economic development context underpinned by well thought-out institutional base within and outside government. Because of this bottom-up approach and the primary reliance on better coordination of existing programmes, the strategy will be able to deliver results on the group very quickly. Rural communities are empowered to undertake integration for the purposes of development planning under Section 21 of the Municipal Systems Act".

The ISRDS brought clarity to the concept of rural development in South Africa, and debated ways in which rural development could be achieved. As stated in the previous chapter, the strategy aimed to better coordinate the delivery of rural development programmes in a way that these could be replicated in different sites. It is significant to mention that the strategy was developed at a time when the reality of rural poverty and underdevelopment had confronted the ANC government during the elections of 1999. In addition, governmental concerns with the problem of rural poverty and underdevelopment is depicted in President Mbeki's speech at the opening of parliament in June 1999 in which he highlights in that statement that, "The rural areas of our country represent the worst concentrations of poverty. No progress can be made towards a life of human dignity for our people as a whole unless we ensure the development of these areas" (quoted in the ISRDS, 2000:7). Thus, the ISRDS strategy was also developed at a time when the ANC government was facing the reality of rural poverty and underdevelopment during the elections of 1999.

The ISRDS (2000) is the first official policy specifically designed to address the problem of rural poverty and underdevelopment. It aimed at radically transforming rural areas and empowering rural stakeholders to engage in rural development processes meaningfully. The use of integrated development planning (IDP) processes sought to identify and prioritise relevant development programmes. An analysis of the strategy reveals that it was well thought-out and identified key areas that need to be addressed to achieve sustainable rural development through:

> "Improved service delivery, enhanced opportunities for income generation and local economic development, improved physical infrastructure, social cohesion and physical security within rural communities, active representation in local political processes, and effective provision for the vulnerable" (ISRDS, 2000:23).

The strategy considers rural development as consisting more than poverty alleviation and provision of services. It highlights rural development in order to build stable rural communities with viable institutions and sustainable economies. Olivier, Van Zyl and Williams (2010:123) point out that, the ISRDS was based on key elements such as, "integration through (municipal) IDPs, rural development,sustainability, the existence of growth dynamics in rural areas, and the existence of rural safety nets". The challenge with the strategy was on how to translate it into action so that it could produce the desired change in rural areas. As a result, the implementation plan of the ISRDS consists of the following key elements:

- Establishing institutional arrangements that will clarify the roles of key stakeholders;
- Creating an information and knowledge management base;
- Developing planning and monitoring systems; and
- Crafting the mechanisms to coordinate the delivery of programmes at each of the selected nodes.

The implementation process of the ISRDS was designed to take place in three phases within the period of ten years. The first phase set forthe period December 2000 to March 2001 would concentrate on ensuring that the key elements of the implementation plan were both in place and operational. The second phase of implementation, which covered the period April 2001 to March 2004, was meant to review the performance of each of the key elements of the implementation plan and make adjustments accordingly to improve implementation. The third phase would cover the period April 2004 to March 2010 and seek to complete the ten year implementation cycle which was envisaged to conclude with a robust summative evaluation of the ISRDS.

However, the ISRDS was aborted prematurely at the ruling ANC's Policy conference held in 2007 at Polokwane. The main reason cited was that it showed signs of failure and was met with growing dissatisfaction among the rural population. According to Mahlati (2011), the ISRDS was not formally concluded with an evaluation as initially planned. This suggests that the decision to abort the implementation of the ISRDS was not informed by evidence of scientific research. Thus, the impression here is that the decision to halt the implementation of the ISRDS was made for political gains and not to improve the existing policy.

An analysis of the ISRDS document and that of a few external evaluations reveals numerous reasons why the ISRDS performed poorly. The ISRDS established institutional arrangements that consisted of the political sphere and the operational sphere and yet still performed poorly. Nonetheless, the Deputy President was tasked on the political sphere, with the overall coordination and monitoring of the ISRDS. This effectively meant that the planning, implementation and management of the ISRDS would be done by the Office of the Deputy President with the support of a programme manager and a strategic advisor (ISRDS, 2000). In addition, a core group of Cabinet Ministers would be drawn from the Economic, Infrastructure and Social Clusters to provide leadership and ensure better coordination and integration of the ISRDS programmes. The ISRDS (2000:45) defines the function of each Cluster as a means "…to ensure that the sectoral line-function departments prioritise the identified nodes in their

programmes and budgets, and that they operate effectively through the required planning mechanisms of the IDPs". Furthermore, each node would be led by a nodal champion whose task would be to provide political leadership. The nodal champion could be a Minister, a Premier, an MEC or a Mayor (ISRDS, 2000). The champion was supposed to enter into a performance contract with the Deputy President to ensure accountability for the implementation of the ISRDS and delivery of services in each respective node.

The operational sphere consisted of a project team that operated under the leadership of a nodal delivery manager. The role of the nodal delivery manager was to support the nodal champion and ensure the coordination and implementation of the ISRDS at the local level. The participative nature of the ISRDS necessitated that, members of the project team be drawn from the three spheres of government, local NGOs, CBOs and the private sector (ISRDS, 2000). The bottom-up outlook of the ISRDS also means that, the community-based project teams would be formed at each node to encourage more participation and representation at the grass-root level. One of the key functions of the nodal delivery managers and community based teams was to engage the IDP in their respective nodes in the key areas of planning, budgeting, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. The ISRDS also assigned, to the national and provincial line departments the role of being delivery agents to the nodes within their authority and aims. They were supposed to support the local government in its mandate to deliver services and spearhead development in rural areas.

The institutional arrangements for the implementation of the ISRDS are clear in terms of their political and operational spheres. They seem impressive, and yet it is difficult to see how activities of the various actors from the three spheres of government, civil society organisations and the private sector could be effectively coordinated and managed from a centralised office in the Presidency. Mare (2016) points out that the task to drive the implementation of the ISRDS was later shifted to the relatively new Department of Provincial and Local Government (DPLG). The decision to entrust the implementation of the ISRDS to the DPLG, which was relatively new at the time was criticised by Everatt (2004) on the basis that the DPLG had not been involved in the initial formulation and planning processes of the ISRDS. In a sense, the DPLG was seen as ill-equipped to successfully drive the implementation of the ISRDS. Therefore, the first implementation challenge that the ISRDS faced related to the coordination of the various government departments and independent actors. Everatt, Dube and Ntsime (2004:7) note that, "the central tenet of the ISRDS is that better coordination of delivery is a

prerequisite for sustainable development in rural areas". However, coordinating sector departments in the three spheres of government from planning to budgeting, and ensuring implementation proved to be a mammoth task.

The ISRDS was initially designed to address the challenges related to coordination and implementation and that way avoid the problems of programme fragmentation and duplication. Coordination was supposed to help align the programmes of all three spheres of government. But research conducted by Everrat, Dube and Ntsime (2004), reveals that there was lack of clarity on the planning cycle and responsibilities of all the three spheres of government owing to poor coordination and communication. Some of the challenges that hindered the effective implementation of the ISRDS, as identified in the previous chapter, include the lack of strategic planning and sectoral prioritisation which were necessary to address the systemic and structural constraints as some of the challenges that hindered the implementation of the ISRDS (Cousins, 2003). Other researchers such as Everrat and Zulu (2001) and Pieterse (2001) argue that the local government lacked execution capacity to effectively implement the ISRDS. Kole (2005) also argues that the ISRDS failed to galvanise productive partnerships that were necessary to achieve its objectives. In her assessment of the ISRDS, she concludes that:

> "Partnerships at the local level, especially with NGOs and the private sector, are the pillar of the ISRDP's success… However, these partnerships have not been forthcoming as should be expected due to reasons ranging from municipalities' lack of capacity to the management of these stakeholder relations and ultimately to the private sector not making rural development a priority as part of its social responsibility programmes" (Kole, 2005:33).

Kole's assessment indicates that the ISRDP failed in practice to be a bottom-up approach driven from the grass-root level. Mahlati (2011) also notes that, at a theoretical level, the ISRDP prioritised the involvement of the rural poor in rural development initiatives through the IDPs while in reality the top-down government heavy designs prevailed. Finally, the lack of or poor public participation in the IDPs also contributed to the poor performance of the ISRDP.

These challenges notwithstanding, the problems of implementation, were compounded by the fact that there was no specific budget allocation for the operationalisation of the ISRDS, "and no tangible project-level deliverables" (Olivier, Van Zyl and Williams, 2010:124). The explanation for the lack of budget according to Everrat, Dube and Ntsime (2004) is that the ISRDS was not a stand-alone programme but a mechanism for doing things differently, and more importantly, its work was to coordinate the already existing programmes in a better way.

However, the evidence at hand indicates that the programme failed dismally to improve coordination and communication.

Another challenge that affected the implementation of the ISRDP in a significant way was the human factor. It was imperative that those on the operational sphere had a full grasp of the ISRDP and its implementation plan. However, research conducted by Everrat, Dube and Ntsime (2004) on the understanding and implementation of the ISRDP reveals that some of the key actors had minimal understanding of the programme and its implementation plan[23]. A report on the ISRDP nodes commissioned by the IDT in 2004 reveals that 39% of the Executive Mayors and Municipal Mangers who took part in the survey indicated that their understanding of the ISRDP was poor (Olivier *et al*, 2010). Another 59% of the respondents directly involved in the implementation process believed that, the selected nodes lacked the capacity to implement the ISRDP effectively (Olivier *et al,* 2010). It is conspicuous from the available data that the ISRDP faced a myriad of challenges, hence its poor performance. The research conducted by the Public Srvice Commission (2009) established that IDP planning at the municipal level was in most cases done in isolation from sector departments and as a result, there was no harmony between sector department planning processes and procedures. In addition, the research (2009:64) reveals that most local municipalities in rural areas lacked technical planning capcity to effectively implement the ISRDP. The District Steering Committees which were tasked to coordinate between sector departments and municipalities also lacked the required standards and competence. Further, Jacobs et al (2008) and Olivier et al (2010) underscore, in concurrence with my observation that, the ISRDP lacked a framework to regulate the stakeholder relations and was characterised by weak private sector involvement. However, some positive outcomes can be identified in spite of the various implementation challenges identified above.

A presentation that was prepared by a joint Department of Provincial and Local Government (DPLG) and Stats SA in 2006 for the Cabinet Lekgotla, documents a few positive achievements derived from the ISRDP. Jacobs *et al* (2008:39) outline the achievements as follows:

[23] An empirical study in which a total of 147respondents consisting of all officials working on the ISRDP from the selected 13 nodes were interviewed was conducted. The respondents included Executive Mayors, Municipal Managers, and different officials who included IDP Managers, Planning Managers, as well as officials from the Programme Implementation Management Support Systems (PIMSS) centres and Nodal Delivery Teams (NDTs) in each node (Everrat, Dube and Ntsime, 2004).

- There has been a steady improvement in the lives of rural nodal communities with regards to access to basic services and employment opportunities.
- However, the rate of improvement in the nodes has been slow given the historical backlogs.
- With regard to the analysis of sector department's service delivery programmes in the nodes, the contribution is not optimal, given that sectors do not participate satisfactorily in nodal IDP processes and fora.

The same report focuses on one of the nodes located in the Zululand District Municipality and indicates the following:

> "Since the last reporting period, some impressive progress has been made with regard to partnerships, improvement of sector departments' participation, etc…However, there are areas that still need improvement such as community participation, including ward committees and less than minimal attention from some sector departments" (DPLG and Stats SA, 2006).

Although it is largely accepted that the ISRDP failed to deliver on its promises due to various implementation challenges considered above, studies conducted on the nodal areas indicate that some positive results were achieved (Perret, Anseeuw and Mathebula, 2005). The most important aspect that has been unearthed about the ISRDP is the lack of formal evaluation focusing on the factors that affect policy implementation. The implementation challenges that have been discussed here could have been brought to the fore and corrective measures taken to improve implementation if the ISRDP had been subjected to a process of formal evaluation. This indicates that the monitoring and evaluation of policy implementation is paramount and must be conducted to increase the chances of achieving sustainable rural development. Policy implementation generally occurs through projects and programmes that a government and other stakeholders undertake to achieve the goals and objectives articulated in the policy documents. These projects and programmes have to be carefully identified and designed to match the situation or problem to be addressed. Monitoring and evaluation are part of the implementation process as they help to ensure that projects are implemented as planned, and that corrective measures are instituted timeously and that allocated resources are not wasted. This indicates that policy implementation should be managed by skilled project managers and technical teams who are experienced in the field of project management, and who value the importance pf implementing projects successfully.

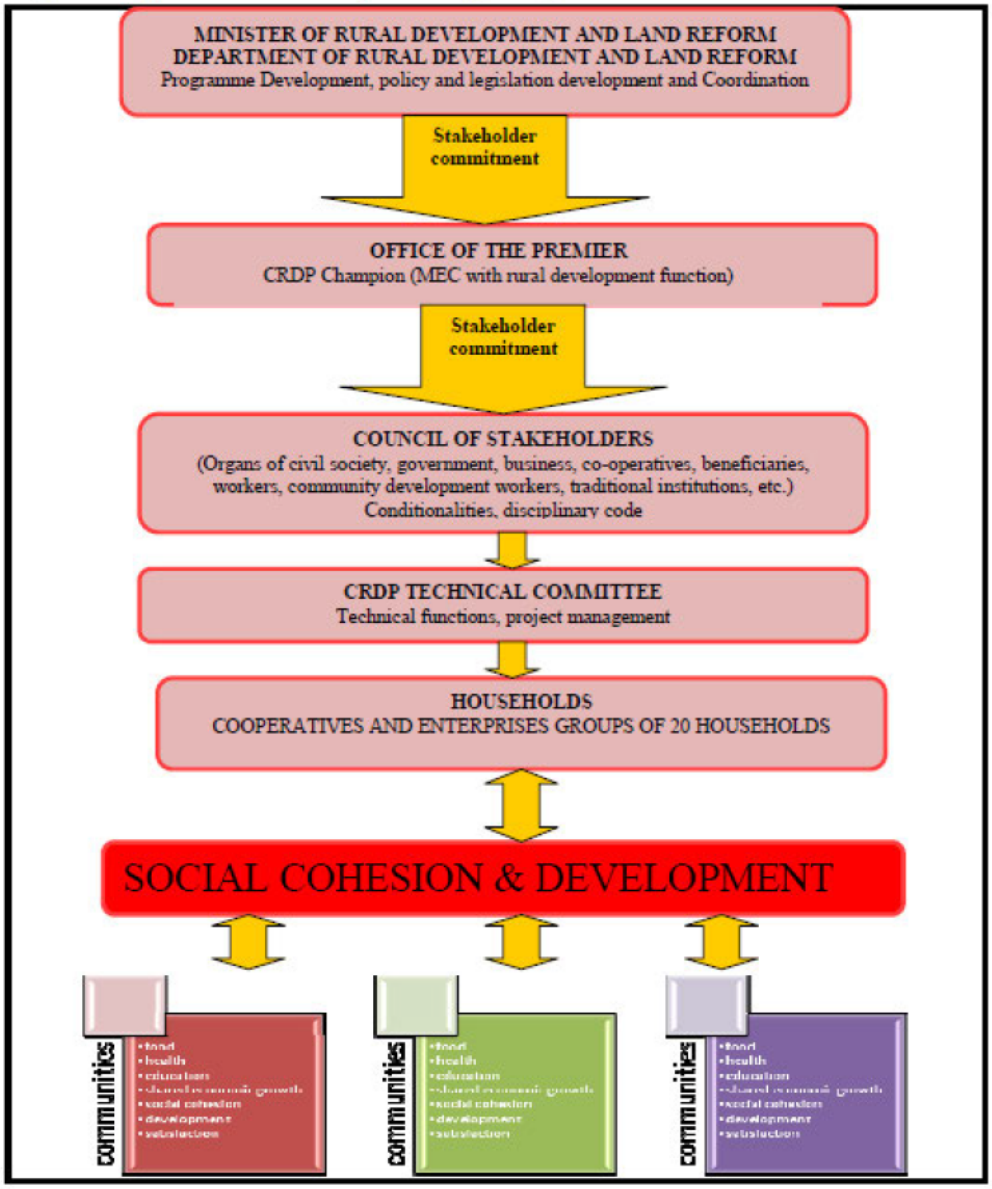
4.4 THE COMPREHENSIVE RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (CRDP)

The CRDP targeted the poorest rural wards, including those located in 23 priority districts. The Strategic Plan (2011-2014) states that, the CRDP was supposed to have been rolled out to all rural municipalities during its medium term period of 2009/10-2010/11. The aim was to reach at least 180 poorest rural wards by January 2012.

The CRDP is premised on the understanding that the problems of rural poverty and underdevelopment were too great and complex to be tackled by a single department. An effective implementation of the CRDP would require the contributions of other departments in the three spheres of Government (Nkwinti, 2009). Thus, the CRDP recognises the significance of collaboration between various stakeholders and sought to mobilise government resources in order to channel them to rural areas where they are needed the most. It is important to recognise that the CRDP came into being at a time when different sector departments had already been involved in various rural development programmes and having gained a lot of experience from the previous programmes. One of the major challenges experienced by the previous programmes, such as the RDP and ISRDS, was coordination. As a result, coordination of the already existing programmes had to be addressed in order to increase efficiency and minimize duplication of programmes (Marie, 2016; Peters, 1998). In fact, the CRDP Concept document (2009) defines the institutional arrangements for its implementation. Furthermore, policy implementation as pointed out earlier, involves various stakeholders each with their own personal and political interests, such that the CRDP had to have clearly defined institutional arrangements, and agree upon the feasibility of existing partnerships in order to reduce confusion and increase collaboration between various stakeholders

The document divided the institutional arrangements into four broad categories and outlined the role that each category is expected to play to enhance implementation. The four categories are: Political champions, Council of Stakeholders, CRDP Technical Committee, and Operational Groups/Households. The fifth category of Strategic partnerships was also added. The figure below depicts the institutional arrangements and the functions each category is expected to perform in the implementation of the CRDP.

Figure 1: Comprehensive Rural Development Management System



Source: DRDLR, 2009:25

4.4.1 Political Champions

The Minister of Rural Development and Land Reform is the national political champion of the CRDP. The national political champion is responsible for programme development, policy and legislation development, as well as coordination. The Premier is the CRDP political champion at Provincial level. The Premier can appoint an MEC to spearhead the implementation of the CRDP in the Province (DRDLR, 2013). In addition, the Premier is tasked with assisting the

DRDLR in getting commitment from all Stakeholders, especially from local and district municipality Mayors (Siyo-Pepeteka, 2014; DRDLR, 2013; DRDLR, 2009a; DRDLR, 2009b).

4.4.2 Council of Stakeholders (COS)

A Council of Stakeholders consists of various local stakeholders. These include community-based organisations and forums, school government bodies, government (national, provincial and local), business entities, cooperatives, beneficiaries, community development workers, traditional leaders, and ward committees. The COS performs various functions. One of its key functions is to plan, implement and monitor development projects in the area. It also facilitates the participation of stakeholders, especially residents, in their own development. According to the DRDLR report (2013:14) and DRDLR (2009a:24), the COS must, inter alia:

- Enforce compliance with national norms and standards on support for the CRDP beneficiaries set by the State;
- Ensure compliance to agreed codes of conduct;
- Manage the implementation of the disciplinary codes;
- Support the disciplinary panels in the implementation of the codes;
- Identify community needs and initiate project planning;
- Play an oversight and monitoring role.

The COS also promotes information sharing and communication between the various stakeholders. It was established to organise local communities and develop appropriate structures which would empower local communities to respond effectively to socio-economic opportunities. The DRDLR report (2013:15) explains that the COS is different from ward committees in that its "focus is much broader than just municipal service delivery and has broader representation to address broader socio-economic opportunities in rural areas". Thus, the COS has a crucial role to play in rural development processes. It has a "watchdog" role to play to ensure that development projects and programmes are designed and acted upon in order to deliver the desired change. The COS is also supposed to play the role of animating local communities and promoting public participation.

4.4.3 CRDP Technical Committees

Technical committees comprise of provincial sector departments. The role of technical committees is to implement decisions that would have been made by the COS. The primary function of the technical committees is to manage and implement projects. The composition of

the technical committees is dependent on the type of projects that have been approved at a particular area. The decisions to implement projects are effectively taken by government officials in technical committees. This means that the technical committees can use their discretion to implement or reject some of the projects that have been approved by the COS. Lipsky's (1971; 1979) highlights the complexity of policy implementation as noted in the analysis of the behaviour of *street-level bureaucrats* or the frontline workers highlights the complexity of policy implementation as noted in the observation that these workers have enormous freedom and discretion to alter or modify policy. This indicates that local stakeholders at the micro-implementation level (which is the local context) that include technical committees can devise their own programmes and implement them. Effectively, this suggests that the successful implementation of the CRDP depends largely on the discretion of the technical committees and their actions.

4.4.4 Operational Groups/Households

These are manageable operational groups consisting of cooperatives and enterprises drawn from households. The underlying assumption is that small groups are easy to manage and coordinate. In addition, the programme implicitly assumes that it is easy to encourage collaboration, commitment and effectiveness in small groups. The operational groups would consist of individuals drawn from households that are trained to increase their job opportunities (DRDLR, 2013; DRDLR, 2009a). It was envisaged that each project would create jobs where at least one member of the household would be employed on a two year contract in line with the Expanded Public Works principles (DRDLR, 2013). The CRDP stipulates that households should be profiled in order to determine their needs and individual members to be employed. The idea of building operational groups sounds plausible, and could contribute positively to rural development if implemented. However, the effectiveness of the implementation of the CRDP is investigated later in this study.

4.4.5 Strategic Partnerships

Strategic partnerships constitute the fifth category added to the institutional management system of the CRDP. A report on the implementation evaluation of the CRDP, published on 5th September 2013, acknowledges the important role that strategic partners play in the implementation of the CRDP (DRDLR, 2013). The report notes that, strategic partners contribute largely towards the development of technical skills, human resources and financial

resources. The DRDLR (2013) identifies the following sectors and organisations as its strategic partners in the implementation of the CRDP:

- Relevant Government Departments;
- Development Bank of Southern Africa;
- Independent Development Trust and state-Owned Enterprises;
- Non-governmental organisations;
- Land Bank and other development financial institutions; and
- Commercial Banks.

The strategic partners are important as they can contribute the much needed resources and skills to boost rural economies and alleviate rural poverty. Strategic partners in the implementation of the CRDP are key against a backdrop of most rural municipalities being financially distressed and deriving "about 40% of their revenue from national and provincial transfers (as compared to 8% for urban municipalities)" (Perret, 2004:5). However, the challenge is on finding practical ways to work with rural communities. It is also a concern that rural people and their grass-roots organisations are not included on the list of strategic partners. The hypothesis of this study is that sustainable rural development cannot be achieved without the rural people playing an active role and contributing their resources that include indigenous knowledge systems. The capabilities of rural people and their indigenous knowledge systems constitute an essential local resource that should not be overlooked. Recognising rural people and their grass-root organisations as strategic partners could motivate them to participate and support development programmes in their local communities.

The CRDP is the most comprehensive policy response to the legacy of rural poverty and underdevelopment. It is also considered to be different from the previous policies of rural development because "it is based on proactive and participatory community-based planning" (DRDLR, 2009:3). It prioritises land reform and agrarian transformation as essential components of rural development. However, despite a clearly defined institutional arrangement to support its implementation, the CRDP has encountered challenges as the other previous programmes. The challenges were diagnosed through a number of implementation evaluations (DRDLR, 2012; DRDLR, 2013; Ngomane, 2015). The evaluation results indicate that the programme was riddled with implementation challenges despite evident achievements in meeting the basic needs of the people in rural areas. For example, an evaluation of the CRDP

conducted by Impact Economix in September 2013 identifies poor coordination as a major challenge that hindered effective implementation of the CRDP.[24] Poor coordination is identified as the main reason for the fragmentation and duplication of rural development programmes. Ironically, the CRDP was designed to address the coordination between the sector departments in order to improve policy efficiency and eliminate any policy contradictions. Therefore, addressing the problem of coordination reduces confusion and promotes cooperation between the various stakeholders involved in the implementation of the CRDP at the local sphere of government.

The establishment of the DRDLR in 2009, and the Department of Policy Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME) in 2010 aimed at improving the implementation of rural development programmes. Umlaw and Chitepo (2015) note that, the DPME put in place strategies that enhanced accountability and learning in the three spheres of government involved in rural development. This indicates that the coordination of effort across institutional boundaries has improved to some extent. The DRDLR (2013) conducted an implementation analysis and evaluation to ascertain whether the institutional management system that had been established was fulfilling its role of supporting the implementation of the programme and whether the functions of different institutions had been clarified efficiently or not. The roles to be played by each sphere of government in relation to the implementation of the CRDP were articulated by the Minister of Rural Development and Land Reform (RDLR) in the statement that:

> "Whilst the Ministry will be responsible for CRDP programme development, policy and legislation development, coordination and setting norms and standards, the provinces will be responsible for monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the CRDP with the Premiers being the CRDP champions at provincial level. The Districts on the other hand, will be responsible for the actual implementation of the CRDP at ground level" (DRDLR, 2013a:15).

It was essential to clarify the roles that each of the three spheres of government was expected to perform in order to address the problems of confusion and duplication of programmes between government departments experienced in the previous programmes. Theoretically, the DRDLR established Provincial Coordinating Forums (PCFs) that consist of District Mayors and Heads of Departments (HoDs). The PCFs are chaired by the respective MECs to facilitate effective coordination of the implementation of the CRDP. The PCFs meet once every two months to evaluate reports from the districts and combine the various reports into a provincial

[24] The study covered a three year period from the programme's inception in June 2009 to June 2012.

report (DRDLR, 2013a). In addition to the PCFs, the District Implementation Forums (DIFs) were formed to focus specifically on coordinating the implementation of the CRDP at the local government level. The DIFs are constituted by Municipal Managers, Ward representatives and representatives from the COS, and chaired by the respective District Mayor (DRDLR, 2013). The effective implementation of the CRDP depends on the effective functioning of these institutions work. However, it is concerning that traditional leadership which remains prominent in the rural landscape is not explicitly listed as a key stakeholder in the implementation of the CRDP. To this end, Rugege (2003:172) notes that traditional leadership is an important institution at the local government level and its role in rural development should not be underestimated. Bikam and Chakwizira (2014:142) support the view expressed by Khan et al (2001) that, "the involvement of traditional leaders is one of the surest ways of promoting rural development". At the same time, Bikam and Chakwizira (2014:143) also note that lack of clarity on the role that traditional leaders should play in rural development in the post-apartheid South Africa has been the source of conflict between the rural municipalities and traditional leaders. Tshitangoni and Francis (2017:70) add that the tension and conflicts "between democratic institutions in which councillors are an integral component of community leadership and traditional leadership weaken the efforts of both institutions in championing rural development". This indicates that the prospects of achieving rural development are higher in situations where there is cooperation and good rapport between democratic local institutions and traditional instituions.

A report based on an implementation evaluation conducted by the DRDLR (2013b) on the different independent stakeholders involved in the implementation of the CRDP and the different sectoral departments reveals that coordination remains the major challenge. The report outlines that the DRDLR has not been effective in its role as coordinator. The ineffectiveness is attributed to the DRDLR's lacks of authority to mobilise all the three spheres of government and numerous sectoral departments to work collaboratively. The evaluation report notes further that, poor coordination in various sectoral departments lead to the continued duplication of programmes. The report also points out that, while the CRDP was designed to be driven by the provincial and local government structures, it remained centralised at the national level. In this respect, the DRDLR evaluation report (2013b) states that, failure to decentralise the CRDP as initially planned created a political vacuum at both the provincial and local government levels. The political vacuum makes it difficult to promote and implement the CRDP in rural

constituencies (DRDLR, 2013b). In addition, the report asserts that there has been little ownership of the CRDP at the local sphere of government. The appointed political champions are generally not involved in the promotion of the CRDP. Ironically, a case study conducted by Impact Economix for the DRDLR (2013c) notes that the implementation of the CRDP achieved mixed successes across the provinces and local levels. The report attributes the varying success of the implementation of the CRDP to the different approaches adopted by provinces and the municipal capacity at each site (DRDLR, 2013c). However, the report reiterates that the top-down tendencies are still dominant in the institutional arrangements in the sense that the DRDLR continues to impose programmes without consulting beneficiaries and local institutions. The study also identifies poor coordination as one of the implementation challenges of the programme and underlies that local governments still lack institutional capacity to implement the CRDP effectively and promote meaningful public participation. As a result, the report (DRDLR, 2013c) makes numerous recommendations in order to remedy the situation and these include:

- That the DRDLR should minimise its national role in the implementation of the CRDP but maintain and increase its funding and coordinating role.
- That the coordinating and monitoring role of Provincial governments should be strengthened.
- That the capacity of local governments should be strengthened with the COS playing a leading role in facilitating local communities to identify priority projects that could be funded by a combination of municipal, provincial, and or national funding support.

The extent to which these recommendations have been taken into account and implemented has not been ascertained. However, the report also provides details on the extent to which the CRDP was and is likely to achieve its objectives. As a result, the report (DRDLR, 2013c) outlines five goals:

- Mobilising and empowering rural communities;
- Stimulating rural job creation and promoting rural economies;
- Improving access to basic needs for the beneficiaries in the CRDP sites;
- Implementing sustainable land reform and agrarian transformation and;
- Targeting vulnerable groups including women, youths, the disabled, child-headed households, people living with HIV and AIDS, and the elderly.

Another implementation evaluation report was presented to the Portfolio Committee on Rural Development and Land Reform in June 2015, by Ngomane, in which she points out that the CRDP had made great success in the goal of meeting basic needs. The goal of meeting basic needs focused on the development of economic, social, cultural and ICT infrastructure. The development of economic infrastructure focused on the provision of adequate water supply, construction and maintenance of roads and the electrification of rural areas. The development of social infrastructure focused on speeding up the delivery of RDP houses, the building of rural clinics, the provision of Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) and Early Childhood Development Centres (ECDC) in the rural areas. The building of cultural infrastructure consisted of channelling investment towards the construction and maintenance of tribal offices, rural libraries and sporting facilities (Ngomane, 2015).

Although some achievements were noted in the provision of the infrastructure, some concerns were also raised regarding the quality, functionality and maintenance of various infrastructures. Ngomane (2015) notes, that the major challenge was on understanding the roles of different institutions involved in the implementation of the CRDP. Her findings indicate that the CRDP was not widely known and that this situation resulted in various CRDP institutions not appreciating their roles in supporting the implementation of the programme. Furthermore, Ngomane argues that the CRDP was seen as a top-down national initiative and as a result there was poor commitment to participate in its implementation by various officials. The situation was compounded by insufficient support from the provincial and local champions such as Premiers, MECs and Mayors (Ngomane, 2015).

Ngomane's findings present further challenges to the CRDP. She notes that some of the goals of the CRDP were achieved at a high cost, which means that the value for money (VFM) was not being achieved. Her findings also reveal that the CRDP faced challenges on mobilising and empowering communities such that the weaknesses in community representation and lack of wider consultation resulted in inappropriate development programmes being adopted. Ngomane's findings also indicate that in some instances, the implementation of the CRDP was affected by resistance to the COS and conflicts with traditional authorities. A close analysis of the findings reveals weak institutional arrangements, poor inter-governmental coordination, weak integrated planning processes and lack of understanding of the roles of both the provincial and local spheres of government as the major challenges in the implementation of the CRDP. To this end, SALGA (2015:5) states that, "there are practical challenges associated with rural

development that manifest themselves at programme planning, coordination, implementation and operation level". As a result, Ngomane (2015) suggests broader recommendations and these include the following:

- DRDLR to develop a guideline for the development of Integrated Development Frameworks (IDFs) for all CRDP sites.
- DRDLR to hold a national consultative conference with representatives of local government (including COGTA, SALGA, and individual municipalities) to discuss the concrete proposals to improve the participation of municipalities in the CRDP.
- DRDLR, in partnership with Provincial Governments, to put in place stronger support measures to strengthen the COS.

The implementation of the CRDP remains a work in progress and the programme continues to be monitored and evaluated in order to improve it. The CRDP has land reform and agrarian transformation as its cornerstone. The significance of land reform and agrarian transformation for rural development is discussed in detail in the previous chapter. In his 2010 budget speech, the Minister of Rural Development and Land Reform (RDLR), Nkwinti pointed out that the CRDP would be accomplished through coordinated and broad-based agrarian transformation. This is interpreted to denote a radical change in the systems and patterns of ownership and control of land, livestock, and cropping (Mahlati, 2011). It also indicates that an effective implementation of the CRDP shall be reflected in visible changes in the systems and patterns of land ownership and control. However, available evidence suggests that land reform programmes and agrarian transformation have remained the major challenges of the CRDP.

The DRDLR and Agri-SA produced two land audit reports in November 2017. Both land audit reports determined the progress of land reform since the dawn of multi-racial democracy in South Africa. The reports provide detailed statistical data on land ownership in South Africa in general. The DRDLR's report in particular provides detailed information on land ownership based on race and gender. Both the DRDLR's report (2017) and the Agri-SA report (2017) reveal that land reform and agrarian transformation have been progressing at a very slow pace. In this respect, the DRDLR land audit report (2017) indicates that 72% of farms and agricultural holdings in South Africa are still owned by White individuals while Coloureds own 15%, Indians 5%, Africans 4%, Trusts 2% and CBOs 1% and a further 1% of farms and agricultural holdings being co-owned (DRDLR, 2017). The audit report reveals the extent of land inequality more than twenty years into democracy. In addition, the report reveals the failure of the

government to effectively implement land reform programmes despite the existence of Section 25 (5) of the Constitution that obliges the state to take necessary measures "to enable South African citizens to gain access to land on an equitable basis".

The Agri-SA land audit report (2017:10) explains that, "…the available agricultural land declined by almost 4% over the past 23 years, from 97 million hectares to 93.3 hectares". The decrease has been attributed to an increase in the number of mines, extension of municipal boundaries, and the establishment of conservation areas and forestry. The report (Agri-SA, 2017) states that, concerning land reform and agrarian transformation, only 4 701 542 hectares of commercial agricultural land, which translate to 5.46% has been redistributed to date.[25] The table below presents a summary of data on land redistribution in relation to South Africa's land area.

Table 6: Summary Data on Land Redistribution in South Africa

Land area of South Africa	Land area of former homelands	Land area of former 'white South Africans	Commercial agricultural land	30% of commercial agricultural land	Total land redistributed to date	Land redistributed as % of commercial agricultural land
122 320 100 ha	17 112 800 ha	105 267 300 ha	86 186 026 ha	25 855 808 ha	4 701 542 ha	5.46 %

Source: Kepe and Hall, 2016 (quoted in Information EWC May 2018:3)

The 5.46% of commercial land that has been redistributed accounts for land in which ownership was transferred either to the beneficiaries, the state institution or shareholding in businesses. Nonetheless, the table demonstrates that the implementation of land reform and agrarian transformation programmes has been too slow, and resulted in persistent land inequality. The changing of ministers and low budget allocation has been cited as the contributing factors to the slow progress in the redistribution of land.[26] But the major problems have also been

[25] Background and Information: Land Expropriation without Compensation, 2018. (www.senwes.co.za/media/Global/documents/PDF/Senwes/2018/Houseview/Land-Ex-Information-May 2018.pdf). (Accessed: 11 Sept. 2018).

[26] Background and Information: Land Expropriation without Compensation, 2018. (www.senwes.co.za/media/Global/documents/PDF/Senwes/2018/Houseview/Land-Ex-Information-May 2018.pdf) (Accessed: 11 Sept. 2018)

identified as "the lack of implementation skills, institutional capacity, support, adequate and proper information on land and corruption".[27]

The slow progress in the implementation of the land reform programmes and agrarian transformation has ignited a robust debate on section 25 of the Constitution. The debate was initiated by the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) party in the national assembly, who demanded that Section 25 of the Constitution be amended to enable the government to expropriate land without compensation. Subsequently, at its 54th conference held in Johannesburg in December 2017, the ruling ANC party adopted a resolution to allow expropriation of land without compensation, subject to certain conditions. The process of consultation on the amendment of Section 25 of the Constitution is on-going and indications are that it will be accepted by the majority of citizens. However, this researcher contends that tools for expropriation of land without compensation are already encapsulated in Section 25 of the Constitution and, there is therefore, no need to amend the Constitution.

Hall (2004) also asserts that the Constitution provides the state with sufficient mechanisms to expropriate land without compensation as part of implementing land reform. For Yeni (2021:195), "the state has not sufficiently exercised its powers to expropriate land for land redress purposes". These views support the argument that tools for the expropriation of land already exist and are provided for in the Constitution, but have not been utilised to address the land question. To this end, Yeni (2021) identifies lack of political will on the part of the state as the problem. For Yeni (2021:208), it is crucial for the landless people both in urban and rural areas "to use their agency to organise and strengthen their power to put pressure on the state" to deliver a pro-poor land reform programme. At the same time, the negative impact that the amendment of the Constitution and thereafter, expropriation of land without compensation on the economy in general, and the agricultural sector in particular, and the financial institutions cannot be underestimated (Ngcukaitobi, 2021). Notable, though is the ANC's promise that expropriation of land without compensation will be done in a sustainable manner and not harm the agricultural sector or the economy, a promise that some researchers still view as a bad idea that is not based on facts (Kirsten, 2018; Sihlobo and Kapuya, 2018).

The CRDP presented land reform and agrarian transformation as the cornerstones of rural development in post-apartheid South Africa. It is clear that the government has so far failed to

[27] Ibid…,pg. 5.

accelerate the implementation of land reform programmes. There is no guarantee that the expropriation of land without compensation will transform social relations and reduce rural poverty or promote rural development. The challenge is on how to involve people in the implementation of the CRDP, which has land reform and agrarian transformation as its bedrock. According to Obadire et al (2013), rural development can only be sustainable if it involves people living at grass-roots level in rural areas. In other words, it must be people-centred. To this end, Kotze (1997) asserts that public participation in development processes is essential as it enables local communities to influence development activities that affect their lives. Rural development policies of the post-apartheid era indeed recognise the important role that people living in rural areas need to play in their own development. This entails establishing public participation structures and mechanisms seeking to promote the participation of people living in the rural areas in decision-making and implementation processes.

The next section analyses the different ways in which public participation has been practiced in the post-apartheid South Africa. It focuses on the mechanisms employed by local government to enable people living in the rural areas to influence development activities that affect their lives. The analysis considers further this study's assumption that sustainable rural development in the post-apartheid era cannot be achieved without the meaningful participation of the people living in the rural areas.

4.5 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN POST-1994 SOUTH AFRICA

The concept of public participation has already been discussed (see section 2.4.1). The concept gained wider acceptance as a tool that modern governments can use to strengthen their democratic structures. De Beer and Swanepoel (2010) draw on the context of South Africa to express their warning on the limitations of public participation in their observation that, despite the positive energy that the concept of public participation generates, in practice it can fail because of geographical factors such as distance or other factors such as conflict. These limitations notwithstanding, public participation, still holds the key to sustainable rural development.

In South Africa, public participation underpins the democratic dispensation inaugurated in 1994. The multi-racial democratic dispensation of 1994 created a new system of constitutional democracy, which is representative and participatory in essence. Nyati, (2008:102) explains that the representative aspect "embraces multi-party democracy and is achieved through regular

elections based on a common voters' roll and proportional representation". Representative democracy improves the accountability of governing officials to their electorate and reduces the gap between policy makers and the intended beneficiaries (Masango, 2001; Smith, 1985). In addition, the principle of representative democracy suggests that getting people to participate in decision-making through their representatives leads to better management of issues of public interest.

The participatory aspect provides the opportunity for citizens to participate in public life as a way of promoting and sustaining democracy. It prioritises participation in all spheres of public life for the development of individual capacities and achievement of common goals. Participatory mechanisms enable both the individual and community to benefit and develop a shared sense of purpose (Zakhour, 2020; Masiya, Davids and Mazenda, 2019; Madumo, 2014; Mathekga and Buccus, 2006). Furthermore, the participatory dimension recognises and promotes the rights of other independent actors such as NGOs and private sector organisations in decision-making and policy implementation processes. As a constitutional democracy, South Africa has a well-developed legal and regulatory framework on public participation. In particular, the legislative framework provides guidelines on how local government should function and interact with communities to promote democracy and improve service delivery at the local level. The rural development policies of the post-apartheid era are all premised on the principle of public participation in policy formulation and implementation. Commenting on public participation as explicated in the RDP, Davis (2005:) states that, "the birth of a transformed nation can only succeed if the people themselves are voluntary participants in the process towards the realisation of the goals they have themselves helped to define". Davis (2005) notes further the need for the democratic government to embrace public participation owing to South Africa's history of disempowerment and predominantly top-down decision making processes. The RDP therefore, provided the first legislative framework on how to address the negative effects of centuries of colonialism and apartheid in South Africa (Siphuma, 2009).

However, a solid and more refined legal framework was still needed to entrench a culture of public participation in a democratic society. Thus, the principle of public participation needed to be enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa.

4.6 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AS ENSHRINED IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONSTITUTION

The Republic of South Africa is a constitutional democracy, which means that the constitution is the supreme law of the land. Masango (2001) and Ranney (1975) note that, a constitution consists of the whole gamut of rules that are written and unwritten, legal and extra-legal. The constitution provides the legal framework that directs the operations of a particular government. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa is internationally recognised as one of the most enlightened ones (Theron, 2012). The rights and obligations of citizens are defined and enshrined in the constitution. As a result, the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996) obliges legislatures to provide mechanisms for public participation in processes of policy-making and implementation. This underscores public participation as an imperative for building a democratic society in South Africa.

Chapters 2, 4, 7 and 10 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108of 1996) stipulate provisions for public participation in policy-making and implementation processes. These chapters focus on the Bill of Rights, national and provincial spheres of government, local government and public administration, respectively. The Constitution provides a solid legal framework for public participation in different contexts within the Republic of South Africa. The afore-mentioned chapters explain the terrain and parameters in which citizens can participate in decision making processes and matters of public interest.

Sections 16, 17, 19 and 23 of the chapter on the Bill of Rights contain provisions for public participation. These provisions relate to freedom of expression, assembly, demonstration, picketing and petition, as well as association and political rights respectively.

Freedom of expression plays an important role in public policy making processes. Different interest groups, political parties, prominent individuals and the media utilise freedom of expression to shape and influence public opinion on pertinent policy issues. South Africa's democracy also affords opposition parties and other interest groups that are opposed to the government of the day the freedom of expression to criticise public policies and public officials. To this end,Masango (2001) argues that, the chapter on the Bill of Rights gives all citizens the freedom to express their views, regardless of whether such views agree with government policies or not. Freedom of exprerssion is important in a democratic country such as South Africa because if affords citizens the opportunity to express their opinions and for the political

leaders and government to receive public opinion on pertinent policy issues. Public participation therefore, legitimises a government and provides a system in which those in government are kept "informed about the will of those who elected them" (Masango, 2001:70). In South Africa, apart from voting in general elections and local government elections in which citizens elect their representatives, there are regular interactions between three spheres of government and the public. To this end, "Public participation in governance involves the direct involvement or indirect involvement through representatives of the concerned constituency in decision making about policies, plans or programmes in which they have interest" (Quick and Bryson, 2016:1). This indicates that elections alone do not improve government performance and accountability but that more involvement of citizens in processes of decision making and their implementation is important. In South Africa, public participation in governance beyond elections is an imperative, in view of the country's colonial and apartheid history of social, political and economic exclusion.

Various initiatives have been made by the different spheres of government to promote public participation. There are various instruments at the national and provincial levels of government whose role is to promote public participation. For example, public participation has been promoted at the national and provincial spheres of government through the Standing and Portfolio Committees.[28]The Portfolio Committees play a critical role in the policy-making process. When the Green Papers and White Papers have been developed, the Bill is then introduced to the National Assembly and sent to the relevant portfolio committee which advertises and invites written submissions from the public. The public can also make oral submissions through public hearings. Both the written and oral submissions form part of the constitutional mandate to involve the public in the legislative process. The relevant portfolio committee is obliged to consider both the written and oral submissions when processing the Bill. In addition, a survey conducted by the Parliamentary Monitoring Group (PMG) (2017:8) underlines that, parliamentary committees also use "workshops, colloquiums and round tables

[28] The national parliament divides its members into small groups to focus on specific areas of governance. These small groups are called parliamentary or portfolio committees. Their role is to ensure that policy issues and new bills are thoroughly debated before they are brought to parliament. The committees provide members of parliament with the opportunity to gain experience and be specialised in a particular area of interest such as finance and, agriculture. In addition, the portfolio committees serve as forums through which members of the public can as individuals or interest groups with parliament and government on specific issues and policies (https://paralegaladvice.org.za/wp_content/uploads/2016/05/03_PLM2015_Democracy.pdf). Accessed: 2018.02.12.

as another means to invite public comment and create dialogue between the public and their representatives on key topic issues".

The PMG (2017) survey established that parliamentary committees also allow individuals and organisations to lobby Members of Parliament (MPs) and political parties to advance a certain view or interest in the legislature. In addition, the survey report (PMG, 2017:12) indicates that the practice of lobbying in the parliamentary committees "allows for more strategic engagement, empowers MPs by increasing their knowledge base, offers solutions and assists in creating a climate of more critical and engaged debate". Furthermore, parliamentary committees provide the public with an opportunity to hold public officials at the national and provincial spheres of government accountable for their decisions and actions. According to Masango (2001) and Benwell (1980), parliamentary committee meetings are interactive and involve in-depth discussions among members who are capable to understand the matter(s) under consideration. These in-depth discussions ensure that topical issues of public interest are thoroughly addressed.

The nature of public participation in governance in South Africa goes beyond the set of procedures that are controlled by government. In cases where the public feels excluded or not consulted enough on importanct decisions that affect their life, the public can use the Courts to demand that their concerns are listened to and considered. For example, in the case between Matatiel Municipality and Others v The President of the Republic of South Africa and Others, Nyati (2008: 105) demonstrates how the public used the Court to participate in changing the provincial boundaries of KwaZulu-Natal and the Estern Cape. In this case, the provincial government of KwaZulu-Natal had taken an important decision to support the boundary change without involving the public. In another case of Merafong Demarcation Forum and Others v President of the Republic of South Africa and Others, the public (various community structures) from Merafong had to turn to the Court to voice their opposition to the decision of the National Assembly to incorporate Merafong Municipality to the North West Province without public engagement (Nyati, 2008:106). These examples demonstrate that public participation is protected by the Constitution of the Republic pf South Africa and that public participation is not limited to procedures that are controlled by government. However, poor communities, especially those in the rural areas may not have the skills and enough resources to mobilise and influence decisions through the Courts. In essence this means that the poor have limited choices to participate outside the structures designed and controlled by government. However, the

existence of well-resourced civil society organisations at the grass-roots level could remedy the situation and act on the behalf of the poor communities. Unfortunately, Buccus (2011:13) asserts that, "There is a sense that often the civil society sector is often co-opted into participating in a process with a pre-determined outcome and of being excluded from an 'inner circle' enjoying privileged access to decision makers". This leaves the poor more vulnerable to manipulation by the political elites.

Of particular interest in this research is the role of the Local Government (LG) in promoting public participation especially in development processes. The LG is the local sphere of government that is closer to rural areas and marginalised communities in South Africa. The argument of this research is that rural development cannot be achieved without the involvement of rural people in the policy-making and implementation processes. It is therefore, imperative to consider the Constitutional provisions that obligate the LG to promote and facilitate public participation at the local level, particularly in rural areas. According to Siphuma (2009) and Putu (2006), the Constitution articulates the important role that the LG system in a democratic South Africa ought to play to entrench democracy and promote socio-economic development at the local level. Rural areas constitute a huge part of local government in South Africa and they are also an epicentre of poverty and underdevelopment. Efforts to transform the social and economic well-being of rural areas in a sustainable manner require the meaningful participation of rural people. Thus, the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996) obliges the local government to create mechanisms that enable people at the local level to interact with government on decisions that affect them.

4.7 THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK IN SUPPORT OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AT LOCAL GOVERNMENT LEVEL

Chapter 7 of the Constitution of the Republic of South (Act 108 of 1996) contains provisions for public participation at the LG level. Section 152(1) stipulates that the purpose of the local government is to serve local communities in a democratic and accountable manner. Furthermore, section 152 (1) (c), states that the core role of the LG is "to promote social and economic development", and to provide services to local communities. The LG has a constitutional duty to encourage and promote the participation of local communities and community organisations in matters of local government. According to Jolobe (2014) and Fuo (2015), the three spheres of government are supposed to cooperate with each other and support the LG in providing leadership and creating local structures that promote public participation.

Functional structures for public participation at the LG level are viewed as a prerequisite for building an inclusive and active citizenship at grass-root level.

As stated in chapter three of this study, the LG in the Republic of South Africa consists of three categories of municipal councils: Category A: Metropolitan Councils, Category B: Local Councils, and Category C: District Councils. The Local Government Municipal Structures Act (Act 117 of 1998, chapter 1), stipulates that districts have executive and legislative powers in areas that include local municipalities. The LG electoral system operates differently unlike in national and provincial electoral systems that are purely based on proportional representation. Voters of category A municipalities are given two ballots, one for the metropolitan council ward and the other one for the metropolitan proportional representation. Those in category B and C Municipalities are given three ballots, one for the local council ward, one for the local council proportional representation and one for the district council proportional representation. The LG elections take place every five years, which means that local communities have the opportunity to choose their representatives after every five years. However, in the event of a municipal ward council seat being vacant as a result of death, resignation, expulsion or dissolution of council, a by-election has to take place within 90 days as stipulated in the law (Act 117 of 1998). Voting in the municipal elections is the most popular form of public participation at the local level. The reason is that much resources and campaign works are undertaken by various political parties and the media to mobilise the electorate to vote. The major challenge is on how to get the public involved in the matters of the LG after the municipal elections have been concluded, and to get the marginalised groups to participate in decision-making processes and implementation. In other words, how does the public participate in governance at the local sphere of government?

There are various pieces of legislation that oblige the LG to create structures that ensure that local communities participate in municipal decision-making processes, planning, budgeting and implementation of those decisions which affect their lives. Mbuyisa (2013) notes that South Africa has created an impressive basket of legislations to guide and promote public participation at the LG level. The key legislations in this regard include: Local Government Municipal Structures Act (1998), Local Government Municipal Systems Act (2000), Local Government Finance Management Act (2003), and Local Government Municipal Property Rates (2004). The Constitution is the most important piece of legislation that guides and serves

as a point of reference for all the afore-said legislations that promote and regulate public participation at the LG level.

The Local Government Municipal Structures Act (Act 117 of 1998) provides for the creation of various structures and institutions for democratising LG by involving local people in matters that affect them. The Act clearly defines the powers and functions of the various local structures and institutions aimed at promoting public participation. The core objective of the Local Government Municipal Structures Act (Act 117 of 1998) is articulated in its preamble as follows:

> "To provide for the establishment of municipalities in accordance with the requirements relating to categories and types of municipality; to establish criteria for determining the category of municipality to be established in an area; to define the types of municipality that may be established within each category; to provide for an appropriate division of functions and powers between categories of municipality; to regulate the internal systems, structures and office-bearers of municipalities; to provide for appropriate electoral systems; and to provide for matters in connection therewith" (Act No. 117 of 1998:2).

The Act demands that municipalities work hard, and within their capacities to achieve the goals set out in section 152 of the Constitution. Section 19 (2) of the Act prescribes that, in order to promote public participation and improve service delivery, every municipality should annually review:

a) The needs of the local community;
b) Its priorities to meet those needs;
c) Its process for involving the community;
d) Its organisational and delivery mechanisms for meeting the needs of the community
e) Its overall performance in achieving the objectives outlined in section 152 of the Constitution.

Chapter 4 of the Local Government Municipal Systems Act (Act 32 of 2000) deals specifically with community participation in matters of LG. According to section 17 (2) of the Act (Act 32 of 2000), "a municipality must establish appropriate mechanisms, processes and procedures to enable the local community to participate in the affairs of the municipality". In terms of the Act, municipalities are required to develop a culture of local governance that combines formal representative government with a system of participatory governance. The idea is to create a LG system that includes ward committees, non-governmental organisations, community based organisations and private sector organisations that work together in order to accomplish the

mandate of promoting public participation. In their endeavour to promote public participation, municipalities are also required to create conditions that enable the most disenfranchised members of the community such as disabled people, disadvantaged groups and the illiterate, residing, mostly in rural areas to participate in the affairs of the municipality (Siphuma, 2009; Putu, 2006). As Fuo (2015:172) notes, "The right to public participation is given considerable importance at the local government level" so that municipalities can "provide democratic and accountable government to local communities and encourage community participation inlocal government matters". This should compel municipalities to find creative ways to consult local communities and residents on their needs and priorities in order to enable effective participation. The most common structures for public participation that are employed by the LG in development processes are: the Ward Committees (WCs), Council of Stakeholders (COS), IDP Representative Forums and public meetings/*imbizo*. Therefore, in addition to the electoral system (Local Government Elections which occur every five years), people at the grass-roots level participate in matters that affect their lives such as development activities through the afore-named three key structures. These need to be examined to understand how they are supposed to function and determine how the powers they possess influence key decisions and their implementation.

4.7.1 Ward Committees as Mechanisms for Public Participation

Ward committees are the most important structure for promoting public participation at local government level. The Municipal Structures Act (Act 117 of 1998) states that "the objective of a ward committee is to enhance participatory democracy in local government". Section 72 (1) of the Act (Act 117 of 1998) specifies that ward committees may only be established at metropolitan and local municipalities with a ward participatory system. Consequently, the Act provides for the establishment of ward committees as appropriate vehicles for public participation at the grass-root level. Finally, ward committees provide an alternative form of participation in rural areas to the traditional ones which are less democratic. Ward committee members act as advisors to the ward councillor on policy matters that affect the ward, identify development needs of the ward and provide feedback to the ward councillors (Skenjana and Kimemia, 2011:58).

The composition of a ward committee is defined by the Act (Amendment Act 1 of 2003, Section 73 (2)(a) and (b), and the Handbook for Ward Committees (2005). A ward committee consists of the local councillor, who represents the respective ward in the council andacts as

the *de facto* chairperson of the ward committee, and 10 members elected from the ward. The proportional representation (PR) councillor can be assigned by the council to play a supporting role to the ward councillor. The rules that regulate the election of members of ward committees are made by a metro or local council. The Act recommends that the composition of a ward committee should reflect the diverse interests of the ward and ensure that women are equitably represented. The frequency of ward committee meetings and the term of office of committee members are determined by the council regulations. Section 73 (4) of the Act (Act 117 0f 1998) stipulates that metro or council needs to make the necessary administrative arrangements in order for ward committees to function and exercise their powers effectively.

The system of ward committees as mechanisms for promoting public participation at the LG level seems plausible, but has obvious limitations. For example, the Act (Amendment Act No. 1 of 2003, section 74 (a)), states that a ward committee may make recommendations on any matter affecting its ward:

- To the councillor; or
- Through the ward councillor, to the metro or local council, the executive committee, the executive mayor or the relevant metropolitan sub-council.

Apart from making recommendations on matters affecting the ward through the councillor, a ward committee cannot perform any other task unless it is given powers to act by the metro or local council. This is limited participation in which local people are allowed, "under certain conditions to take part in a prescribed way" (Swanepoel and De Beer, 2010:23). Meaningful participation, according to Swanepoel and De Beer (2010), entails taking part in full and allows local people to be part of the decision-making processes, planning, implementation and evaluation. A critical question then arises regarding the impact of ward committees in promoting public participation and influencing decision making processes. This is because their powers are seriously curtailed as their function is narrowed down to making recommendations through the ward councillor who is also a political representative. As political representatives, ward councillors have to try to balance the expectations of their communities and those of their respective political parties. The danger is that the interests of local communities can be overridden by those of the political party that a ward councillor represents. This begs the question whether ward committees have the power to influence important decisions or not. To this end, Skenjana and Kimemia (2011:58) argue that,

"conditions that would favour the emergence of truly strong and effective ward committees are almost non-existent in the rural communities". This indicates that the role of ward committees and ward councillors to act as agents of democratic governance in rural areas is severely compromised by political factors.

Furthermore, the Handbook for Ward Committees (2005) stipulates the functions of ward committees and yet they can only initiate and execute programmes with delegated power from the council. The ward committees do not also have the power to elect their own ward committee chairpersons even if the committee would prefer a different candidate from a ward councillor. This indicates that ward committees have limited power to influence key decisions and their implementation at grass-roots level. Despite their potential to enhance public participation in local government, Fuo (2015:173) and Mathekga and Buccus (2006:13) note that many of them are dysfunctional. Fortunately, ward committees are not the only mechanism designed to promote public participation at the local level. IDPs were particularly introduced to integrate various actors at LG level and increase their participation in development initiatives.

4.7.2 Integrated Development Planning Representative Forums as Mechanisms for Public Participation

Local municipalities in the Republic of South Africa are required to use IDPs as instruments to design their five yearly integrated development plans. According to Harrison (2008), IDPs are the leading instruments for local planning in South Africa (cited in Theron, 2012). IDPs serve as a locus for integrating service delivery and development programmes at the LG level. In essence, IDPs are supposed to allow local communities and various stakeholders to identify and prioritise development programmes in their context. They are supposed to encourage local people to contribute their experience and indigenous knowledge in the selection of development programmes that are relevant to the local people. In this way they serve as mechanisms for public participation at the LG level. Section 29 (b) of the Local Government Municipal Systems Act (Act 32 of 2000), stipulates that local communities should be consulted on their development needs and priorities. According to Cele (2003), public participation in the IDP processes is in line with Section 152 (1) of the Constitution (Act No.108 of 1996) that provides for the participation of local communities and community organisations in the affairs of local government. The Act (Act 32 of 2000) also makes it mandatory for all municipal councils to have IDPs that reflect their long term vision of development as well as their internal transformation needs.

IDPs play a significant role in the development plans and objectives of the LG. Theron (2005) and the RSA Ward Committee Resource book (2005) note that, IDPs help municipalities to involve the public during the preparation of their development plans. Siphuma (2009) and Theron (2005) point out that IDPs are supposed to be a result of an integrated planning process that guides and informs all planning, budgeting, management and decision-making process. Fuo (2015:173) adds that, "In order to enhance public participation in local governance processes, municipalities are obliged to use their resources and annually allocate funds in their budgets for building the capacity of communities, municipal councils and municipal officials". The aspect of building the capacity of local communities is essential so that they could acquire the necessary skills and knowledge to participate meaningfully in local governance processes and improve local government performance. Thus it is mandatory for municipalities to adhere to public participation principles. In addition, IDPs compel the LG to adopt a developmental approach in order to overcome the apartheid legacy of exclusion and the resultant entrenchment of rural poverty and underdevelopment.

The Integrated Development Planning for Local Government Guide (2000) stipulates that IDPs should include all the key stakeholders. These stakeholders include local municipalities, councillors, local communities, NGOs and relevant departments from the three spheres of government. The ward councillors are supposed to present the needs of their constituencies so that they can be considered in the IDP processes. This means that local councillors have the mandate to promote the needs and interests of their constituencies. Community organisations and other stakeholders have the opportunity to participate in IDP processes and present the needs and priorities of local communities as well. Other stakeholders such as businesses which reside and operate within the municipal areas are also encouraged to participate in the IDPs and in the implementation of the development plan.

Essentially, IDP processes are intended to be open to all the relevant stakeholders and transparent so that they truly reflect the developmental interests of local communities. In this regard, Reutener and Fourie (2015:13) state that, "When public engangement is limited or curtailed, the implementation of government policies frequently face resistance and fail to achieve desired objectives". This indicates that poor and lack of public participation in local governance processes can result in implementation failure and poor service delivery. Meaningful participation in local governance processes can improve the quality of decisions and facilitate their effective implementation.

IDPs provide an avenue for local communities to determine their destiny in terms of service delivery and development programmes. They also bring the national and provincial sector departments closer to the poor at the local level. The interaction that takes place in IDPs can enlighten the municipalities and local communities about the programmes and policies of the various sector departments. The various sector departments can also use IDPs to guide municipalities and other stakeholders on how to access their resources in a way that addresses local development needs.

The IDP representative forums were proposed by the Department of Provincial and Local Government (DPLG) to encourage the participation of communities and other stakeholders in the IDPs. The forums are supposed to provide a structure for robust discussion, negotiation and joint-decision making. They are also supposed to improve communication between the stakeholders and the respective municipality. According to the IDP guide (2000), IDP forums can also monitor the planning and implementation processes. They are purposefully designed to include a wide range of participants so that they benefit from various skills and experiences. The Guide (2000) notes that IDP forums may include:

- Members of the executive committee of the council;
- Councillors including district councillors;
- Traditional leaders;
- Ward committee representatives;
- Heads of departments and senior officials from municipal and government departments;
- Representatives from organised stakeholder groups;
- People who fight for the rights of unorganised groups –e.g. A gender activist;
- Resource people or advisors;
- Community representatives (e.g. RDP forum);

IDP forums are also mechanisms of public participation and thus, designed to allow local people and other stakeholders to interact with LG on pertinent issues and decisions that affect them. Whereas elections are essential for democracy, there is a need to develop strategies that allow citizens at grass-root level to interact with government and give input on thousands of decisions that the government makes. The IDP forums enable municipalities to receive input from the people regarding their concerns and priorities. Citizens also get to know how the

government does its work and spend their tax money. As a result, IDP forums empower citizens to contribute to their development and hold public officials accountable for their actions. However, it needs to be determined whether they have succeeded in promoting public participation at the municipal level in relation to rural development.

4.7.3 The Council of Stakeholders as a Mechanism of Public Participation

The council of stakeholders (COS) is part of the CRDP institutional arrangement that was designed to enhance the implementation of the programme. Obadire et al (2013) note that, stakeholder' participation forms the cornerstone of the successful implementation of the CRDP. A COS consists of various stakeholders in the local context. These include community-based organisations and forums, school governing bodies, government departments from the three spheres of government, businesses, cooperatives, community development workers, traditional leaders, and ward committees. The COS has many functions and these include planning, implementing and monitoring development projects in the area. It is also expected to encourage and facilitate the participation of local residents in their own development.

According to the DRDLR (2013) and DRDLR (2009) documents, the COS must, *inter alia,* perform the following tasks, amongst others:

- Identify community needs and initiate project planning
- Play an oversight and monitoring role
- Promote information sharing and communication between the various stakeholders.

The expectation was that the COS would organise communities at the grass-root level and create appropriate structures that enable the empowerment of local people so that they can respond to socio-economic opportunities. The DRDLR (2013) document explains that a COS is different from a ward committee because its "focus is much broader than just municipal service delivery and has broader representation to address broader economic opportunities in rural areas". The establishment of the COSs was aimed at encouraging the participation of different stakeholders in the implementation of the CRDP. It was recognised that forming partnerships between the private sector, NGOs, communities and government was crucial for the success or failure of the CRDP. At a theoretical level the composition and functions of COSs are clearly defined. They are expected to play a crucial role in the implementation of the CRDP. However, an analysis on whether the COSs have performed as expected or not is done in the next section.

4.8 MECHANISMS OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AT LOCAL GOVERNMENT LEVEL

Entrenching a culture of public participation at the LG level provides an opportunity to tap into the human capital and natural resources that are already available in the local context and mobilise them for rural development. The various structures of public participation that have been discussed can be used as platforms to identify local resources and channel them towards rural development. Public participation is considered as the first building block of development and an important component of human growth. Theron (2012:120) states that, public participation should "create a process of social teaching, capacity building, empowerment and sustainability". As a result, public participation consists more than involving the local people in a limited way and under certain conditions. Instead public participation is about empowerment and the transformation of the whole gamut of human life. It is particularly relevant in rural areas where poverty and underdevelopment are entrenched. The essence of authentic public participation is captured by Burkey (1993:56) in the statement that:

> "Public participation is an essential part of human growth; that is the development of self-confidence, pride, initiative, responsibility, and cooperation. Without such a development within the people themselves all efforts to alleviate their poverty will be immensely more difficult, if not impossible. This process, whereby people learn to take charge of their own lives and solve their own problems, is the essence of development".

The expectation is that the realisation of authentic participation enables the local people to reach the level of growth in which they would feel confident to take charge of their lives with pride and dignity, and solve their own problems. This demands the establishment of structures that promote authentic public participation at the local level. In this regard, the Guidelines prepared by the local government of the Province of KwaZulu-Natal (Notice No. 2649 of 2003), states that ward committees are required to prepare an annual capacity building and training needs assessment that will enable their members to be more competent. This is aimed at empowering ward committees to understand and deliver on their mandates. The Guidelines also require ward committees to meet at least quarterly and to convene public meetings to listen and discuss the concerns of communities relating to service delivery and other issues affecting the wards. This indicates that ward committees are intended to play a critical role to promote socio-economic development at the grass-root level. Their performance has a direct impact on the development of the local community.

Ward committees are supposed to be the most accessible platform for public participation at the local level. However, research has shown that some ward committees are either poorly managed or resourced to play a meaningful role (Idasa, 2004; GGLN, 2009; Ngamlana and Mathoho, 2012:29). The situation is considered to be worse in small municipalities where there is no budget for capacity building or support for ward committees. Ward committees cannot hold their ward councillors and municipalities to account without capacity building and empowerment. The committees cannot influence the adoption of development programmes that address the real needs of the people. In this regard, Ngamlana and Mathoho (2012) argue that when local councils are less empowered as a result of weak ward committees "the development initiatives tend to be determined by what municipal officials think people want or need". On the contrary, better empowered ward committees can play a critical role and contribute to the socio-economic development of their local communities as they influence the decisions that are made and participate in the implementation of those decisions.

A case-study conducted by Khuzwayo (2009) in wards 1 and 19 of Umzumbe Municipality reveals that ward committees are viewed as the local people's direct form of access to the government. These ward committees facilitate communication between local communities and the municipality. In addition, ward committees enable local people to update the municipality on issues that affect them and also receive feedback on how the municipality plans to address community problems. However, ward committees need to be managed and adequately resourced in order to play a meaningful role (Ngamlana and Mathoho, 2012:29).

A critical analysis of ward committees reveals that most of them are constrained due to the lack of skills and inefficient power. Most ward committees play an advisory role. The most ineffective ward committees are located in the rural municipalities where institutional capacity to promote authentic public participation is constrained. As a result, most rural municipalities' ward committees operate at the level of tokenism and participate without power. The real power remains in the hands of council officials who make the final decisions. Madumo (2014:134) argues further that, ward committees are provided with tokenism while municipal councils possess the legislative power to make and enforce decisions. This suggests that the devolution of discretionary powers to the ward committees exists at a theoretical level. At best, it appears that ward committees are utilised as platforms for information sharing and consultation by municipalities. Although information sharing and consultation are important, they represent weak participation because both do not have the power to influence key decisions.

A Citizen Report Card (CRC) exercise that was conducted by Idasa (2011) in 22 municipalities across the four provinces of KwaZulu-Natal, Limpopo, Mpumalanga and North West, presents a range of challenges faced by ward committees. The report confirms the existence of a lack of skills among ward committee members in rural municipalities and presents this inadequacy as a major factor that constrains meaningful engagement. In this regard the report reveals that some committee members lacked even the basic knowledge of how local government works. This is despite the fact that the Guidelines (Notice No. 2649 of 2003) emphasise the importance of an annual capacity building and training needs assessment for ward committee members. The report also reveals that in some cases local communities received conflicting feedback from ward committees and councillors concerning service delivery and development in their areas. This indicates that there are situations where ward councillors and ward committee members operate at different wavelength, and this creates mistrust. In addition, the report (Idasa, 2011:68) reveals that there are situations where:

> "Councillors as chairpersons of the ward committees are not visible to communities and they do not maintain the required contact and communication with the local people except prior to elections".

The Municipal Structures Act (Act 52 of 1998, sections 73(2) and 74(a)), and Handbook for Ward Committees (2005) stipulate that, one of the key functions of ward councillors is to convene and preside over ward committee meetings and public meetings organised in the wards. It is through such meetings that ward councillors become visible to and communicate with local communities. If ward councillors become invisible and fail to convene regular meetings, the work of ward committees suffers and community development is compromised (Idasa, 2011). This is unfortunate because ward committees are supposed to serve as vehicles through which local communities convey their input to municipal councils for incorporation in the final decisions of the council. However, the research conducted by Idasa (2011) reveals that 57% of the respondents felt that the consultation processes had no impact on the decisions of the council, and that some ward councillors were not recognising public input. As a result, ward committees and the public felt that public consultations were a useless exercise because their input was not taken seriously. The reality is that, while information sharing and consultation take place at ward committee level and other public gatherings, the final decisions are made by municipal officials who exercise their discretional power on whether to incorporate public input or not. In some cases, public participation is used for the sake of complying with legislation when the decision has been pre-made (Fester, 2018:16).

However, the research conducted by Khuzwayo (2009) and Idasa (2011) reveals that the performance of the ward committees is enhanced in situations where there exist good working relationships between ward committees and ward councillors. This indicates that the existence of good working relationships could motivate councillors to take developmental issues raised by the ward committees promptly to the council. This suggests that, although ward committees lack original power, they can still play a vital role in local municipalities if they are adequately resourced and trained for needs assessments. Therefore, the nature of the relationship between ward committees and local councillors is a strong variable that can motivate and strengthen a ward committee to be more effective or weaken it. The research indeed reveals that the competence of local councillors and their relationships with ward committees is crucial for promoting socio-economic development at the grass-root level.

Some research also claims that ward committee meetings are in some cases regarded as meaningless (Stanton, 2009). Furthermore, Stanton states that sometimes ward committee meetings are irregular and viewed as a waste of time. Her findings suggest that some ward councillors do not even attend their meetings. She also states that instead of focusing on developmental issues that affect their communities, some ward committees function "as forums for political parties and are used for deepening patterns of patronage as opposed to deepening democracy"(Stanton, 2009:88). According to Mathekga and Buccus (2006:13), ward committees have not been fully executed and "the government has not done enough to educate citizens about participatory government vis-à-vis corresponding structures that are in place to facilitate the process". Furthermore, Mathegka and Buccus (2006:13) assert that the problem is compounded by a 'wait and see' attitude that citizens have adopted, whereby "they expect the government to simply provide services without their input".

The literature also claims that the manner in which ward committees are structured excludes other stakeholders such as NGOs, CBOs, and private sector organisations which have the capacity and resources to contribute towards rural development. Anderson (2011) points out that, autonomous organisations have the potential to promote participatory democracy and considerable power to support development initiatives at the grass-root level. The participation of such organisations in ward committees, especially in rural areas could be priceless. According to Mbuyisa (2013) and Friedman et al. (2003), authentic participation in rural areas is hampered by the lack of technical and specialised skills which are necessary to provide legal interpretation of policies. There is also a shortage of language skills and capacity to compile

written submissions to the council. This predicament could be overcome by the inclusion of independent organisations which possess the skills and expertise to engage with policy and development issues. Although rural development policies have recognized public participation as the cornerstone of sustainable rural development, it has been construed by the government as less important and secondary to service delivery (Mathekga and Buccus, 2006). Yet through public protests, the public also express their dissatisfaction against poor or lack of service delivery, or for being excluded from governance at the municipal level. This indicates that in practice, public participation is still not enjoying the same prominence as service delivery which features more frequently in the rhetoric of public officials and politicians. It also creates an impression that service delivery is the prerogative of government alone and renders public participation irrelevant. This researcher contends that meaningful participation should embody the agency of the rural people and other stakeholders in the local context. It is important that public participation is genuinely promoted in rural areas at the ward level and be recognised as an integral part of rural development which is broader than mere service delivery.

The IDPs are more inclusive as mechanisms of public participation than ward committees. They are supposed to provide an avenue for local communities to identify and prioritize development programmes that are appropriate to their own local contexts. The process affords local communities at grass-root level an opportunity to contribute their experiences and local knowledge to the development plans. In terms of section 152(1) of the Constitution (Act 108 of 1996), IDPs are essential for promoting democracy at the LG level. The IDPs encourage the participation of local communities and various actors in the development affairs of the local government. Ceasar (1999) notes that, IDPs are central to any development planning at the local government level. Section 29 (1b) of the Municipal Systems Act (Act 32 of 2000) stipulates that local communities must participate in the drafting of the IDPs. Thus, consultation of local communities on their developmental needs and priorities is imperative. As a result, IDP processes are open to all stakeholders who wish to participate and they provide a wider space for greater public participation and transformation of local government. According to Siphuma (2009) and DBSA (2001), the IDPs require municipalities to align their physical, sectoral, and resource planning. The process serves as a vehicle for development because of its participatory approach. It also provides a framework for municipalities to integrate economic, sectoral, spatial, social, institutional, environmental and fiscal considerations in order to

optimise the allocation and use of scarce resources. The IDPs also seek to reform municipalities into developmental structures through greater public participation.

Furthermore, Siphuma (2009) and Davids (2005) point out that, IDPs provide a strategic framework for democratic municipal governance. They articulate the council's vision, needs, priorities, goals and strategies to be developed and implemented during its five-year term in office. Theron (2009) argues that IDPs are the leading instruments of local planning in post-apartheid South Africa. These processes guide and inform all planning, budgeting, management and decision-making in municipalities based on public participation principles. The Municipal Systems Act (Act 32 of 2000) defines and stipulates the stages to be followed to ensure that developmental issues are identified and involve local communities and other role players including traditional authorities. The IDPs are people-driven, and once adopted by the municipal council, they become "the primary strategic planning instruments which guide and inform all planning and development and all decisions regarding planning management and development in the municipality" (Theron, 2005:141). The IDPs are also conveyed into the local government budget to eschew the risk of them becoming mere wish-lists (Ceasar, 1999). This ensures that adequate resources are allocated to the programmes and projects that have been identified to address community needs. As a result, Davids (2005) and Parnell and Pieterse (2002) assert that the budget process of each municipality is linked to the IDP to avoid a situation where the best integrated plans fail due to the lack of resources. More importantly, linking the budget process to the IDP process is vital for promoting transparency and accountability in the local government.

There is a need to make sure that IDPs do not become redundant. Section 34 of the Municipal Systems Act (Act 32 of 2000) prescribes that each Municipal Council must review its IDP annually based on its performance measurements and amend the plan accordingly. This ensures that IDPs are always relevant to the needs of the people and get adjusted accordingly as new needs and priorities arise. The expectation is that the public will participate in the IDPs and that their input will indeed be incorporated. Ideally, the IDP process seems to be the most progressive approach to get the public involved in the developmental affairs of the local government. It is indeed the most appropriate strategy for rural development because it accommodates various stakeholders including independent organisations and businesses that operate at the grass-root level.

However, Siphuma (2009) and Theorn (2005), argue that the implementation of IDPs has not been successful in South Africa. These authors attribute the failure of the IDPs to municipal officials who lack the necessary skills and understanding of the IDPs. In addition, Theron et al (2007) argue that local government generally lacks the capacity to implement and manage participatory development efforts such as the IDP. The situation is dire in rural local municipalities which are poorly resourced. Asaresult, Siphuma (2009) and Theron et al (2007) assert further that some municipalities have been turned into 'cash-cows' for consultants due to the inadequate training of municipal officials who are supposed to implement IDPs. Ngamlana and Poswayo (2013:93) add that, "Poorly informed officials, poorly written plans, or highly complicated technical plans developed by consultants, which even officials cannot interpret or implement confidently, are just some of the obstacles faced" by the majority of the municipalities. This indicates that, other challenges notwithstanding, rural poverty and underdevelopment persist due to the lack of skilled municipal managers and officials which leads to an ineffective management and implementation of IDPs.

Although integration is an important component of the IDP, research has shown that most departments within municipalities do not operate in an integrated fashion (Sipuma, 2009; Davids, 2005; Parnell and Pieterse, 2002; Liebenberg, 1998). Again, the findings of these authors show that the municipal managers' failure to coordinate between various departments within municipalities results in the poor performance of the IDPs. The coordination of different departments within municipalities is necessary to break the 'silo' approach and create an integrated one to rural development. Nonetheless, IDPs require the acquisition of appropriate skills by the civil servants in order for them to be effective and improve the delivery of services (Ncube, 2018).

The poor performance of IDPs also reflects the weaknesses of IDP representative forums. The IDP representative forums established under Section 15 of the Local Government: Municipal Planning and Performance Regulations (No. 7146 of 24 August 2001), aim at enhancing public participation in the drafting and implementation of municipal IDPs. They are also expected to monitor, measure and review the municipality's performance in relation to the set targets and indicators. In addition, IDP representative forums serve as platforms for discussion, negotiation and decision making between all the stakeholders involved. The work of IDP representative forums is supposed to bolster the performance of IDPs and enhance community participation. However, the failure by IDPs to fulfil their roles affects public participation adversely.

Although the establishment of IDP representative forums is sanctioned by the Local Government: Municipal Planning and Performance Regulations, it is not clear how many municipalities have been able to establish these forums. What is clear is that they can enhance public participation and strengthen the functioning of IDPs. The way they are constituted suggests that they can be more effective than the ward committees on monitoring the performance and implementation processes. The IDP representative forums also seem well constituted to increase accountability and improve the performance of municipalities. However, Waeterloos (2017) argues that the complex nature of intergovernmental relations has perpetuated the problem of fragmentation of responsibilities and priorities, and hindered coordination and accountability. In addition, Waeterloos (2017) states that, "[I]nsufficient clarity about powers and functions of local government has led to municipalities being saddled with unfunded mandates in areas such as roads, water treatment and other infrastructure". Rural municipalities which are historically the poorest and most marginalised lack the capacity to deliver these services (Government of South Africa, 2011; Siddle and Koelbe, 2012; Waeterloos, 2017). These authors argue further that despite a visible lack of technical capacity in most rural municipalities, the situation has been exacerbated by the failure of the responsible provincial and national sector departments to share information or participate in the IDPs.

The literature on public participation in local government in South Africa reveals many challenges which have resulted in poor performance of local government. Mathekga and Buccus (2006:12) describe the crisis of local government as "chiefly characterised by lack of community participation, corruption and poor service delivery"as a result of "lack of technical skills and trained personnel at the local government level". Other researchers such as Ngamlana (2011), Ngamlana and Poswayo (2018), Makwela (2012), Poswayo (2012), Bailey (2011) and De Visser (2007) outline numerous challenges faced by public participation systems controlled by government. Ngamlana and Poswayo (2018) state for example, the lack of political will to facilitate genuine public participation at the local government level as one of the challenges. In addition, lack of openness to engage with the public in creative space outside the formally defined public participation mechanisms is also a challenge. Above all, the politicisation of public participation strucutures at the local government level, especially the ward committees is a major problem that hinders genuine and meaningful participation at the local government level. To this end, Ngamlana (2016:6) asserts that, "ward committees offer a perfect vehicle for political parties to access and ultimately control ward committees". Other challenges

notwithstanding, the poor performance of local government is also attributed to the ANC's cadre deployment policy which has affected the local government the most (Ngamlana and Poswayo, 2018; Kanyane, 2009).

The then Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA), Dr Zweli Mkhize revealed disturbing facts about the state of municipalities in his budget speech delivered in Parliament on May 14, 2018. Notwithstanding some achievements that some of the municipalities have made in championing socio-economic development programmes and delivering services, Mkhize expressed disappointment at the poor performance of the majority of municipalities which were under the control of the ANC. In his budget speech, Mkhiza (2018) describes the state of municipalities as follows:

- Seven per cent of the country's municipalities are classified as functioning well
- About 31% of the municipalities are functioning reasonably well
- A further 31% of municipalities are almost dysfunctional; and
- The remaining 31% are dysfunctional or distressed.

Mkhize identifies various reasons as accounting for the poor performance of municipalities. These reasons include the lack of revenue in some municipalities, structural problems, and capacity problems in municipalities that are largely rural with "no industrial base or significant economic activity" (Mkhize, 2018). While it cannot be refuted that the identified challenges constrain the capacity of some municipalities to function, the biggest challenges are succinctly described by Mkhize (2018), the statement states that:

> "Since the amendment of the Municipal Systems Act in 2011, a total of 1651 municipal employees were dismissed for misconduct, and 130 resigned prior to the finalisation of the disciplinary proceedings. The offences include financial misconduct, corruption or fraud, gross misconduct involving dishonesty or gross negligence, as well as the breach of the code of conduct for municipalities".

Mkhize's articulation indicates that there is a need to increase accountability and transparency in municipalities. It also presents human error as the underlying cause of distress and failure in some of the municipalities. More importantly, Mkhize's findings suggest that the structures of public participation at the local government level have not been effective. His findings show that structures for public participation at the LG level do not possess sufficient power to hold public officials accountable with the rural or in the peri-urban areas being the most affected municipalities.

There are other factors that explain the poor performances of some municipalities. Phadi and Pearson (2017) note as staed earlier that, politicisation of public participation structures contribute to the distress and poor performance of some municipalities. Using Mogalakwena Local Municipality in Limpopo as a case study, both researchers demonstrate how factional politics within the ANC filtered down to the local government and paralysed the local municipality at the administrative and operational levels. Phadi and Pearson (2017:5) state that, "[L]ocal government is not situated outside of national dynamics. It is a theatre for an array of competing, collaborating and shifting alliances across party and state, and local officials and politicians are directly implicated in these broader networks". The case of Mogalakwena Local Municipality shows that policy implementation and the performance of municipalities maybe constrained by political conflicts that create paranoia, fear and uncertainty among municipal officials. It also reveals the weakness of the LG system whereby municipal managers are deployed by their political parties and have to remain loyal to them. This shows that municipal managers and mayors are political deployees who are expected to serve both the interests of the local community and their political parties. This indicates the dilemma that in most cases these officials face to prioritise between their political parties at the detriment of citizens. To this end, creative ways of public participation that are not controlled by government but in line with the Costitution need to be developed and promoted at the local government level.

At a theoretical level the Council of stakeholders (COS) offers hope for a robust and effective participation of various actors in the implementation of the CRDP. The COS is one of the structures established specifically to facilitate and promote an effective implementation of the CRDP. An analysis of its key functions suggests that it seeks to mobilise local residents to participate in their development and to monitor the implementation of rural development programmes. The CRDP recognises stakeholder participation as a cornerstone of its success because autonomous organisations have access to extra resources that are an important factor in the implementation equation. However, Kole (2005) argues that experience in the case of rural development programmes has shown that partnerships with the private sector, NGOs and local communities are not always at the expected level. In some cases, the roles and functions of stakeholders are not clearly defined, a situation which resulted in conflicts, misunderstanding and, sometimes even total collapse of some projects (Kole, 2005). The implementation and evaluation report of the CRDP (DRDLR, 2013) identifies the less ideal participation of COS in the CRDP structures as one of the factors that impact negatively on the

implementation of the CRDP. The report indicates that in some cases officials from the districts and local municipalities did not attend COS meetings (DRDLR, 2013). One of the key reasons for lack of attendance is that some of the officials at the district and local municipality level fail to see value in attending COS meetings.

4.9 CONCLUSION

This chapter identified and analysed various factors that affected the effective implementation of rural development policies in post-apartheid South Africa. The chapter argued that the process of implementation needs to be managed and efficiently coordinated at both the institutional and relational levels to increase cooperation among the stakeholders. The chapter noted that the management of implementation process and effective coordination of the activities of various stakeholders from government departments, private sector and civil society organisations could minimise the duplication of programmes, fragmentation and counter-productive attitudes. The literature reviewed showed that poor coordination and lack of public participation in the design and implementation of rural development programmes remains a challenge. The chapter also analysed different structures aimed at promoting public participation and emphasised the need to involve people living in the rural areas in decision making processes and their implementation. It demonstrated that South Africa has developed a solid legislative framework for public participation in all the three spheres of government. Nonetheless, it focused more on the sphere of local government which is closer to local communities. In this respect, it analysed ward committees, IDP representative forms and the COS that are the key structures for promoting public participation at the local government level.

The surveyed literature indicates that public participation in the afore-said structures has largely remained at the level of tokenism. This is because people do not really have power to influence key decisions. Public participation at the local level is limited to information sharing and consultations, and the power to decide still remains with public officials. It was noted further that some municipalities in the rural areas, lack institutional and infrastructural capacity to equip ward committees with relevant skills to enable them to be more effective.

The chapter showed that in the implementation of rural development policies in most rural municipalities fails because municipal managers lack the necessary skills and competencies to manage IDPs. Although the lack of revenue in some rural and peri-urban communities has contributed to the distress and dysfunction of some municipalities, the chapter emphasised the

human factor as one of the major causes of implementation failure. The failure of the structures of public participation to play an oversight role of monitoring IDPs and their implementation has thus resulted in the increase in corruption, fraud and negligence cases in municipalities (Mkhize, 2018). In some cases, the implementation of rural development policies has been affected by political conflicts within the ruling party. The case of Mogalakwena Local Municipality in Limpopo demonstrates how political conflicts can paralyse development at the local level (Phadi and Pearson, 2017).

Ultimately, the chapter identified the general implementation challenges that have affected rural development programmes in a post-apartheid South Africa. The surveyed literature suggests that the challenges, which include lack of resources, lack of institutional capacity, lack of skills, poor coordination and management of intergovernmental relations, as well as minimal public participation, are in most rural municipalities.

CHAPTER FIVE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the study research design and methodology. Research is a systematic process of obtaining data and analysing it logically in order to reach certain conclusions (Welman, Kruger and Mitchell, 2009). The purpose of conducting research is to expand knowledge in a particular field of study. The term 'systematic' implies that the process of research employs various objective methods and procedures. The research methods are designed for the purpose of acquiring knowledge reliably and validly. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010), research methodology is systematic, purposeful and planned, and its core aim is to yield data on a particular research problem. This chapter therefore explains the rationale for the research methods chosen for this study and the approach adopted. The chapter describes the methodology followed by the research in conducting the study. The discussion includes the research approach, the site and location of the study, the profile of the area of study, the sampling method, data collection instruments, data analysis, limitation and ethical considerations of the study. The chapter begins by restating the research problem, provides the philosophical underpinnings of qualitative research and the description of the research design of the study.

Since this is a qualitative research, a case study approach has been chosen as a key component of the study with both concepts described in detail in this chapter. De Vos et al. (2011:312) describe qualitative research as an approach that has no fixed steps to follow but whose design is dictated by the choices of the researcher. This indicates that an appropriate design for qualitative research develops as the research unfolds.

In addition, qualitative research has the advantage of providing a broader description and analysis of a research subject without limiting the scope of the research and the research participants' responses (Collis and Hussey, 2003). The research participants are the primary source of information in qualitative research and as such, qualitative research places enormous value on the research participants. Thus, Strauss and Corbin (1990:17) ague that qualitative research deals with people's lives, behaviours, stories, organisational functioning, interactional relationships and social movements. This suggests that the researcher has to interact with participants to gain a deeper understanding of the subject of research.

The researcher plays a key role during the process of data gathering and analysis. Merriam (1988:19) asserts that the researcher is a primary and human instrument for collecting and analysing data. This underlines that the effectiveness of qualitative research is largely dependent on the researcher's skills and abilities, a factor which can make its outcomes unreliable. In the same vein, Patton (1990:14) and Matyumza (2015:62) point out that the validity of qualitative research is enhanced by the skill and competency of the researcher. However, Bogdan and Biklen (1992:58) argue that a qualitative researcher should avoid any preconceptions about the subject of investigation or the research participants. In practical terms, it is not possible to get rid of all bias due to personal values and assumption that shape the researcher's actions and interpretation. This notwithstanding, Glesne and Peshkin (1992:36) and Matyumza (2015:63) argue that qualitative research does not permit a researcher to come as an expert in the field or authority but as a learner to interacts in a robust way with the research participants. In this study the researcher tried to remove all preconceived knowledge and allowed the participants to freely share and express their experiences.

5.2 APPROACH TO THE STUDY

Qualitative and case study approaches have been chosen to satisfy the objectives of this thesis. The major characteristics of qualitative research are that it is appropriate for small samples and that, its outcomes are not measurable in statistical terms and are hence not quantifiable. The basic advantage of qualitative research, which also distinguishes it from quantitative research, is that it offers a broad description and analysis of a research subject (Collis and Hussey, 2003). Thus, Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2005:188) point out that, "…the qualitative approach to research is also fundamentally a descriptive form of research". The approach assumes that reality is socially constructed and that there is no single observable reality (Merriam, 2009). This implies that there are multiple interpretations to a single reality, and that researchers develop knowledge by analysing and interpreting reality. In contrast to qualitative research, quantitative research assumes that there is objective reality that researchers need to discover as they conduct their research. Quantitative research is also based on the assumption that reality exists out there, and that it is observable, stable and measurable (Merriam, 2009). The most basic feature of quantitative research is that data is in the form of numbers and statistics while in qualitative research, which is the chosen approach to this current study, data is in the form of words, pictures or objects (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Thus, researchers seek to maximise

objectivity in quantitative research by using numbers and statistical data in a structured and controlled manner, which also underlines that, the quantitative research process is deductive.

Qualitative research is essentially an inductive process. Researchers pay significant attention to detailed observation in order to provide a rich and deep description of the phenomenon. Morrison (2002) argues that, data can only make sense in qualitative research if it is understood in its social and historical context. The researcher gathers information through in-depth interviews and observations of human activity in natural and social settings (Lichtman, 2006). The qualitative approach is based on the assumption that social reality is shaped by human experience and social contexts (ontology), and that it is best studied within its socio-historical context by seeking to reconcile the subjective interpretations of different participants (epistemology).[29] Quatitative research offers flexibility and allows the researcher to pursue broad and open-ended research questions which can be refined during data collection. However, the limitation of the qualitative approach is the subjective nature of its data collection and interpretation procedures that create the problem of validity and reliability of its conclusions. Atieno (2009:13) notes that:

> "It [qualitative research] argues that validity is important than attempting rigorously to define what is being observed and by so doing study the whole situation. It attempts to study the whole situation in order to evaluate the complexity and ensure that their conclusion take account of both unique and general factors".

In addition, Atieno (2009:14) asserts that the qualitative approach to research is "primarily concerned with process, rather than outcomes or products". This shows that researchers are the primary instruments for data collection and analysis and thus, they have to physically go to the people, site or institution to interact, observe or record behaviour in its natural setting. In this way, the researcher is able to gain insights on how people make sense of their lives, experiences and the world around them. The qualitative researcher may also use data from the available literature to support the findings of the study.Denzin and Lincoln (1998:8) summarise the distinction between qualitative research and quantitative research in their statement that:

> "Qualitative researchers stress the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied, and the situational constraints that shape inquiry. Such researchers emphasise the value-laden nature of inquiry. They seek answers to questions that stress how social experience is created and given meaning. In contrast, quantitative studies emphasise the measurement and

[29] Research Methods for the Social Sciences, https:courses.lumenlearning.com/suny-hccc-research-methods/chapter-12-interpretive-research/ (Accessed: 22 Jan. 2019).

analysis of causal relationships between variables, not processes. Inquiry is purported to be within a value-free framework".

The research question of this study seeks to establish the reasons behind the continued existence and persistence of the problem of rural poverty and underdevelopment in the post-1994 era in South Africa. The qualitative approach was adopted as the most appropriate to answer this study's research question. It allowed the researcher to collect data that is difficult to obtain through methods that are quantitatively-oriented. This qualitative approach ultimately created the opportunity to provide a detailed description of the challenges of rural development, problems associated with implementation and the significance of public participation. The researcher physically went to the people (ward councillors and ward committees), interacted with them while observing and conducting in-depth interviews and was thus, able to collect data that satisfies the purpose of the research, which is to explain why the problems of rural poverty and underdevelopment persist. The researcher argues that, the experiences of ward councillors and ward committee members are imperative to understand the challenges of rural development. Qualitative research therefore, offers the opportunity to focus on the empirical experiences of individuals and their interpretation of the world around them. To this end, Cypress (2017:208) asserts that, "The world or reality is dynamic and not fixed, single, or measurable phenomenon. There are mutlitple constructions, interpretations, and contexts of reality that are active, and it also changes in time".

5.3 CASE STUDY APPROACH

A case study approach is one of the three types of qualitative research (Babbie et al, 2006:287).[30] Qualitative research which is the preferred approach of this study manifests itself in different forms. Cresswell (2007) identifies five types of qualitative research and these are: narrative research, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography and the case study. In addition, Merriam (2009) identifies six types of qualitative research, which are: basic qualitative research, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, narrative analysis and critical qualitative research. An extensive summary of the various forms of qualitative research is presented by Lichtman (2006) who identifies ten different types of the qualitative research

[30] The other two main types of qualitative research are: ethnographic studies and life histories (Babbie et al, 2006:278). Ethographic studies are described as the data of cultural anthropology that is a result of direct ovservation of human behaviour in a particular society. However, the term ethonography has developed beyond its original link to cultural anthropology to include studies in schools, clinics and other cult groups. Life histories focus on the study of documents on one's life. This includes intensive observation of the subject's life, interviews with friends and perusal of letters, diaries and photographs (Babbie et al. 2006:283).

and these are: ethnography, grounded theory, the case study, feminist theory, phenomenology, generic approach, narrative analysis, postmodernism, post-post modernism, and mixed methods. Although these various forms of qualitative research are homogenous, they differ in terms of their focus, sample selection, data collection and analysis.[31]

The different types of qualitative research reflect the advancement in social science disciplines as the quest to study and understand social reality grew stronger (Denzin and Licoln, 1998). It is not the objective of this study to present a detailed history of qualitative research or to analyse each of the different types in detail. However, the case study is the chosen design for this current study.

According to Simons (2009), a case study refers to the singular, the particular and the unique. This underlines that a limited number of units of analysis are studied thoroughly. Babbie et al (2006) emphasise that the defining characteristic of a case study is its primary focus on an individual unit. The unit of analysis could be individuals, groups or institutions. A survey of the literature on case studies indicates that different authors refer to a case study as a method, a strategy, a research design and an approach. For example, Babbie et al (2006) refer to the case study as one of the three design types of qualitative research.[32] Simons (2009) defines a case study in broad terms as a systematic and critical inquiry into a chosen social reality. The aim of the inquiry is to generate an understanding that contributes to public knowledge of the chosen phenomenon. Thus, Stake (1998:87) asserts that, "[A] case study is both the process learning about the case and the product of our learning". This indicates that a case study has a clear research intent and methodological purpose that determines which methods are appropriate for data collection. In addition, the name case study indicates that something specific can be learnt from the single case of the chosen phenomenon. The primary reason for choosing a case study in this current research is to provide an in-depth description and explanation of the continued existence of rural poverty in post-apartheid South Africa.

[31] Methodology, https://wiredspace.wits.ac.za/jspui/bitstream/10539/20038/17/Chapter_3.pdf (Accessed: 25 January 2018).

[32] The other two main design types of qualitative research are: ethnographic studies and life histories (Babbie *et al,* 2006:278). Ethnographic studies are described as the data of cultural anthropology that is a result of direct observation of human behaviour in a particular society. However, the term ethnography has developed beyond its original link with cultural anthropology to include studies in schools, clinics and other cult groups. Life histories focus on the study of documents on one's life. This includes intensive observation of the subject's life, interviews with friends and perusal of letters, diaries and photographs (Babbie *et al*, 2006:283).

According to Merriam (2009) and Babbie (2013), the defining characteristic of a case study is that it limits its attention to a particular unit of analysis, in this instance, uMkhambathini Local Municipality. In this regard, Cresswell (2008) describes a case study as an in-depth exploration of a bounded system. Furthermore, McMillan and Schumacher (2011) note that, the word bounded indicates that the case is unique in terms of location, time and participant characteristics.[33] Consequently, the researcher has to identify boundaries which will determine what is and what is not the case, and these boundaries should be kept in mind during the study. Stake (1998) also asserts that case studies are holistic, empirical, interpretive and emphatic. Yazan (2015) provides a rendition of what each of these characteristics entails. For example, holistic suggests that researchers should take into account the relationship between the reality being studied and its context. Empirical means the study should be based on observations that take place in the field while interpretive means that researchers rely on "their intuition and see research basically as a researcher-subject interaction" (Yazan, 2015:139). This also indicates that qualitative "researchers have to reflect the vicarious experiences" of the research participants from an insider perspective (Yazan, 2015:139). For Merriam (1998: xiii), qualitative case study research is "an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a bounded phenomenon such as a programme, an institution, a person, a process, or a social unit". Case study researchers therefore produce data that is richer and of greater depth in contrast to quantitative designs.

Researchers such as Yin (2002), Merriam (1998) and Stake (1995) contend that it is incumbent upon the case study researcher to employ a combination of data collection methods in order to capture the phenomenon in its entirety. Yin (2002) suggests a combination of both quantitative and qualitative data collection instruments. In contrast, Stake (1995) and Merriam (2002) contend that an exclusive use of various qualitative instruments could be sufficient to capture the phenomenon in its complexity and entirety. For example, qualitative data can be drawn from sources such as documentation, archival records, interviews, direct observations, participant observation and physical artefacts. The use of multiple sources of data maximises the quality of the study and enhance its validity.

[33] In defining a case, Stake (1995) concurs with Louis Smith's (1978:2) interpretation that researchers should regard a "case as a bounded system and inquire into it as an object rather than a process". In his conceptualisation Stake (1998:87) asserts that a case is a specific, a complex and functioning thing, and more specifically, it is an integrated system with a boundary and working parts. He adds that even if the parts are not working well, and the purpose is irrational, it is still a system.

5.4 RESEARCH SITE AND LOCATION

The word "Mkhambathini" is a Zulu word which is adopted from the word "eMkhambathini", which describes a place populated by acacia trees.[34] The municipality was established in terms of Section 155 (1b) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996) after the Local Government Elections of 2000. Mkhambathini Local Municipality is one of the seven category B municipalities which comprise uMgungundlovu District Municipality.[35] Section 155 (1b) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act No. 108 of 1996), stipulates that: all category B Local Municipalities share municipal executive and legislative authority with a category C municipality which is in this case, uMgungundlovu District Municipality in the province of KwaZulu-Natal. The province of KwaZulu-Natal is one of the few provinces with vast regions that are rural and are part of the former homeland of KwaZulu. Khapoya (1980:32) describes the homeland of KwaZulu as being "…densely populated, more than a half of its territory is mountaneous, and close to three-fourthsof it is unsuitable for crop production". Kirsten (2011:29) adds that, the rural areas in the former homeland regions "were isolated and had bad infrastructure, inferior 'Bantu' education, poor health care and limited income-earning opportunities". Kirsten (2011:30) states further that, "… the provinces that were created from most populous homelands (Limpopo, Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal) are the country's poorest". Thus, rural poverty is entrenched in the rural areas of the province of KwaZulu-Natal in which the study is located. Below is a map of uMgungundlovu District Municipality in which uMkhambathini Local Municipality is situated.

[34] *Mkhambathini Municipality for the community: Integrated Development Plan 2018/2019*. http://www.mkhambathini.gov.za/documents/sites/default/files/mkhambathini_IDP-2018-2019.pdf (accessed: 10 May 2019).

[35] The other local municipalities under Umgungundlovu District Municipality are: Msunduzi, Impendle, UMshwathi, Umngeni, iMpofana and Richmond Local Municipalities.

Figure 1: Map of Umgungundlovu District Municipality

Source: mapcarta.com/29040722 (accessed: 2021/12/13).

5.5 PROFILE OF MKHAMBATHINI LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

Mkhambathini Local Municipality is described as largely rural in nature and underdeveloped.[36] It consists of seven wards which cover large commercial farms and four Traditional Authorities and these are: Mbambangalo Traditional Authority, Manyavu Traditional Authority, Macala-Gwala Traditional Authority and Embo-Thimuni Traditional Authority (IDP 2018/2019:26). Traditional Authorities in the province of KwaZulu-Natal administer land that falls under *Ingonyama* Trust, which was established in terms of the KwaZulu-Natal Tust Act (Act No. 3KZ of 1994). The *Ingonyama* Trust owns and administers land that constitutes the former KwaZulu homeland which is roughly 30% of the current province of KwaZulu-Natal (Lynd, 2021). Researchers such as Lynd (2021) argue that the Ingonyama Trust was created to diffuse the political impasse that existed between the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) and the ANC, which had to be solved before the first democractic elections of 1994. According to Lynd (2021), the

[36]http://www mkhambathini.gov.za/documents/sites/default/files/mkhambathini_IDP-2018-2019.pdf (accessed: 10May 2019).

leader of IFP, Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi saw the demoractic elections as a threat to the power of traditional authority, IFP and the KwaZulu Government which he headed. Thus the IFP threatened to boycott and disrupt elections in KwaZulu-Natal. The establishment of the *Ingonyama* Trust formed the basis for the IFP's participation in the democratic elections of 1994. In addition, the *Ingonyama* Trust ensured that the Zulu King and Amakhosi (Chiefs) retained power through their control of the land. To this end, Lynd (2021:30) states that, "By giving the King and the amakhosi control over a resource crucial to the lives of ordinary zulu people, the Trust ensured that traditional authories would wield real power, no matter the outcome of the election". In terms of the Act, all rural land in the province of KwaZulu-Natal is held in a trust, the *Ingonyama* Trust, with the Zulu King as the sole trustee (Ncapayi, 2021:110). Section 2A (2) of the Act (Act No. 3KZ of 1994) states that the *Ingonyama* Trust Board:

> "Shall administer the affairs of the Trust and the trust land and without detracting from the generality of the foregoing the Board may decide on and implement any encumbrance, pledge, lease, alienation or other disposal of any trust land, or of any interest or real right in such land".

Ncapayi (2021:114) argues that in essence, rural people in the province of KwaZulu-Natal actually "…lease the land from the *Ingonyama* Trust for a fee". To this end, Ncapayi (2021:115) expresses a critical view that the *Ingonyama* Trust is used as an instrument by the Zulu King and his Chiefs to "strip the rural residents of their land rights". This indicates that although the rural residents of KwaZulu-Natal may have access to land, they do not have a secure tenure of the pieces of land that they occupy.

Mkhambathini Local Municipality covers an area of approximately 917 square kilo-meters, with a population estimated at 63 142 people (IDP 2018/2019:47). There are approximately 14 964 households in Mkhambathini, and the majority of the population resides in the four traditional authority areas which are defined as rural. The majority of the population are women. For example, "…in 2011, females out-numbered their male counterparts by 4%" (IDP 2018/2019:48). The majority of women reside in the wards that are predominantly rural than men. According to the IDP (2018/2019) document, 51% of the population of Mkhambathini consists of the working age group of between 20 and 60 years, and yet unemployment in the area stands at 12%.

The conceptualisation of the term rural in Chapter Two of this study is that the term specifically describes areas that fall outside of geographical areas classified as urban or city centres. It is also revealed that rural areas are isolated with limited to no access to adequate resources and infrastructure such as roads, electricity and telecommunication and lacking quality service provision in sectors such as education, health, water and sanitation. In addition, Pellekaan and Hartnett (1996) note that, rural areas are characterised by lack of economic opportunities, high unemployment rates and poverty that are a result of many challenges. A key characterisation of rural areas is their settlement patterns and dense populations, which take the form of small villages that can be found scattered on tribal or communal land and on commercial farms with one or two small towns. Finally, rural people generally live a simple life style and rely on subsistent farming for their livelihood. Below is a map of Mkhambathini Local Municipality.

Figure 2: Map of Mkhambathini Local Municipality

Source: mapcarta.com/29040722 (accessed: 2021/12/13).

Mkhambathini Local Municipality fits the profile of traditional rural areas in South Africa which, according to Mahlati (2011), are characterised by beautiful countryside views and valuable natural resources that form the basis for tourism. Thus, Mkhambathini Local Municipality has divided its tourism sector into three categories and these are: eco-tourism, agro-tourism, and adventure tourism.[37]

Eco-tourism: eco-tourism seeks to exploit the beautiful views of the table mountain and Umngeni Valley and the private game ranches and wildlife trails which include Tala Valley Game Ranch, Killarney Game Ranch, the Lion Park and Zoo.[38]

Agro-tourism: this category focuses on the large commercial farms that form the backbone of the local economy. The Sakabula circuit comprises various routes that link the municipality to the nearby commercial farms such as Thornville, Baynesfield, Richmond and Byrne Valley.[39]

Adventure tourism: this part is linked to Mkhambathini Local Municipality's adventure areas that include canoeing events in Nagle dame, mountain bike racing, sky-diving, water-skiing and hiking trails.[40]

The three categories of tourism reflect the beauty of the countryside and diverse natural resources which are found in the Mkhambathini Local Municipality. This indicates that the area has the potential to develop the tourism industry for the benefit of the rural poor. However, there is little participation of the rural people in the tourism industry in Mkhambathini Local Municipality. The sector's potential to contribute towards rural development has not been fully utilised as it remains too closed up and offers little opportunities to the rural people who remain confined in traditional rural villages. Participant B commented that, the majority of the rural people are unable to participate in the tourism industry because they lack the resources to do so. As a result, people from outside the municipality who visit places of attraction such as the Lion Park and Zoo, and participate in sporting activities that include canoeing in the Nagle dame, skydiving and water-skiing. These activities are inaccessible to the majority of rural

[37] *Mkhambathini Municipality for community: Integrated Development Plan 2018/2019.*http://www mkhambathini.gov.za/sites/defaults/files/mkhambathini_IDP-2018-2019.pdf.
[38] Ibid.., p. 22.
[39] Ibid.., p. 22.
[40] Ibid.., p. 22.

people in Mkhambathini Local Municipality, except for a few who are employed in the tourism sector.

Another key characteristic that qualifies Mkhambathini Local Municipality as a rural area is its classification as a category B municipality in terms of Section 155 (1b) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. All rural municipalities in post-apartheid South Africa fall under category B municipalities and are largely found in the former homeland regions. Mkhambathini Local Municipality is found in the Province of KwaZulu-Natal, which is a former homeland of Kwa-Zulu. For easy analysis, Stats SA (2016) divided category B municipalities into four groups (B1, B2, B3, and B4). B1 constitutes all municipalities under category B that are referred to as secondary cities. B2 consists of municipalities under category B that have an urban core with a large urban population. B3 consists of municipalities with a relatively small population that is urban based in one or two small towns. Commercial farming forms the backbone of local economies of these municipalities. The three groups of municipalities under category B municipalities lack some of the characteristics that define them as rural areas. Instead, it is B4 municipalities that exhibit characteristics that identify with Mkhambathini Local Municipality as rural. According to Stats SA (2016), B4 municipalities are characterised by at least one or two small towns in their area. They consist of small villages that are scattered on communal land that is administered by traditional authorities. Some of the villages under B4 municipalities are found on commercial farms. A significant feature of these municipalities is that they are largely located in the former homeland regions. In the Mkhambathini Local Municipality, it has been established that, the majority of the population reside in villages under Traditional Authority. This indicates that traditional leaders exercise power and influence over rural populations.

An analysis of the seven wards that constitute Mkhambathini Local Municipality indicates that the municipality falls under category B4 municipalities. For example, wards 1, 2, 5 and 7 fall under Traditional Authority areas that are underdeveloped and under resourced. The majority of the population of Mkhambathini Local Municipality resides in areas under Traditional Authority, which are generally poor. All the participants in the individual interviews (Participants: A, B, C, D, E, F and G) described the municipality as rural and poor. When they were asked to elaborate why they describe the municipality as poor they mentioned lack of development which is characterised by poor road infrastructure, high levels of unemployment, poor access to adequate shelter because many poor people cannot afford to build and maintain

proper houses, inadequate access to water and electricity. It was mentioned that some of the rural people who reside in traditional authority areas still depend on candles, paraffin and firewood for energy. Some of the respondents identified illiteracy as a major problem that slows down progress in rural areas. Thus, participant (C) also mentioned that various rural people are reluctant to participate and express themselves confidently in public meetings because they are illiterate. Some participants raised some concerns about the poor conditions of schools and lack of library facilities which does not promote the culture of teaching and learning in rural areas. Participant (G) stated that in his ward there are households that still use pit latrines or no system at all because they are poor.

The conditions in wards 3, 4 and 6 are quite opposite to those evident in wards that fall under traditional authority areas. These wards (i.e. 3, 4 and 6) are well developed and well resourced. They constitute the productive sector of the municipality. For example wards 3 and 6 are predominately the farming area with few settlements.[41] Ward 3 covers the Lion Park and has witnessed the development of high class homes that are set to transform the area into an affluent suburb in the near future. Ward 4 comprises Camperdown which is the administrative centre of the municipality, and Eston, Manderston, Ntimbankulu and Tala Valley settlements that all constitute the urban core of the municipality. These settlements are also surrounded by large commercial farms.

The profile of Mkhambathini Local Municipality is congruent with the description of rural areas in the context of South Africa. It is noteworthy that the majority of the people reside in traditional authority areas that are described as poor because they are underdeveloped and under resourced. It is imperative to examine some of the factors that respondents used to describe Mkhambathini Local Municipality as rural and poor. The participants identified factors that include unemployment, poor road infrastructure, lack of decent shelter, electricity, water, illiteracy and lack of economic opportunities. That these factors were mentioned repeatedly by different participants indicates that the participants view them as essential to understand rural poverty in Mkhambathini Local Municipality.

[41] The few settlements in wards 3 and 6 include Umlaas Road, Mid-Illovo, Milford and Avondale. These settlements are actually on commercial farms which are privately owned and the people who reside in these settlements are farm workers.

5.6 RESEARCH METHODS

Research methods are instruments used to execute a given research (Struwig and Stead, 2013:55). They explain the sampling method and why a certain number of participants were chosen for the study. Bertram and Christiansen (2014:13) explain that, collected data is classified and analysed to answer a set research question. The current study used a literature study and a case study that draws on a questionnaire with open ended questions administered in person by the researcher during in-depth individual interviews, a semi-structured interview schedule administered by the researcher during group interviews with ward committees, and direct observations of public meetings and war room sessions. These data collection methods are explained shortly in the subsequent sections. Finally, a sampling strategy is a key component that influences any given research methods used, as such the one influencing this research is presented before sections outlining the data collection and analysis methods. A list of key informants for this current study and some summarised personal information is provided in the table below.

Table 7: Key Informants and their Personal Information

Key Informant	**Summarised Personal Information**	**Data Collection Strategy**
Participant A	The participant is a 46 years oldman who is serving a second term as ward councillor. He is married. The participant has a secondary school qualification (Standard 8) and is an ANC member.	-Individual Interview
Participant B	The participant is a 31 years old man who is not yet married. He is serving his first term as ward councillor. The participant has a grade 12 qualification and is a member of the ANC.	-Individual Interview
Participant C	The participant is a 45 years old woman. She is a teacher by profession and holds an Honours Degree in education. She is serving her first term as ward councillor and an ANC member.	-Individual Interview
Participant D	The participant is a 54 years old man. He is serving a third term as ward councillor. He has a	-Individual Interview

Key Informant	Summarised Personal Information	Data Collection Strategy
	secondary school qualification (Standard 8), and is a member of the ANC.	
Participant E	The participant is a 42 years old man. He is married. He is a staunch supporter and member of the ANC. He has a secondary school qualification (grade 12).	-Individual Interview
Participant F	The participant is a 56 years old man. He has been a ward councillor since year 2000. He is a member and supporter of the ANC. He has a secondary school qualification (standard 8).	-Individual Interview
Participant G	The participation is a 35 years old man. He has a secondary school qualification (grade 12). He is an ANC member and is serving his first term as a ward councillor.	-Individual Interview

5.7 SAMPLING

According to De Vos et al. (2011:391) and Matyumza (2015:64), there are no rules for sample size in qualitative research. Instead the sample size is determined by what one wants to know, the purpose of the inquiry, what would be at stake, what will be useful and what can be done with the available time and resources. Nonetheless, sampling constitutes decisions that the researcher makes about where to conduct the research and who should participate in the research. For this study, purposive sampling technique was chosen as the best tool for collecting data that is relevant to answer the problem being investigated. Judd, Smith and Kidder (1991:136) note that, "the basic assumption behind purposive sampling is that with good judgement and an appropriate strategy, we can handpick the cases to be included and thus develop samples that are satisfactory in relation to our needs". Thus, the researcher has the freedom and flexibility to choose whom and what source to include or exclude from the sample. In addition, Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2009:69) state that, in purposive sampling, researchers depend on their experience and findings from previous research to obtain a sample that can be regarded as being representative of the relevant population.

In this study, individual interviews were conducted with ward councillors to obtain relevant information about rural poverty, rural development and public participation in policy making and implementation processes in the Mkhambathini Local Municipality. The study's participants were purposefully selected because they are situated at the grass-roots level and interact directly with the people living in the rural areas in the policy making and implementation processes. To this end, the position of ward councillors and their direct interaction with people at the grass-roots level and other council officials makes them key informats to provide relevant information for the study. They are responsible for identifying the needs of the rural people and ensuring that service delivery occurs in local communities. The researcher sought permission and consent of the Speaker of Council to interview the ward councillors and ward committees. The researcher obtained contact details of ward councillors from the Council Offices and contacted them individually to explain the purpose of the research and obtain consent for the interviews. According to Patton (1990:169), the objective of purposive sampling is to allow the researcher the opportunity to select participants who are likely to give rich data that sheds more light on the subject being investigated. Effective implementation of rural development policies and meaningful public participation are prerequisites to achieve sustainable rural development. The researcher believed that ward councillors and ward committees as well as other forms of public participation would provide relevant data to answer the research question.

Seven ward councillors who represent the seven wards of the Mkhambathini Local Municipality were purposefully selected as key participants in order to obtain empirical data regarding the research problem. Ward councillors play a pivotal role in the agenda of rural development and local government. They provide a link between local communities and local government, and act as catalysts of service delivery and implementation of rural development projects. In addition, ward councillors work closely with ward committees in their respective wards to identify the needs of the people and present them to Council for consideration. They are also responsible, together with ward committees, for monitoring the implementation of development projects in their wards and communicating information from the Councils to their wards. Therefore, the ward councillors' pivotal role leaves them better informed about the state of rural development in their wards and the gaps that need to be addressed to improve the lives of the people living in the rural areas. However, the researcher discovered during the individual interviews that all the seven ward councillors belonged to one political party, the ANC. This

created the problem of sample bias which was addressed through a triangulation approach which utilised a combination of in-depth individual, group discussions, direct observation and documentary sources. It is important to note that the purposeful selection of the individual participants was influenced by their proximity to the local communities at the grass-roots level rather than their political affiliation.

Ward committees were purposefully selected for group discussions because their core objective is to increase the participation of residents at the grass-root level in municipal decision-making processes and their implementation. The ward committee members are elected by their respective wards to represent the views of the people at the local level. They also reside in the local communities and in this way play a very important role within their wards. They are a support structure to the ward councillor and assist in identifying and initiating development projects in the ward. According to the Handbook for Ward Committees (2005:6), ward committees "should be involved in matters such as the Integrated Development Planning Process, municipal performance management, the annual budget, council projects and other key activities and programmes as all these things impact on local people". Ward committee members are indeed better placed to provide rich data regarding rural development and the challenges of rural povertyand underdevelopment experienced at the grass-roots level, hence this researcher purposefully selected them as participants for data gathering.

The researcher also used direct observation method, which focused on war room sessions and public meetings such as IDP Forums and *imbizos* that are part of the mechanisms of public participation that are utilised at the local government level. Direct observation is one of the principal methods of gathering data in qualitative research and, as Struwig and Stead (2013:104) point out, it occurs in true-to-life contexts. The purpose of observation is to gain a deeper understanding of the participants' beliefs, expressions and extent of involvement in the phenomenon being studied in their natural setting. Observation involves the researcher's witnessing and recording the behaviour of the participants and their verbal and non-verbal expressions without attempting to alter anything (McBurney, 1994:169; Walsh, 2001:67). The researcher does not try to become an active participant in the context, but he/she strives to be as unobtrusive as possible. Direct observation helped the researcher to gain an understanding of the nature of public participation in the Mkhambathini Local Municipality. To this end, the researcher argues that sustainable rural development cannot be achieved without the meaningful participation of the people living in the rural areas.

5.8 DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

Data collection methods are techniques used to physically obtain data to be analysed and discussed in order to answer the research question (Johnson and Christensen, 2008:201).One of the strengths of qualitative research is its flexibility to use a variety of sources and types of data in the process of investigating the phenomenon. The use of various sources and methods of collecting data is called triangulation and it is the most well-known strategy for supporting the validity, credibility and reliability of the study (Mohammandi, Norazizan and Kikkab, 2018:176). As explained above, the data collection methods used in this study were: (1) literature study, (2) individual interviews, (3) group interviews and (4) direct observation on the field. The literature study component is covered in Chapters two to four of the study.

5.8.1 Individual Interviews

An individual interview is one of the principal techniques of collecting data in qualitative research. Individual interviews consist of a conversation between the interviewer and the research participant in which the interviewer tries to get information from the participant (Merriam, 1988:71). In this regard, Kvale (1996:125) and Matyumza (2015:69) explain that an interview is in fact, a human interaction through which primary data is obtained. In social sciences, information is obtained and shared through conversation and according to Van Dalen (1979:158), many people prefer to communicate orally than responding to questionnaires. The advantage of an interview is that it enables the researcher to obtain information that could easily be missed if a questionnaire with closed-ended questions as in the case of a quantitative study. This study employed in-depth individual interviews with ward councillors. The individual interviews were conducted between May 2019 and November 2019. The researcher obtained a letter from the Office of the Speaker granting him permission to interview ward councillors. The researcher also obtained a list of ward councillors and their contact details. This made it easier for the researcher to contact each of the ward councillors to obtain consent and arrange for the interviews. Although it was easy to arrange for the interviews over the phone, there were a few occasions where some of the ward councillors failed to turn up for the interview without informing the researcher. This caused frustration on the part of the researcher as time and resources were wasted in this way. All the individual interviews were conducted at the Mkhambathini Council Offices which are situated at Camperdown as this was the convinient venue for the participants.

The researcher prepared a questionnaire consisting mainly of open-ended questions for the individual interviews. In the first part of the questionnaire the researcher introduces himself and explains the purpose of the research. The introduction and purpose of the research were repeated in person by the researcher at each individual interview. The questionnaire was used to interact face-to-face with each of the ward councillors and record their responses. Each interview lasted between one to one and half hours. The questionnaire is designed in a way that each question had sufficient space to hand-record the responses and make comments during the interviews. The design is also based on the various themes covered in Chapter Two of this study for easy analysis of the data. Thus, each theme has a list of questions that were put to the participants. Although the interviews were done in English, there were situations where isiZulu was used as a preferred language. This happened when interviewing elderly participants who did not feel comfortable speaking in English.

The researcher read each of the questions in the questionnaire and hand recorded the responses as much as possible. However, to capture as much information during interviews, an audio recorder was also used to record the interviews. The recording was done with the consent of the participant. The recorded conversations of the interviews were transcribed immediately after the interviews and stored. The researcher made a decision to record the interviews to ensure that whatever was said during the interviews was preserved for analysis. Although the researcher was restricted to questions on the questionnaire, the direct face-to-face interaction allowed the researcher to observe each of the participants' facial and bodily expression when responding to questions. It also allowed the researcher to listen to the tone of the voice and delve deeper into issues being discussed. Although the participants answered the questions as openly and freely as they could, the researcher got the impression that the majority of participants were uncomfortable to talk about issues of accountability and corruption in the local municipality (it could due to the sensitive nature of the issue of corruption). Unfortunately the question addressing these issues was closed-ended and the researcher was unable, judging from the body language of the participants, to dig deeper into the issue.

5.8.2 Group Interviews

According to Patton (1990:335), group interviews are used to obtain information from a small group of people. McMillan and Schumacher (1997:453) add that group interviews assist members of the group to stimulate each other through their ideas and interpretation of their world that enriches data. However, Van Dalen (1979:159) advises that the researcher

conducting group interviews must be alert and prevent situations where one person dominates the interview. In the same vein, Bogdan and Biklen (1992:100) delineate three basic challenges associated with group interviews which the researcher needs to address. These challenges include the task to begin the group interviews, controlling the dominant participant in the group and transcribing the interviews immediately in the case of tape-recorded interviews.

In this case study the group interviews were conducted with each of the Mkhambathini Local Municipality's seven ward committees. The problem of sampling bias does not arise in this case because all the ward committees were equally selected and none was excluded. In addition, the use of triangulation approacg of collecting data also minimises the danger of sampling bias. The researcher did not encounter the difficulty of mobilising individual members to form a group as the ward committees, which consist of different individuals from each ward already exist. Thus, the researcher obtained verbal permission to interview each of the ward committees from the respective ward councillors and Public Participation Officer (PPO). Ward committee meetings and public meetings organised for public participation are the responsibility of the PPO who organises them in consultation with the Speaker. The researcher was granted oral permission by the PPO to conduct group interviews and was introduced to each ward committee members by the PPO who also encouraged the members to participate freely. Each ward committee consisted of twelve members including the ward councillor and PPO. However, the ward councillor and the PPO were excluded from participating in the group interviews because they are *ex officio* members. The exclusion of the two officials left each ward committee with ten members to participate in the group interview. In each case there was on average, two or three members who were absent. In such instances it was easier for the researcher to manage the group with small numbers.

The researcher compiled a list of questions based on the various analytical themes from Chapter Two of this study (see appendix 2). Some of the questions were the same as those asked in the individual interviews. IsiZulu was used to conduct group interviews to enable every ward committee member to participate and express themselves in their local language. As a result, the questions were translated from English into isiZulu, and read to the group. All the responses were audiotaped to ensure accurate collection of data and later transcribed. The major challenge that the researcher encountered with conducting group interviews was the time factor. The interviews were conducted on days when each of the ward committees had their scheduled meetings. The researcher was given limited time of between 45 to 60 minutes at the end of the

meeting. As a result the researcher was not able to ask all the questions as planned and not every member of the group had the opportunity to speak. This was the major problem that the researcher experienced and as such, he had to choose questions which focused on specific themes. The time and resources limitations made it difficult for the researcher to mobilise ward committee members to participate in group interviews out-side the scheduled times for ward committee meetings. The researcher, therefore, had to be flexible and reduced the number of questions to be asked.

5.8.3 Direct Observation

As already discussed (see section 5.6), direct observation is one of the principal techniques of gathering data in qualitative research. The purpose of direct observation is to gain a deeper understanding of the participants' comprehension of the phenomenon being studied in their natural setting. Therefore, direct observation involves the researcher's observation and recording of the participants' behaviour without attempting to alter it (McBurney, 1994; Walsh 2001).

The researcher used direct observation during war room sessions, IDP Forums and *imbizos* that he attended and observed as a non-participant. The researcher recorded accounts of what he had seen and heard during the discussions in a notebook. Direct observation enabled the researcher to capture some of the data which could not be captured during interviews. For example, the researcher observed the participants' actions and interactions in a different setting and this assisted in the interpretation of some of the information obtained through individual and group interviews. Direct observation assisted the researcher to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon of public participation in a rural setting such as Mkhambathini Local Municipality.

5.7.5 Data Analysis

Qualitative data analysis is executed by way of "inductive reasoning, thinking and theorising" (De Vos *et al*. 2011:399). This approach to data analysis enables the researcher to draw conclusions from empirical data extracted from existential social life of the research participants. De Vos et al (2011:49) also state that the researcher may begin with a general topic and a not so clear idea that need to be refined and expanded in order to draw a valid conclusion. Thus, Bogdan and Biklen (2003:148) define analysis as a process of systematically searching for meaning and arranging all the interview scripts, field notes and other materials

gathered by the researcher. The process of analysis in qualitative research begins when data is being collected. Apart from conducting a literature review of available sources on the phenomenon being investigated, data analysis in qualitative research begins with the first interview and lead to insights that open up new opportunities for further data collection (Matyumza 2015; Merriam 1988; Taylor and Bogdan 1984). Finally, an intensive process of analysis is conducted immediately on the completion of data collection.

The researcher used inductive reasoning to analyse data in this study, which is a time consuming process. The researcher began by familiarising himself with the data collected from both individual and group interviews. This involved transcribing audio recorded data and reading through the texts and field notes. The data was then coded by highlighting manually, similar phrases and sentences that correspond to specific themes on the interview schedules. The themes were analysed according to the different sections of the second chapter of the study which provided an analytical framework. The researcher had to review the themes to ensure that they represent the data collected. Organising data in this manner enabled the researcher to embark on intensive process of analysis and interpretation of collected data to make sense of it. This involved organising the data into files and coding it according to the various categories of the themes and sections of the second chapter of the study.

The researcher adopted both the interpretative and descriptive paradigms which, according to Fisher (2010:59), "seek people's account of how they make sense of the world and the structures and processes within it". An interpretative paradigm recognises different people's perceptions, needs and experiences of the phenomenon being investigated. Although the study was largely qualitative, there were a few instances in which responses provided quantitative data. The instances in which quantitative data was collected only occurred in the individual interviews and in such cases responses were presented in percentages. The qualitative data was analysed manually and, based on the themes provided in Chapter Two of the study. The findings of the study are presented in a narrative, explanatory and descriptive text which is the commonest form of reporting in qualitative research.

5.9 TRIANGULATION, TRUST WORTHINESS AND CREDIBILITY

Triangulation is the use of several methods of data collection to increase the validity and reliability of the research findings (Mouton 2012:156). The use of several methods of data collection is done to achieve a more inclusive and holistic understanding of the phenomenon

being investigated (Matyumza 2015:79; Perone and Tucker 2003:2). In addition, Bertram and Christiansen (2014:188) explain that triangulation is the process of collecting data from different sources to intensify its trustworthiness. In concurrence, Struwig and Stead (2013:105) note that, trustworthiness of data is achieved when alternative sources of data are used as supporting evidence. It is clear that triangulation assists to reduce subjectivity and increases the reliability and validity of data as the researcher is given the opportunity to obtain data from different perspectives. However, Best and Kahn (1993:203) caution that all data collection techniques have their strengths and limitations, which indicates that while, triangulation increases reliability, validity and credibility of the findings, it has its limitations.

Nonetheless, the researcher used triangulation to ensure this current study's trustworthiness. The use of multiple data collection techniques helped to ensure complementarity and reduce individual weaknesses. The researcher used four techniques in this research and these are: literature review, individual interviews, group interviews and direct observation recorded in the field notes. The data collected through the various techniques was incorporated in the discussions of the findings in the next chapter. The researcher contends that triangulation helped to provide a comprehensive and holistic understanding of the problem that this current study sought to investigate. Specifically, it generated relevant data to explain why the problems of rural poverty and underdevelopment persist in South Africa, as well as explain the nature of public participation at the local government level in the rural contexts. In this way, the qualitative approach is relevant to the purpose of the study.

The knowledge gained from the case study can be applied to other cases and similar cases within a rural context. This means that the findings of this research can be transferred to other rural settings in South Africa. The biggest advantage of the qualitative approach is that it gives the researcher an opportunity to probe into responses and explanations of the participants' experiences. This enables the researcher to answer the *why* and *how* questions which are at the heart of the investigation. Although Atieno (2009:17) points out that, "[T]he main disadvantage of qualitative approaches to corpus analysis is that their findings cannot be extended to wider populations with the same degree of certainty that quantitative analyses can", this researcher contends that the combination of methods employed in this study addresses the question of validity, trustworthiness and credibility of the findings. However, the limitation of the study is that the voices of other stakeholders such as traditional leaders, opposition political parties, other council officials and independent oragisations are silent. There is a need for future

research in which the voices of these stakeholders in relation to the problem of rural poverty and rural development in the post-apartheid South Africa are also heard.

5.10 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical issues are an integral part of qualitative research because of the involvement of human participants as the main source of information. It is imperative that the researcher avoids any data collection technique that could harm or compromise the integrity of the research participants. This indicates that participants in qualitative research are given the same protection and respect as those who participate in quantitative research (Wassenaar, 2006:76). In this study the researcher was guided by the following ethical principles: informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity. Informed consent refers to a situation whereby research participants are informed about the research and what it entails, and given the liberty to choose freely whether to participate or not. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2001:197), informed consent indicates that clarification is provided to research participants regarding the aims of the research and the freedom to withdraw from the research at any time with no consequences. Finally, Denzin and Lincoln (2000:372) and Matyumza (2015:82) emphasise that care must be taken in qualitative research to eschew any conduct that could cause harm to the participants.

In this study, the researcher obtained permission from the Speaker of the Municipality to interview individual ward councillors and conduct research in the Mkhambathini Local Municipality. The researcher also obtained oral permission from the PPO to interview ward committees and attend IDP Forums, war room sessions and public meetings organised for public participation. The researcher was given a written letter signed by the Speaker, which granted permission to conduct the interviews. The researcher was also provided with a list of all the ward councillors and their contact numbers, and thus phoned each of the ward councillors to obtain their consent to be interviewed. The time anticipated for the interview, date and the place where the interview would be conducted was agreed upon. The questionnaire (interview schedule) contained a clear description of the nature and aims of the study, as well as the procedures to be followed during the interview. The researcher assured each of the participants that their identity would remain confidential and anonymous, and would only appear on any document or publication with their express permission. Individual oral permission was also obtained from each of the participants before audiotaping the interviews.

The individual participants were code-named (Participant A; Participant B; Participant C; Participant D; Participant E; Participant F; and Participant G) to maintain anonymity.

The researcher did not obtain written consent from each of the ward committee members for group interviews. Instead, consent was obtained orally after the ward councillor and Public Participation Officer (PPO) had introduced the researcher and given him the opportunity to explain the nature and aims of the study to the group. The researcher judged the oral consent as well as the permission granted by each ward councillor and the PPO as sufficient to address any ethical concerns. In addition, the researcher assured the members of the group in each case, that their names would remain confidential and anonymous to safeguard their integrity. In this regard, the ward committees were code-named (Participant A2; Participant B2; Participant C2; Participant D2; Participant E2; Participant F2; and Participant G2). The researcher also ensured that all data obtained from secondary sources was appropriately acknowledged in text and a list of all references was compiled at the end of the study.

5.11 CONCLUSION

This chapter outlined the research design and the various techniques used for data collection and data analysis. It underscored that triangulation, which is also explained in detail here, was used to increase trustworthiness and validity of the findings. The nature and rational of a case study was also discussed and it was noted that it offered the researcher an opportunity to deal with the intricacies of complex social issues such as rural poverty and underdevelopment, as well as public participation which are central to this current study. Thus, various detailed information about the chosen phenomenon is generated through a case study, which is not the case when using other research designs of the quantitative nature. Finally, the chapter explained the purposeful sampling of ward councillors and ward committees and noted their use in the provision of relevant in-depth data to answer the research question. Since the study is essentially qualitative, ethical considerations were addressed to protect and safeguard the integrity of the participants. The case study findings are presented and discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER SIX: CASE STUDY FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapters confirmed that numerous policies have been developed in the post-apartheid era to address the challenges of rural poverty and underdevelopment. A detailed description of the various phases of the formulation of rural development policies, from the RDP in 1994 to the inauguration of the CRDP in 2009 was presented. The phenomenon of South African rural poverty and underdevelopment has also been described as a direct outcome of the racial and discriminatory policies of the apartheid system and its colonial legacy. As a result, rural poverty in South Africa is viewed as a racial and gender issue because most of the poor are black African people who reside in most of the former homeland regions. In addition, the previous chapters have shown that poverty is gendered because it affects women the most and, especially those who reside in rural areas.

Although there are common characteristics such as geographical remoteness, poor resource base and inadequate infrastructure which define rural areas in most developing countries, the previous chapters have shown that rural areas in South Africa are not easily defined. Rural areas however, fall under Category B municipalities which consist of communal villages and farming areas. As such, rural development policies, particularly the CRDP, have identified land reform and public participation as integral components of sustainable rural development. This indicates that land reform which guarantees security of tenure and promotes skills development for productive use of land is imperative. Public participation indicates that sustainable rural development requires the meaningful participation of rural people in policymaking and implementation processes. The previous chapters have shown that South Africa has developed a solid legislative framework to promote public participation in all three spheres of government. This case study, therefore, examines public participation at the local government level.

The case study investigates the challenges of rural development that relate to policy implementation and public participation in the Mkhambathini Local Municipality which is a rural municipality. Attention is paid to the mechanisms used to promote public participation

in policy making and implementation processes at local government level, and in this case, in the Mkhambathini Local Municipality. Factors that hinder effective implementation of rural development policies and public participation are identified and discussed. The research findings obtained through in-depth interviews and direct observations are analysed in the light of Chapter Two, which provides the analytical framework of the study.

6.2 RURAL POVERTY IN THE MKHAMBATHINI LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

The concept of poverty has been used to describe different types of human deprivation in society. The concept is complex and not easily defined and yet, in its primordial form, poverty refers to a lack of basic needs. Ordinarily, basic needs encapsulate essential amenities such as clean and safe water, nutritious food, physical and emotional security, decent shelter, clothing and those needs that are necessary for the individual to live a better life (Peet and Hartwick, 2009). The conceptualisation of poverty presented in Chapter Two of this study noted that poverty is experienced at both individual and communal levels when communities lack essential amenities to survive and sustain their members. According to Burkey (2003), communities require access to nutritious food, educational and health care facilities, transport, recreational facilities and political systems that provide mechanisms for participatory decision-making processes to sustain the well-being of their members.

In the case study, the participants were asked to explain why Mkhambathini Local Municipality is described as the most rural and poorest of the seven local municipalities under the uMgungundlovu District. The same question was asked in both the individual and group interviews of the ward committees. The question gave the participants the opportunity to articulate their understanding of poverty in their rural setting. All the seven participants (Participant A, Participant B, Participant C, Participant D, Participant E, Participant F, and Participant G) who were interviewed concurred that Mkhambathini is indeed rural and the poorest of all the local municipalities under uMgungundlovu District. However, the participants from wards 1 and 2 gave more details regarding the causes of poverty in their wards. The individual participants described the history of political violence between the ANC and IFP that took place in these two wards in the 1990s and how it resulted in the death of various bread winners and displaced several families. One of the individual participants (Participant A), from ward 1 explained as follows:

> "Yes, it is true that UMkhambathini is a rural municipality. It is the poorest because of historical reasons. In the early 1990s it was affected by violence where many people died. This was between IFP and ANC. Because of violence, many people stopped going to work to protect their families, and others had to run away to other areas. The Inkosi Maphumulo was killed during the violence of the 1990s".

As confirmed in the above cited response, the high levels of poverty in wards 1 and 2 are linked to the history of the 1990s' political violence, which is a significant factor in that it indicates that political stability and peace are integral to development. The responses note further that, some of the men in the two wards were forced to give up their jobs and stay home to protect their families. This resulted in some households losing their steady income and being exposed to poverty. In the group discussions, members of Participant A2 acknowledged that some improvements have occurred since 1994. In this regard, members of Participant A2 concurred that:

> "In ward 1, local clinics, schools and shops had closed down as a result of political violence, but things changed after 1994 and all these started functioning again. More schools, clinics and pre-schools have been built, the road that connects Pietermaritzburg and our area has been built, and it has improved transport a great deal. Electricity and water have also been connected to many households".

The responses of Participant A2 indicate that while rural poverty and underdevelopment persit in ward 1, the situation has improved in the post-1994 era. Participant B2 expressed similar sentiments as Participant A2, but bemoaned unemployment as a prominent indicator of poverty in their ward. One member of Participant B2 stated that:

> "Yes, our municipality is rural and poor. Most of the young people are unemployed while older people and children depend on government grant to survive. It is not good to have so many young people doing nothing because there are no jobs".

The other members of Participant B2 concurred with the semintments expressed above. Individual participants from the other wards gave different explanations for the existence of poverty in the municipality. The scourge of HIV and AIDS and unemployment are some of the factors that are pointed out as entrenching rural poverty and underdevelopment in Mkhambathini Local Municipality. One of the participants (Participant A) stated that:

> "The municipality was badly affected by HIV and AIDS which caused many deaths and created many orphans in the area. The other problem is the high unemployment rate in our municipality. All these things have contributed to the high levels of poverty and suffering".

The mention of HIV and AIDS and high unemployment rate, as noted in the above quoted response, indicate that people living in the rural areas are deeply affected by the negative impact of these factors. The scourge of HIV and AIDS for example, depleted human capital and left orphans more vulnerable. One participant also mentioned that, "The many deaths caused by HIV and AIDS illnesses force poor families to spend the little income they have in conducting expensive burial ceremonies". Although it cannot be claimed to be part of the black African culture to conduct expensive funerals, the participants concurred that a trend has developed in the rural areas where funerals have become too expensive for many poor families.

In the individual interviews, the participants were asked: "*What indicators can you identify to describe the level of rural poverty in Mkhambathini*?" The participants identified the indicators that they associate with rural poverty in the Mkhambathini Local Municipality and these are summarised and presented in the table below.

Table 8: Indicators of Rural Poverty in Mkhambathini

1.Unemployment	6.HIV and AIDS
2.Lack of clean water and sanitation	7.Poor conditions of schools
3.Poor road infrastructure	8.Low investment
4.Lack of decent shelter	9.No training centres
5.Lack of electricity	10.Iliteracy

The indicators of rural poverty presented in the above table are consistent with those outlined by Pellekaan and Hartnett (1997) and discussed in Chapter Two of this study (see section 2.2.2). Pellekaan and Hartnett argued that these indicators are associated with rural poverty in Africa and reflect the state of underdevelopment and impoverishment under which people in rural areas live. During the individual interviews, the researcher established that while some indicators were common in all the seven wards, there were variations between the wards. Unemployment, HIV and AIDS, poor roads and lack of clean and safe water and sanitation were mentioned by all the individual participants as key indicators accounting for the prevalence of rural poverty in Mkhambathini Local Municipality. Unemployment was specifically identified as a critical issue that the municipality has to grapple with and viewed by the participants as the major cause of other social challenges in the municipality. The

participants pointed out that the high rate of unemployment and lack of other economic opportunities force many young people to migrate to big cities and to engage in risky behaviours that increase HIV infections in the municipality. To this end, Participant C stated that:

> "We have a problem of young women who fail their matric or drop out of school and end up engaging in risky sexual behaviour rsulting in the problem of teenage pregnancy. This is really a challenge in our ward which has many farm workers and dwellers".

The latest IDP document (2018/2019:49) states that unemployment rate of the municipality stands at 12% while, the proportion of the non-economically active population is at 46% and that of the discouraged job-seekers stands at 8%. This means that only 34% of the economically active population of the municipality is employed. The non-economically active population consists of the pensioners and children most of whom are dependent on government social grants. The majority of the 12% of the unemployed are young people who depend on their grandmothers' pensions for survival. It is less wonder that the study participants pointed out that unemployment forced some of the young women, particularly those who are single mothers, to engage in risky sexual behaviours that expose them to HIV and AIDs.

According to the UNAIDS Data (2020:1), "South Africa has the biggest HIV epidemic in the world, with 7.7 million people living with HIV". Although measures have been taken to combat HIV, the situation has continued to deteriorate, especially in the Province of KwaZulu-Natal. The Province of KwaZulu-Natal, in which this case study is conducted has more people (18.23%) living with HIV (Low and MacDonell, 2019:2). In addition, the number of people living with HIV in the Mkhambathini Local Municipality is estimated to have increased at an annual average rate of 2.9% between 2000 and 2010 (IDP 2018/2019:49). The population of people living with HIV in Mkhambathini reached 17% during the same period. All the individual participants, in concurrence with the above-noted prevalence statistics, identified unemployment and HIV and AIDS as the key factors behind rural poverty and highlighted the severity of the impact of these indicators on rural communities. Although the number of HIV and AIDS related deaths are said to have reduced as a result of the introduction of the antiretroviral therapy, participants conceded that a new wave of infections is emerging because of high unemployment, especially amongst the youth. While rural poverty in the context of South Africa has been generally linked to the apartheid era and its colonial history, the mention of political violence and HIV and AIDS by the participants indicate that these factors must be

taken into account when addressing rural poverty and underdevelopment. The comments by one of the participants (Participant A) are thus instructive:

> "Because of its history of political violence, there is still a certain degree of animosity between supporters of ANC and IFP, and this affects the functioning of the ward committee in the sense that those who are not ANC get side-lined and are viewed as the enemy. When the ward committees do not function well, the public is deprived and it means that residents of in the ward and their needs are not represented well in the municipality".

The above comment indicates remnants of past events, political differences and the associated tension can affect the implementation of development programmes and service delivery at the local level. It is therefore, important to promote cooperation between elected representatives from different political backgrounds at the local level and encourage the prioritisation of the needs of the people living in rural areas.

The other set of indicators that the participants identified and emphasised were poor roads and lack of clean and safe water and sanitation. The participants in the individual interviews identified poor roads as an indicator of rural poverty. The responses noted that there are still areas which are not easily accessible owing to poor roads with the situation getting worse during the rainy season. The problem of poor road infrastructure in rural areas was mentioned repeatedly by participants from the wards that fall within the parameters of Traditional Authorities (i.e ward 1, 2, 5, 6 and 7). These traditional authorities are located within the *Ingonyama* Trust land, which is administered by the *Ingonyama* Trust Board together with the traditional chiefs in terms of the KwaZulu *Ingonyama* Trust Act (Act No. 3KZ of 1994). The Zulu King is the Trustee of the Ingonyama Trust.

The individual participants felt that poor roads make it difficult to attract investors to these areas, hence low to no economic opportunities for the people living in rural areas. The issue of poor roads was also raised as a concern at the group interviews where ward committee members stated that transport becomes a problem for the rural communities during the rainy season when roads get damaged or too slippery and risky for taxis to operate. The public identified poor roads as one of the urgent needs of rural communities at the 2019/2010 IDP Review and Draft Budget Road-show held at Kwa Dwengu Hall in ward 6.[42] It was evident from the discussions

[42] The IDP Review and Draft Budget Road-show was held on the 10th April 2019 at Kwa Mdwengu Hall. It covered wards 5, 6 and 7. The Mayor presented a financial report of the financial year which was to end 30 June 2019. The Mayor also presented to the public various development projects that the municipality had implemented and services delivered during the financial year. The public was given a chance to comment on the report and

at the road-show that the issue of poor roads had been raised in the previous public meetings with municipal officials but had not been addressed. The reason given by one of the participants (e.g Participant B) during individual interviews was that, "capital projects such as road construction, water infrastructure, and electricity fall under the District and the respective departments under the Provincial Government". This means that the local municipalities have no control over such projects and lack the capacity to implement them on their own. Participant B explained further that, "Each ward is granted one capital project during each financial year and this is done in a rotational system so that all the seven wards can benefit equally".

Concern over clean and safe water and sanitation were also raised by both the individual (Participants E and C) and group participants (Participants C2, F2 and G2) as a key indicator of rural poverty in Mkhambathini. The participants (B, F,G) at both individual interviews and group interviews (Participants B2, F2, and G2) acknowledged that there was a remarkable improvement in the provision of clean and safe water in their wards but insisted that there is still a challenge to provide all households with clean and reliable water supplies. In addition, some of the individual participants (Participants B and D) explained that all water and sanitation service provisions are under the uMgungundlovu District Municipality's responsibility, which impacted on the speed of implementation:

> Participant B: "Major projects to provide water and sanitation are done in consultation with Mkhambathini Local Municipality. Our municipality is rural and small, so we have to rely on uMgungundlovu District Municipality".
>
> Participant D: "We depend on the district municipality for big projects and can do little to speed up the delivery of clean water and sanitation to local rural communities".

The concern with water and sanitation was raised several times both at the 2019/2020 IDP Review and Draft Budget Road-show of 10 April 2019 and the 2019/2020 IDP and Budget *Imbizo* held on 22nd June 2019 at AbeBhuzi Community Hall in ward 2. This indicates that there are still parts of the local municipality in which water and sanitation provision have not been addressed adequately. The researcher is of the view that the local communities in

raise questions for clarification. This was followed by the presentation of the draft budget for 2019/2020 financial year. Again the public was given the opportunity to comment and provide input. The Mayor clarified that, although the public had been given the opportunity to give input and identify needs to be included in the budget, it was the Councillors who would meet to prioritise the identified needs based on the budget.

rural areas are not adequately informed about responsible authority regarding the delivery of services.

The other indicator identified as indicating the level of rural poverty was the lack of electricity. Some participants (Participants B, C, F and G) stated that lack of electricity was still a problem in their wards. These participants explained that there are still households in their wards that are still without electricity and rely on candles, paraffin and firewood as sources of energy. Electricity was also identified as a priority need by the public at the Budget Road-show of 10 April 2019 and at the 2019/2020 IDP and Budget *Imbizo* of 22nd June 2019. There was also acknowledgement of significant progress that has been made in the provision of electricity in most of the areas. One of the participants (Participant B) estimated that 85% to 90% of households have already been electrified in the local municipality. In addition, the participants indicated that a large number of new settlements were not yet electrified and thus showing electricity remains a major concern for the residents of those areas. This was mentioned by Participants G and G2 in both the individual interview and group discussions.

There was noticeable variation with the other indicators. For example, only one participant (Participant C) in the individual interviews identified the lack of decent shelter as one of the indicators of poverty in the ward. The majority of households which lack decent shelter are found in ward three, which has a large number of informal settlements and farm dwellers. They are also found in ward four which has a small portion of informal settlements and farm dwellers. The participants (Participants C and D) from the two wards explained that, the lack of land makes it difficult for the municipality, in conjunction with the Department of Human Settlement to provide subsidised houses for the farm dwellers and informal settlers on commercial farms. One participant (Participant C) stated that:

> "In ward 3 most of the settlements are informal because most of it are commercial farms and people on the farms can only build *imijondolo* as they do not own the land (informal settlements or shacks)".

Similar sentiments were also expressed by participant (D), which has a large part of commercial farms when he stated that:

> "It is difficult to help poor people on the farms to build proper houses because the land belongs to farmers, and there are many farms in the municipality".

On the contrary, the issue of housing/decent shelter was not identified as a problem by participants from wards that fall under traditional authority areas. This indicates that people

living in rural areas that fall under the jurisdiction of traditional authority have better access to land than their counterparts who live and work in the commercial farms. The researcher also observed that the issue of formal houses was not mentioned in any of the public meetings. The researcher believes that, the farm dwellers and farm workers who are directly affected by the problem of poor housing did not participate in the public meetings to raise their concerns. As a result, the issue was only brought up in the individual interviews by the participants who are the elected representatives of the wards.

The issue of poor conditions at schools was also identified as one of the indicators of rural poverty in Mkhambathini. The conditions are closely linked with the municipality's education and literacy levels. Participants from both individual interviews (Participants A, B, D and E) and group interviews (Participants A2, B2, D2 and E2) acknowledged that various Early Childhood Development Centres (ECDC) and schools have been built to improve education in the municipality since 1994. They (Participants B and D) nevertheless, also identified poor conditions of some of the schools as a challenge. They specifically, identified the lack of library services in some of the schools as a problem that impacts negatively on teaching and learning. In this regard, Participant B stated that:

> "Some of the schools do not have libraries and this is not good for students, especially those doing matric. They need good libraries where they can study and prepare for their exams. Libaries are important".

Some of the participants (Participants D and E) in the individual interviews identified the lack of clean and safe water as well as poor sanitation in some of the rural schools as a problem that impacts negatively on learning and teaching. For example, Participant D mentioned that:

> "Water has not been connected to all the schools at our municipality, this means that the municipality has to make arrangements with uMgungundlovu District Municipality to have water delivered to the affected schools".

Participant E mentioned that, "Some schools still use pit latrine toilets, and some of them are not safe for the children". Despite the challenges mentioned in relation to the poor conditions in some of the schools, illiteracy seems to have reduced in the municipality. According to the Municipality's IDP (2018/2019:49), illiteracy rates have been dropping since 1994 in the municipality. For example statistical data indicates that the number of people without schooling in the municipality dropped from 37,6% in 1996 to 12% in 2011(IDP 2018/2019). Although this looks like a remarkable achievement, there are concerns about a large number of people

who did not complete schooling in the same period. The statistics show that an approximated 29% of those who had enrolled in primary schools are estimated as having failed to complete while 37% failed to complete secondary school (IDP, 2018/2019:49). It is not clear whether the poor conditions of schools are a direct cause of the high numbers of those who failed to complete primary school and secondary school or there could be other factors. The researcher contends that poor conditions of schools which include poor to no library services are a discouragement to both teachers and learners. This could be the reason why only 14% of the population is indicated to have managed to complete grade 12 between 1996 and 2011. It is unfortunate that the IDP document (2018/2019) does not give a breakdown by gender of those who failed to complete primary school and those who failed to complete secondary school. Such a breakdown by gender could assist to decipher the reasons behind the trend.

The available statistical data also indicates a gradual increase in the number of people who obtained higher education. The statistics rose from 1.9% in 1996 to 2.5% in 2001, and increased to 3.4% in 2011 (IDP 2018/2019:49). It is unfortunate that the IDP document for 2018/2019 does not provide updated statistical data to create the municipality's accurate education profile and literacy levels. Nonetheless, the literacy levels of the municipality seem to have improved but, it still remains a concern that a small percentage of learners manage to complete their grade twelve and progress to institutions of higher learning. This indicates that a significant number of young people who fail to progress to tertiary institutions of learning after completing grade twelve increases, and this adds to the problem of unemployment. Thus, some of participants in the individual interviews bemoaned the lack of skills training centres for the youths in the municipality. They explained that the majority of the unemployed youths are not skilled, and those who complete grade twelve and fail to progress to University or post school training are not ready to enter the job market. The participants (Participants B, C, and d) believe that a skills development centre for the youths would change the lives of the young people and effectively address the problem of unemployment. The participants also thought that a skills training centre in the municipality could empower those who complete grade twelve with basic skills and act as a gate-way into the job market. The participants (Participants B. C, and D) who identified the lack of training facilities for the youths as an indicator of rural poverty also linked it to low investment in the municipality. They state that the municipality is small and has very limited resources to address most of the concerns of the rural residents, especially the youth. For example, Participant G stated that:

> "Our municipality is small and poor. We do not have enough resources to help the youth and prepare them for the job market. Tvet Collages are also far away, it would help if there was a skills training cntre within the municipality for the youth".

They explained further that the municipality's size and rural location undermined the chances of attracting investment, especially from the private sector, which is necessary to create economic opportunities for the young people. Finally, there was consensus amongst the participants (Participants A, B, C, D, E, F, and G) that there is a need of a skills development centre in the municipality to empower the youths and prepare them for the job market.

In Chapter Two (section 2.2.2) of this study, the researcher endeavoured to define the concept of rural poverty and acknowledged its multi-dimensional nature. In simple terms, poverty denotes an undesirable condition of life. The reviewed scholarly works on poverty made a distinction between absolute poverty and relative poverty. The two types of poverty are economically defined and use income as a key component for measuring poverty. However, the various indicators of poverty identified by individual participants in this case study show that people living in rural areas understand poverty in relation to some concrete life situation that affects them. Thus, none of the participants directly identified lack of income as an indicator of rural poverty. This does not mean that income is not important for the people living in the rural areas, but for them, poverty is experienced in concrete situations that affect families and their communities rather than as individuals. Instead of identifying the lack of income as an indicator of rural poverty, the participants identified unemployment as a major cause of low income with the expensive burial ceremonies as also responsible for the depletion of the poor families' resources. This indicates, in concurrence with Chambers' (1983:2) argument that rural people perceive poverty differently from the outsiders. The researcher agrees with Chambers (1983) that people living in the rural areas understand poverty in concrete terms, and that their understanding of poverty is informed by the context of the harsh challenges that they face each day.

The other researchers such as Myers (2011), Friedmann (1992), Sen (1990), Chambers (1982;1983;1995), and Finnis (1980), identify the dimensions of poverty that are not addressed directly by income poverty. Some of those dimensions cover the existential experience of rural life that is similar to the indicators of rural poverty identified by the individual participants in this case study. For example, some of the dimensions of poverty delineated by Finnis (1980) include poor health, knowledge and education, being gainfully employed, participation in

recreational activities and lack of friendship relationships.These are non-material aspects of poverty. The problem of rural poverty needs a comprehensive approach that takes into account its non-material aspects such as those that Finnis enumerated, in order for it to be effectively addressed. In this case study, the participants were able to identify key indicators of rural poverty that include unemployment, HIV and AIDS, education and illiteracy. These non-material aspects of poverty are also explained by Sen (1990) in the argument that income and wealth are in fact instruments that can be used to attain the kind of life that people living in rural areas desire. The real poverty of the people living in rural areas is evident in the deprivation of their capabilities, which are defined by Sen as the various types of freedoms that people living in rural areas as individuals and communities should have in terms of the choices and opportunities available to them.

The key indicators that the participants identified in relation to rural poverty reveal the extent of deprivation and limitation in terms of the range of choices and opportunities available to the people living in rural areas. Their deprivation and limitations are characterised by high levels of unemployment, low to no investment and lack of skills among the youths. These indicators severely limit the choices of the people in rural areas, especially women and youths to live the kind of life that they desire. As Sen (1990) puts it, the identified indicators also influence the world of the people living in rural areas in different ways.

Chambers (1983) also identifies different types of deprivations that are not captured by the standard definition of income poverty. These deprivations are characterised by vulnerability to shocks, ill health, social inferiority, powerlessness and isolation. Some of these deprivations were mentioned by the participants during the individual interviews. The political violence of the 1990s and later on, the scourge of HIV and AIDS weakened households in the affected wards and amplified their vulnerability. This resonates with Chambers' (1983) views that the poor people living in rural areas lack sufficient buffers to mitigate the impact of shocks caused by natural calamities such as ill health, death and other physical incapacities. Chambers (1983) argues that the vulnerability of the people living in rural areas makes them easy targets of manipulation and exploitation by the political elite. Although manipulation and exploitation were not mentioned by the participants who are politicians, the researcher observed situations which amount to manipulation and exploitation. For example, the researcher observed every organised public meeting such as the IDP budget review meetings and IDP Road-shows, were accompanied by the municipality 's hiring of minibuses (taxis) to transport people to the venue

and back to their homes. The researcher also observed that free-lunch was provided for everyone after the public meetings. In addition, the researcher established that the costs for both lunch and transport, and the sound system were covered by the municipality. Although this might seem as a noble gesture, especially considering that some people reside far from community halls where public meetings are held, the researcher views such an approach as a subtle strategy to attract the people to these public meetings. The researcher observed that people were kept waiting for a couple of hours for the public officials to arrive at their own time. At the 2019/2010 IDP and Budget *Imbizo* for example, the meeting was scheduled to commence at 10am, but it only started at 12:30 in the afternoon after both the Councillors and Council officials' arrival and occupied the seats at the high table. Myers (2011) articulates that this kind of behaviour amounts to manipulation and exploitation of the poor and powerless whose survival and well-being depends on the goodwill of the political and economic elites. It is these elites who determine both policy and allocation of resources. Thus, the structure and set up of the venues of public meetings replicates power and authority hierarchies that signal the elite's manipulative tendencies.

A number of researchers (Grant, 2011; Ahmed, et al. 2007; Chronicle Poverty Research Centre, 2007) argue, as cited in Chapter Two of this study (section 2.2.2), that factors such as lack of resources and limited economic opportunities, as well as poor infrastructure in rural areas perpetuate rural poverty. The indicators of rural poverty in Mkhambathini that the participants identified reinforce this argument. The poor people living in the rural areas suffer the most despite the minimal investment being committed to rural areas. This happens because the powerful elites in the rural areas manipulate and capture the benefits of programmes aimed at improving the lives of the poor. The manipulation and exploitation of the poor people takes different forms and these include their exclusion from decision-making and determination of the distribution of resources. It also manifests itself in keeping the rural dwellers waiting for long periods of time for public officials at public meetings without any recourse. In this respect, manipulation and exploitation of the poor and powerless perpetuates embedded social, gender and class hierarchies.

Therefore, the empirical findings of this case study support the argument that both vulnerability and powerlessness sustain rural poverty and expose the poor people in rural areas to various risks, as it appears to be the case in Mkhambathini Local Municipality. This indicates that rural poverty in Mkhambathini and elsewhere cannot be effectively addressed by monetary

approaches alone. Instead, a more comprehensive approach that addresses the multi-dimensional nature of rural poverty is needed to achieve sustainable rural development. The predicament is that non-material aspects of poverty such as powerlessness and vulnerability may not be so obvious for the people living in the rural areas to identify, and this could affect the way people in the rural areas understand development.

6.3 RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE MKHAMBATHINI LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

The case study conducted in Mkhambathini Local Municipality sought to determine what rural development entails for the people living within the local municipality and predominantly rural municipality. In his analysis of rural poverty, Chambers (1983) observes that many development workers and researchers had failed to comprehend the reality of rural poverty in Africa. As a result, the definitions of rural poverty, although valid and relevant, failed to take into account the lived reality of the rural poor. In the same vein, this researcher contends that rural development has also been largely defined from the top. This means that the voices and experiences of the people living in rural areas have not been fully captured and acknowledged in the traditional definitions of rural development. The Comprehensive Rural Development Programme (CRDP) of 2009 and the IDP document (2018/2019) have stated for example that:

> "Rural development is about enabling rural people to take control of their destiny, thereby dealing effectively with rural poverty through the optimal use and management of natural resources. It is a participatory process through which rural people learn over time, through their own experiences and initiatives how to adapt their indigenous knowledge to their changing world" (IDP document, 2018/2019:36).

Although the meaning of rural development is constructed and expressed well in the aforesaid policy documents, this is not reflected in the lived reality of the rural people. The case study therefore, aimed at establishing the perceptions of the participants regarding their understanding of rural development given their context and lived realities.

This researcher is of the view that the perceptions of the participants are informed by their own experiences of rural life and the improvements that they envisage for rural communities. The following question was asked to each of the participants in the individual interviews; "What is your understanding of rural development?" In their responses, none of the participants provided a straight-forward answer to the question. Instead, each of the participants explained their understanding of rural development in relation to a concrete situation that negatively impacted on rural life. For example, variables such as access to clean and safe water and

sanitation, good roads, access to proper houses and electricity featured prominently in the participants' responses. There is implicit belief amongst the participants that once the basic services are provided, the lives of people living in rural areas will automatically improve and that, the rest of their concerns will be addressed. Most of the participants (Participants B, C, E, F, and G) mentioned the availability of employment as an indicator of rural development. This response was made in relation to the concern about the high unemployment rate amongst the youths in the local municipality. The major concern amongst the participants was the lack of skills development centres and Technical and vocational education and training (Tvet) Collages in the municipality. The participants were of the view that the unavailability of such institutions in rural areas severely limits the chances of young people to enter the job markets and contributes to rural poverty. The researcher contends that the limited numbers of Tvet Collages in rural areas reduce the access and choices of young women to participate in skills development programmes.

The responses of the participants indicate that people in the rural areas understand rural development in practical terms. In other words, they understand rural development in terms of concrete and identifiable indicators such as those that they mentioned. This indicates that the working definition of rural development adopted by both the CRDP (2009) and the IDP document (2018/2019) remains relevant but aspirational and largely unrealised. The working definition is central to policy development, yet it does not seem to resonate with the experiences and understanding of people at the grass-roots level. The participants identified numerous development projects that have been implemented in the Mkhambathini Local Municipality in the post-apartheid era. Participant A mentioned the construction of the road that links ward 1 to the main road leading toPietermaritzburg, the construction of water infrastructure in Maqongqo village and electricity that has been connected to many households. Other participants (Participants B, D, F, and G) also reiterated that the projects of water provision and electricity have been implemented in their wards and that improvements continue being made so that more people have access to water and electricity in their areas. The house project has been implemented in all the seven wards, although there are still residents without decent houses. The researcher also observed that community halls have been built in wards 1, 2, 6, and 7. Participant C also mentioned that a number of schools, pre-schools and clinics have been built in local communities since 1994. A sport field (Bebhuzi Sports Field) has also been built

in ward 2. The number of development projects that have been implemented indicate that the conditions of living have improved despite the persistence of rural poverty.

It is significant that none of the participants made any reference or mentioned anything contained in the working definition that guides rural development policies. Instead, the participants associate development with practical things that they can refer to, such as infrastructure and having access to basic aminities. This justifies the argument that rural development has been largely defined by outsiders who lack the practical experience of rural poverty. It is thus clear that, these outsiders, who include academic researchers, aid agency personnel, bankers and consultants exclude the insights and experiences of the rural people in their definition of rural poverty. This suggests that the working definition of rural development that guides rural development policies in South Africa is abstract and detached from the rural context. It also does not reflect the voices of women, youths, the elderly and other key vulnerable social groups from the rural context. This researcher contends that rural development policies that do not reflect the insights and expectations of the people living in the rural areas risk being irrelevant to the rural context, and are likely to fail to achieve the vision of a better life for the people living in the rural areas. Sustainable rural development can only be achieved through the incorporation of the input and experiences of people living in the rural areas, particularly women who are the majority of rural populations, in the establishment of the working definition of rural development adopted in the policy documents.

6.4 FAMILIARITY WITH RURAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY DOCUMENTS OF THE POST-1994 ERA

Chapter Three of this research focused on the various phases of the development of rural development policies in the post-1994 period. Although rural development was identified as one of the priority areas by the democratic government, it took years before clear rural development policies could be officially inaugurated. Beginning with the RDP (1994), the development of rural development policies in the post-apartheid era culminated firstly, with the Integrated Sustainable Rural Development Programme (ISRDP) of 2000, and ended with the more focused Comprehensive Rural Development Programme (CRDP) of 2009 that was inaugurated as an official rural development policy and has remained as such to date. This section attempts to establish the individual participants' familiarity with the various post-apartheid era pieces of rural development policies. The researcher contends that, participants should have a sound knowledge of the various rural development policies so that they can

explain them clearly to their respective constituencies and participate effectively in their implementation. The participants play a key role in the implementation of rural development policies because they are the direct link between local government and local communities. In addition, the development of rural communities and delivery of services at the local government level are the responsibility of the participants tasked with the management of the affairs and policy implementation at the local government and societal level.

The questionnaire which the researcher administered in person during the individual interviews contained a list of various rural development policies formulated in the post-apartheid era. The individual participants were asked to mention those policies that they were familiar with and all indicated that they are familiar with all the policies. Some of the responses provided by the participants are as follows:

Participant A: "I know all of them".

Participant C: "I am aware of them".

Participant E: "Yes, I am aware of all of them".

The aim of the question was not to gauge the participants' dearth of knowledge of each of the policy documents but simply to establish whether they are aware of the existence of such policy documents or not. Nonetheless, familiarity with any of the policy documents could mean different things for each of the participants and therefore, the responses were subjective in so far as they reflect the perceived knowledge or understanding of each of the policy documents. Furthermore, the participants were asked to identify the policies that they thought had been implemented effectively in the Mkhambathini Local Municipality. The participants were also asked to provide more information to justify their responses.[43] Some participants (Participant A, D, and E) believed that the RDP had been implemented successfully, while the majority (Participants B, C, F, and G) stated that the War on poverty (WoP) campaign was the most successful policy in the municipality. The general feeling about the WoP campaign is captured in the response of one of the participants (Participant C) that:

> "War on poverty was implemented through war rooms. Many people from all the seven wards and officials from different government departments attended the war room during WoP campaign. War rooms provided a platform for the people to raise

[43] Respondents were asked: "Which one of the rural development policies listed in question 16 do you think has been implemented effectively in Mkhambathini Municipality? Please explain your answer".

> their concerns and for the officials from different government departments to assist and guide people to the right offices where they could be helped. That was very good for the people, and it made it easy to address issues that affect the poor, because many people are really poor in our municipality. So when people from different government departments came, they were able to hear from the people what their needs are".

The WoP campaign seems to have brought the various government departments closer to the people at the grass-root level through the war rooms. The war rooms are viewed as platforms that made it possible for people at the grass-root level to interact direct with officials from various government departments. However, there is disappointment from the participants that the war rooms are no longer as regular and robust as they used to be and that, the attendance of officials from the various government departments had decreased. As a result, people feel discouraged to attend war rooms as their concerns are not prioritised or addressed by the relevant government departments. This indicates that war rooms provide the platform for local communities and public officials from different government departments to get first-hand information on the needs of the people at the grass-root-level. The war room sessions also enabled public officials from different government departments to guide the public towards the right offices from where they could be helped and also provide update feedback to the public. The responses of the individual participants (ward councillors) indicate that war rooms were appreciated as the main vehicles through which WoP was implemented at the local level and, especially in rural areas.

The majority of the participants (ward councillors) are also more familiar with the Mkhambathini Municipality Integrated Development Plan. One participant (Participant G) explained that:

> "It is the Mkhambathini IDP because there are even road-shows to solicit input from the community. It is also the plan that guides the development agenda of our municipality. Plans are now under way to attract more investors to our local municipality. The problem is land, we are still looking for a place where big development projects can take place".

The participants (ward councillors) explained that the IDP is updated on a yearly basis after conducting road-shows and *imbizos* to get public input and comments. The IDP is the plan that guides the development agenda of the municipality while the Municipality Systems Act (Act No. of 2000) encourages public participation in the development of the IDPs. The participants elaborated that through road-shows and IDP *imbizos,* the public is given the opportunity to

participate in updating the IDP every year. The impression of the researcher was that, all the participants (ward councillors) identify with the IDP document of Mkhambathini Local Municipality and perceive it as an embodiment of the dreams and aspirations of the local people. However, it was pointed out that the municipality lacks resources and capacity to implement its own development projects. As a result, the municipality is unable to deliver services faster and achieve the vision of a better life for all the people within its boundaries. Participant (B) explained that situation as follows:

> "Our municipality is small and lacks the capacity to implement capital projects such as road construction, electricity, housing and water. We rely on other government departments and the uMgungundlovu District to undertake such projects. The problem is that as local municipality we have no control over their implementation. And some of them take a long time to complete, and meanwhile we have to deal with people who are complaining about service delivery in the community. The problem is that, the capital projects are rotational, meaning that, if my ward applied for a capital project like electricity or road construction this year, it will not be considered for another capital project in the next two years. So this makes it difficult for our municipality which is small and rural".

The explanation given by the participant reveals the limitations of poorly resourced rural municipalities and how they are constrained by weak institutions in their attempts at implementing development programmes. It also highlights the problem of delayed implementation of capital projects which affects service delivery. Finally, it highlights the need to educate the public on how the municipality works in relation to capital projects that fall under the control of the District or other government departments.

The individual interviews revealed that the higher one's level of education, the more knowledge and understanding one has of the policies, and in this case, the IDP policy document and its objectives. Thus, the interviews revealed that the participants who had completed their secondary education (grade 12), or those who have some tertiary qualification have a greater understanding of policy issues. These participants were robust during the interviews and seemed more confident. On the contrary, participants with standard 8 displayed a low level of knowledge of policy issues and were not as interactive during the interviews. This indicates that education impacts on the participants' understanding of policy and their self-confidence and this in turn affects the quality of their work.

The researcher observed that public meetings such as road-shows and IDP *imbizos* were conducted in isiZulu and yet, the IDP documents are written in English. This means that the

majority of the poor in the rural areas who are also considered to be illiterate have no access to or clue of what is contained in the IDP policy documents. This also indicates that the participants (ward councillors) with grade 8 or less level of education have a limited knowledge and understanding of the IDP policy documents that they are expected to endorse and implement. The researcher established from one of key participants (Participant C) that the IDP policy documents are written in English because they are produced by consultants and technocrats who do not even participate in the road-shows or IDP *imbizos*. Participant (C) expressed it as follows:

> "Yes, those in power decide, it is a top-down approach because at the end it is their voice that is expressed in the IDPs, The IDPs are written in English yet the majority of people do not understand it. These documents are produced by consultants who do not even attend IDP forums or *imbizos*, they have to rely on minutes of those public gatherings".

This casts doubt on the inclusion of the public's input and prioritisation of development projects contained in the IDP documents. Finally, the interviews revealed that language and education are the important skills that the participants (ward councillors) need in order to understand rural development policies and be effective in their implementation.

The participants were also asked if they are aware of any other rural development policy documents that were not listed in the questionnaire. Despite the fact that some rural development policies such as *Operation Sukuma Sakhe*, which was launched by the Premier of KwaZulu-Natal in 2015, all the participants responded in the negative. The Mkhambathini Municipality's IDP (2018/2019:41) claims to be enchored on *Operation Sukuma Sakhe* as its philosophical basis, and provides a list of provincial government departments that have spearheaded the programme in the local municipality, yet none of the individual participants seemed to be aware of it.

6.5 THE ROLE OF LAND IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT

The role of land in rural development is explained in detail in Chapter Two (see section 2.2.4) of this study. It is argued that there is a direct link between rural development and the land question in Africa, particularly the issue of land tenure. It is also explained that the majority of the poor in the rural areas of Africa depend on land for their livelihoods and survival. This makes access to arable land and security of tenure a key component of rural development. Grant (2011) and Hanstad, Prosterman and Mitchell (2009) assert that access to arable land is

imperative for people living in the rural areas to sustain themselves and their families through food production and income generating activities. However, the literature survey on the land question in Africa revealed the lack of proof of land ownership as a major factor that perpetuates rural poverty. In this regard, De Soto (2000) pointed out that the majority of people living in the rural areas in Africa do not have title deeds of the land they occupy. As a result, rural residents cannot sell or use the land they occupy as collateral to access loans from banks. Therefore, land reform which entails the formalisation of land ownership and security of tenure is integral to rural development. The formalisation of land ownership in rural areas would, in addition to other productive activities, make it easier for rural land to be transferred to the next generation so that they also benefit from it.

This case study sought to establish whether people of Mkhambathini Local Municipality have access to sufficient land. The participants were asked in the individual interviews that, "Do you think people of Mkhambathini own enough land?"[44] Participants (C) and (D) explained that the majority of people in their wards do not own land. Participant (C) gave the following explanation:

> "Not at all, ward 3 is the most landless because it is largely on commercial farms. Farmers do not want to sell the land, and I think expropriation of land without compensation will be the solution. Land is needed to build houses for the poor families and for burial purposes. As it stands, people who work on the farmers and farm dwellers are forced to live in shacks because they cannot build proper houses in the commercial farms".

Participant (D) also explained as follows:

> "People do not have enough land, especially those who work in the farms, people do not have land to bury their dead or build houses because land belongs to farmers. I am not happy with the Department of Land Affairs. It needs to work hard to give people land, especially those who live in the farms. This will help to facilitate development in our municipality which is rural and poor".

The same question was asked during group interviews and Participant C2 and D2 reiterated that the majority of people did not have enough land. The researcher established that most of the land around Camperdown in ward 3 is owned by private companies and that the municipality has limited access to land (Participant B). As a result, the municipality struggles

[44] The participants were asked to explain their answers. This would give them the opportunity to provide details on the use of land and how landlessness contributed to rural poverty.

to embark on development projects that could help generate income for the municipality. Participant (C) explained as follows:

> "The municipality has no land, and this hinders development. It limits the municipality even from coming up with initiatives for development or build residential flats in Camperdown for renting. This would generate income for the municipality, but most of the land in Camperdown belongs to private companies or commercial farms".

In addition, Participant (C) explained that limited access to land in both wards has resulted in the proliferation of informal settlements on the farms. The participants were not asked about the land use in the individual interviews. Instead the question about the land use was raised at group interviews. In this regard, the question put to the ward committees was, "What do people use land for?" The discussions revealed that people who reside on commercial farms need land to build proper houses, burial sites and pasturing their livestock. There was no mention of food production or income generating activities as the reason behind the desire for land. Chapter Two (see section 2.2.3) of this study states that access to land could contribute to household food security, create economic opportunities and wealth accumulation for rural households. The group discussions revealed that, the people who work and live on the farms are primarily concerned with access to and use land to build houses and establish both burial sites and grazing areas for their livestock. To this end, Coplan and Moopelo (2021:151) assert that among Africans, land is conceived as "a source of being and a basis of identity because it is where their ancestors are buried". Put differently, land is not conceived as a commodity to be bought or sold. The following are the common responses from the two ward committees (Participants C2 and D2):

> Participant C2: "We need land to build proper houses and for our cattle. We need land to bury our dead relatives. It is very difficult to live on the farms because if the farmer decides to dismiss you from work, that means you have also to vacate his farm with your family". There was no objection or addition from the rest of the members of the group.
>
> Participant D2: One member of the group stated that, "This is difficult for many of us because when one loses their job on the farm, one has to vacate the farm and it also means we have to leave our dead relatives who are buried here behind. This matter is very sensitive for us who work and live on the farm". Another member added that, "This matter is very sensitive for us who work and live on the farm". The rest of the members concurred with the views expressed.

The issues of economic opportunities, food production and wealth accumulation are not seen as a priority by farm workers and farm dwellers. However, the researcher contends that the

programme of land reform should include programmes that will empower farm workers and dwellers with skills to use the land productively and in a manner that creates economic opportunities for themselves. Farm workers and farm dwellers could be trained to embark on various income generating projects such as poultry, piggery and vegetable production. Above all, the issue of security of tenure needs to be addressed as an integral part of the lanf reform programme so that the beneficiaries of land redistribution can leave in peace and utilise land without fear or threats of being evicted.

During the individual interviews, one of the participants (Participant C) explained that efforts to negotiate with the commercial farmers to sell land to the municipality have been made, but these have not yielded positive results because commercial farmers such as Rainbow Chickens and Illovo Sugar are not willing to sell. In addition, the participant explained that the Department of Human Settlement was ready to assist the municipality to build proper houses for the people who live on commercial farms. The participant (Participant C) stated that:

> "Ward 3 is the most landless because farmers do not want to sell land. We have met with them in the past to negotiate because the Department of Human Settlement is ready to build houses for the farm workers and farm dwellers, but they are not cooperating. I think expropriation of land without compensation will be the solution".

The participant (Participant C) also explained that commercial farmers make it extremely difficult for the municipality to provide services to rural people who reside on the farms. The participant felt that under these circumstances expropriation of land without compensation is justifiable because commercial farmers are not willing to sell the land to build houses for poor who work and live on the farms. Participant (C) stated that:

> "Ward 3 is the most landless because it is largely on commercial farms. Farmers do not want to sell their land. The only solution is expropriation without compensation because land is needed to build houses for the poor people and for burial purposes. People are forced to build *imjondolo* in the farms and that is not good. People need decent houses".

To this end, the participant bemoaned the slow process of land reform and accused the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform of "sleeping on duty when rural people are suffering".

The participants from wards (ward 1, 2, 5,6 and7) that fall under Traditional Authority areas explained that people in general have access to land, and that it is allocated to them according

to their needs. The responses of all the individual participants from these wards were similar and confirmed that land is allocated to individuals or households according to their needs. The following are some of the common responses from the participants (Participants A, B, F and G):

> Participant A: "People have access to land here, because it is administered by Amakhosi (Chiefs).
>
> Participant B: "Anyone who needs land goes to the local *induna* (Chief's local representative) and asks for a site, and the *induna* will measure the site and allocate it and issue a letter from the Chief with a number".
>
> Participant F: "People have access to land to build their homes and plant their crops, but more land is needed for grazing livestock".

Participant (G) expressed similar sentiments as those expressed by Participant (E). The responses from the participants show that access to land is not viewed as a major problem in areas under traditional authority. The group interviews also revealed that access to land is not viewed as a problem for the people living on land under traditional authority. Finally, the group discussions concurred with the individual participants' assertions, on various issues such as on the need for more grazing land.

Mkhambathini Municipality's IDP (2018/2019:27) notes that, land ownership is still "skewed in favour of White commercial farmers who own 71.8% of the land". This is despite the DRDLR's commitment to fast-track land redistribution processes so that at least 30% of the land could be transferred to the formally disadvantaged groups in the next 15 years. The vast tracts of land in ward 1, 2, 5 and 7 belong to the Ingonyama Trust. The majority of people in Mkhambathini Local Municipality reside in these areas. In the group interviews (ward committees) an open question was posed: "Between men, women and the youths, who do you think own more land?"[45] The responses from the different groups were similar, with most group participants asserting that women own more land. The explanation provided was that there are more women who reside in the rural areas than men. This observation concurs with the national and provincial trends that a higher proportion of women is found in the rural areas than men. The reason for this disparity is that more men leave their rural homes to seek employment opportunities in the cities. The land ownership patterns suggest that the majority of women who are also single parents access land easily from traditional authorities in rural areas. It

[45] The members of the committees were asked to explain their responses in order to provide more information on the issue.

became evident during the group discussions that the majority of youths do not own land because they reside at their parents' homes. In addition, it emerged that the youths only apply for a piece of land when they get married and leave their parents' home to start their own families. However, it also emerged that the youths prefer to relocate to urban areas and live in townships than in the rural areas.

The issue of land ownership in the form of title deeds or possession of an officially registered right of ownership of the land one occupies was not raised in the group interviews. The researcher got the impression that people in the rural areas understand land ownership in terms of one occupying the land that has been allocated to him/her by the concerned chief and building a home. In this regard, it is evident that people living in the rural areas under traditional authority do not possess title deeds of the land they occupy, but this has never been seen as a problem. However, Delius and Beinart (2021:85) argue that, "All South Africans should hold their land in systems that secure ownership". The reality therefore, is that the land that the majority of people residing in Mkhambathini Local Municipality occupy belongs to the *Ingonyama Trust*. This means that the majority of rural residents of Mkhambathini Local Municipality do not have secure ownership of the land they occupy since it belongs to the King. Land tenure therefore, remains an outstanding issue still to be addressed in the post-apartheid era in South Africa. De Soto (2000) described such land as "dead capital" because it cannot be sold or mortgaged as collateral to access loans from banks. As discussed in Chapter Two (see section 2.2.3), lack of official ownership of land by the people living in the rural areas hinders rural development. This researcher contends that land reform processes that address the security of tenure must be prioritised. It must also focus on the land that falls under traditional authority areas to ensure that people living in those areas, especially women, become official owners of the land they occupy.

The current situation in which traditional leaders administer the allocation of land in their areas indicates that they wield enormous power over land seekers in their jurisdiction. This renders rural people who reside in traditional authority areas, especially women vulnerable. It was indeed noted during the group discussions that traditional leaders have the power and authority to order anyone in their jurisdiction to vacate their land. As a result, the vulnerable groups in rural areas, especially women, live under the perpetual fear of being ordered to vacate the land they occupy in the event that they defy the traditional leader concerned. This makes the issue of secure tenure of land an imperative in rural development. The issue of secure tenure of land

will benefit women the most because they are the majority in rural communities and most households are female headed. Without security of tenure, rural households that are female-headed will remain vulnerable because the patriarchy will continue to disempower women socially, economically, culturally and politically. The researcher contends that security of tenure has the potential to attract private companies to invest in rural areas and this could create job opportunities for the people living in the rural areas and also mitigate the problem of rural-urban migration.

6.6 IMPLEMENTING RURAL DEVELOPMENT POLICES IN THE MKHAMBATHINI LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

Chapter Four analyses the implementation of rural development policies in the post-apartheid era. The researcher analysed the literature on the implementation of rural development policies in the post-apartheid era to identify the challenges that have contributed to the poor results. The surveyed literature in Chapter Four indicates that the problem of rural poverty and underdevelopment are a result of implementation failure rather than the shortage of good policies. Although some factors have been linked to implementation failure, this researcher contended that, there has not been sufficient evaluation and analysis done to explain the part/s of the implementation process that not worked. This section therefore, examines whether implementation evaluation has been conducted at the Mkhambathini Local Municipality or not. The conceptual framework developed in Chapter Two (see section 2.3.3) is used to analyse different aspects of implementation that need to be considered as a prerequisite of effective public policy implementation.

6.6.1 Implementation Analysis and Evaluation at the Mkhambathini Local Municipality

This case study research attempted to establish whether policy monitoring and evaluation are conducted at the Mkhambathini Local Municipality level or not. The individual participants (ward councillors) are part of the policy-makers and interact directly with people at the grass-root level. They are also part of the key stakeholders in the implementation of rural development policies. During individual interviews, a question was asked: “From your experience, is the implementation of rural development programmes being monitored and evaluated?” All the participants (ward councillors) responded with a “Yes”, but when they were asked to explain their responses, it became evident that their responses were subjective as they reflected their own perceived knowledge and understanding of what monitoring and evaluation entail. For example, some of the participants explained that monitoring and evaluation are done

by portfolio committees, the oversight committee and full council. The following are some of the verbatim responses given. Participant (B) explained:

> "Yes, it is done well. Council meets every month and reports about projects are given".

Participants E and G had similar responses that:

> Participant E: "Portfolio committees meet and where there are challenges, these are reported and attended to".
>
> Participant G: "Oversight committee meets quarterly to look at the budget and progress of projects".

Participants A, C and D gave similar responses that were captured as follows:

> Participant A: "Yes, they are done".
>
> Participant C: "The technical department does monitoring and evaluation of projects".
>
> Participant D: "There are also inspectors, steering committees and ward councillors who monitor the implementation of projects".

The researcher established that steering committees are established whenever a ward is allocated a capital project. This means that steering committees are supposed to monitor and evaluate projects at the ward level. Oversight committees are established at the council level and report to Council. The lack of uniformity or common thread in the responses of the participants indicates that there is no common understanding of what monitoring and evaluation entail. Both monitoring and evaluation are scientific processes, which must be conducted in a systematic manner in order to produce valid and reliable conclusions. But the responses of the participants indicate that there is no specific department or unit within the municipality whose primary task is monitoring and evaluation of rural development programmes. The involvement of multiple stakeholders in performing these two important tasks may breed confusion and result in no monitoring and evaluation being conducted.

Furthermore, the variations in the responses of the participants indicate that monitoring and evaluation is being conducted in a haphazard fashion, which may contribute to implementation failure. But as already stated, the two activities must be conducted in a systematic and objective way to measure the performance of rural development programmes. This in turn suggests that they have to be conducted by a competent person who possesses the skills to gather and analyse data, and draw conclusions regarding the performance or non-performance of rural

development programmes. Monitoring and evaluation should provide information about the relevance, effectiveness and sustainability of the programme. As a result, the responses indicate that the participants have a limited knowledge and understanding of the scope of monitoring and evaluation, and this can have a negative impact on the implementation of rural development programmes.

6.6.2 The imperative of Managing Public Policy Implementation

The need to manage the implementation of public policy is discussed in Chapter Two (see section 2.3.4) of this current study. The chapter notes that good public policies fail to produce desirable outcomes because of poor management of the implementation process. Brinkerhoff and Crosby (2002) point out that the implementation of public policy which involves multiple stakeholders is highly problematic and can only produce good results when it is managed properly. The imperative of managing the implementation of public policies is also emphasised by Fox and Bayat (2006). However, managing the implementation of public policies is not an easy task because of the factors explained in Chapter Two of this study (see section 2.3.4). The gist of Brinkerhoff and Crosby's analysis is that, it is easier to manage the implementation of projects and programmes than public policies. Despite the distinctions made between the implementation of public policies, projects and programmes, it was also explained that public policies are in reality implemented through projects and programmes (Van Baalen and De Coning, 2011). This indicates that managing the implementation of public policies at a practical level is also done through managing government development projects and programmes.

This case study attempted to ascertain how the implementation of rural development policies is being managed under the Mkhambathini Local Municipality. The individual participants (ward councillors) were asked: "Who manages the implementation of rural development programmes in Mkhambathini?" Some of the participants did not respond to the question even when the researcher explained and repeated it. The participants who responded gave varied and subjective answers. For example, participant E responded as follows:

> "I do not know. I am not sure. The Department of Social Development funds and manages the programmes".

Participant G stated that:

> "It's the war rooms. It is the technical department together with councillors and ward committees"

According to Brinkerhoff and Crosby (2002:25), the management of public policy implementation involves tasks such as policy legitimation, constituency building and monitoring progress. This shows that ward councillors and ward committees manage the implementation of rural development programmes and to do they have to convince their constituencies that their concerns are included in the IDP policy document. Ward councillors and ward committees are indeed instrumental to achieving grass-roots support for the IDP policy documents and getting their constituencies involved in matters of public interest. The competence of ward councillors and effective functioning of ward committees is crucial to the implementation of IDPs. In addition, the good working relationship between ward councillors and ward committee members seems essential for an effective management of the implementation of IDPs. Brinkerhoff and Crosby (2002) identify the lack of strong constituencies as one of the factors that could lead to implementation failure. Ward committees constitute policy constituencies at the grass-root level. Their support for IDPs and oversight roles are an essential ingredient for effective implementation and achieving the vision of sustainable rural development. It is however, disappointing that some of the participants did not know or were not sure of who manages policy implementation at their municipality and yet is supposed to be part of their tasks. In addition, the task of policy legitimation and constituency building fall in the hands of ward councillors who interact directly with communities at the grass-roots level. The reality that some of the participants thought that policy implementation is managed by different government departments responsible for the respective programmes indicates that they do not see it as part of their mandate together with the Municipal Manager, which is a threat to the success of the implementation process.

The participants' responses indicate that some of them confuse the managing policy implementation with project management. This came out when some of the participants explained earlier that capital projects such as road construction, water and sanitation, and electricity supply were being implemented and managed either from the district or provincial level. Perret (2006:6) points out that, "The Municipal Structures Amendment Act of 2000 aknowledged the weaknesses of local municipalities (B) and re-allocated functions such as infrastructure development, bulky supply and services, from municipalities to districts (Category C)". In this regard, the participants did not feel that they have control over capital projects that are designed and managed from the district and provincial levels. This notwithstanding, capital projects such as water, housing, electricity and road construction have

the support of ward committees and ward councillors because they are identified at the ward committee levels. Although the provincial government and the districts are better equipped to oversee the implementation of large rural development projects, it does not mean that structures at the local municipality level should be excluded. According to Brinkerhoff and Crosby (2002), projects are the best way to manage policy implementation because they tend to have specific budgets and time-lines. They also have clearly defined targets and objectives for each phase, with plans and actions defined for each target (see section 2.3.4). Therefore, excluding the local structures from the implementation of capital projects as appears to be the case with Mkhambathini could destroy a sense of ownership by the local community. There could be a way to get oversight committees and ward committees involved in the management of the implementation of capital projects at the local level where the projects are being implemented. This could enhance the sense of ownership and strengthen support for development projects at the local level.

Although ward councillors and ward committees can play a role in managing implementation processes, the operational aspects of implementation can remain the sole responsibility of project managers or programme heads. In this regard, the local municipality would need a project management unit or a project manager to monitor the practical implementation of its rural development programmes. This unit or manager can work in collaboration with other project managers from the provincial government or district to manage and monitor implementation on the ground. Nonetheless, the reality that none of the participants mentioned a project manager as the person who should over-see the implementation of rural development programmes suggests that the municipality has no project management unit or individual responsible for this task.

The individual participants were also asked the question: "Do you think the implementation of rural development programmes in Mkhambathini is being managed well?" They were also asked to explain their responses. The majority of the participants (ward councillors) responded with a "Yes". They also pointed out that there has been improvement in rural areas, which indicates that the implementation of programmes was being managed well. One of the verbatim responses (from Participant D) is as follows:

> "Yes, they have been managed well, although working with people can be difficulty at times. Yes, they have been managed very well".

Although not much details were provided, the participants thought that there were positive results on the ground, which demonstrates that rural development programmes are well managed by the respective departments. For example, the Department of Social Development (DSD) was singled out as the most active stakeholder in the rural space and the participants expressed satisfaction with its programmes. However, there was no indication that communities are actively involved in the management of programmes.

Some of the participants responded in the negative. They explained that most government departments from the district were no longer attending the war room.[46] These participants thought that the war room sessions created space for the public to hold public officials to account and put pressure on them to deliver services. The public could indeed raise issues of concern directly with public officials from different government departments and have their questions answered directly. One participant (Participant D) stated that:

> "No, the war rooms are no longer functioning well. Some government departments are not attending anymore. This makes it difficult sometimes to address some of the needs of the community. They are supposed to report back to the people what is happening, provide information".

These few participants seem to appreciate the role of war room sessions in bringing public officials and ordinary citizens together, and enable them to enact their democratic rights as citizens and improve the management of implementation processes. It is not clear why the officials stopped attending the war room meetings, but it is clear that their non-attendance is construed as impacting negatively on the implementation of some of the rural development programmes. Although the majority of the participants indicated that the implementation of rural development is being managed well, none of them made a linked the management of the implementation process to the various tasks outlined by Brinkerhoff and Crosby (2002). The failure to make reference to any of the tasks that need to be performed to enhance implementation reflects their narrow understanding of what constitutes the management of the implementation process. This suggests that there is a need to deepen the participants' knowledge of management implementation processes as defined by Brinkerhoff and Crosby in Chapter Two (see section 2.3.4). The participants need to understand that implementation is

[46] The war room refers to public meetings which were held in community halls. Representatives from different government departments would attend to explain their programmes and the services they provide to the public and also respond to the concerns and questions raised by the public. The war room created a forum for government departments to interact directly with their clients at the grass-root level.

about planned and coordinated activities that must be managed well in order to produce the desired outcomes.

6.6.3 Coordination of Policy Implementation in Mkhambathini

The significance of coordination in the implementation of public policies is discussed in Chapter Two (see section 2.3.5) of this study. Coordination of the activities of various stakeholders is essential to prevent a potential complicated implementation that may result in the fragmentation and competition between stakeholders. The chapter also notes that coordination promotes cooperation between stakeholders and addresses the problem of gaps in service delivery. In addition, coordination prevents the duplication of programmes which often result in the wastage of scares resources. Coordination as asserted by Brinkerhoff and Crosby (2002) promotes information-sharing, resource-sharing and joint action.

An analysis of the implementation of various rural development policies in the early stages of the post-apartheid era, especially the implementation of the RDP identifies lack of coordination as a major cause of implementation failure. The findings of the research conducted on the implementation of the ISRDS show that that poor coordination persisted and led to poor policy outcomes (Everrat, Dube, and Ntsime, 2004). An implementation evaluation report on the CRDP presented by Ngomane (2015) also indicates that lack of coordination remains a challenge in the implementation of rural development programmes. This indicates that the coordination of the implementation of rural development programmes has not been prioritised or taken as an integral part of the implementation of rural development policies that involves multiple stakeholders from various government departments. Hence, this section of the case study attempts to establish whether coordination has been taken as an integral part of the implementation of rural development programmes in the Mkhambathini Local Municipality.

An analysis of the participants' views on the significance of coordination is instructive. The following question was posed to each of the individual participants: "Who coordinates the implementation of rural development programmes in the Mkhambathini Local Municipality?"

The participants gave varied responses which indicates their poor understanding of the significance of effective coordination of the implementation of rural development programmes. The following verbatim responses were given by some of the participants:

> Participant D: "It is the Public Participation Officer".

Participant B: "At the municipality level it is done by portfolio committees".

Participant F: "It is the steering committees for each development project".

Participant A: "At the ward level, it is done by the ward councillor with the help of the ward committee".

Other participants indicated that they were not sure who is supposed to get involved in the coordination. The responses given by the participants indicate that, Mkhambathini Local Municipality does not have a specific individual, team or unit that is tasked with the coordination of the implementation of rural development programmes. The size of the municipality and lack of institutional capacity and resources undermine the municipality's ability to appoint a specific person for the task of coordination. As a result, coordination is done in a haphazard manner. The participants were also asked to describe how the coordination of various implementation activities is being conducted. However, the question did not produce much information from the participants as the majority merely repeated the same answers that they had given for the previous question. As a result, the researcher believes that the majority of the participants do not quite understand how coordination works. Some of the participants were of the view that coordination is done when ward committee members present reports at their meetings. Others thought that coordination is done by the PPO whose scope of work is primarily focused on community mobilisation and the promotion of public participation. This reflects a poor understanding of what policy coordination entails. In addition, there was no mention of the fundamental purpose of policy coordination, which is to avoid the duplication of programmes and increase cooperation between various government departments operating in the local context. The researcher contends that an occurrence of a robust coordination of the implementation of rural development programmes would have enabled all the participants to describe in detail how coordination is being conducted. Instead, the responses indicate that the participants have a limited understanding of how coordination of public policy implementation works.

Moreover, the three activities of coordination explained in Chapter Two (see section 2.3.5) of this study were not explicit in the responses given by the participants. Brinkerhoff and Crosby (2002) explain that the coordination of public policy implementation involves three important actions, which are: information-sharing, resource-sharing and joint –action. Information-sharing occurs when a stakeholder or subunit within the same organisation informs the others involved in implementation about what would be going on. This aspect of coordination is

fulfilled at ward committee meetings and council meetings where different committees present reports about various projects being implemented and managed by the municipality. However, it is lacking when it comes to capital projects that are implemented and managed at the provincial or district levels. The researcher observed that representatives from different government departments were not in attendance at public meetings such as IDP *imbizos*. As a result, questions from the public about capital projects would not be answered adequately.[47] This creates gaps and makes cooperation between government departments difficult as information-sharing is vital for effective coordination.

Another key aspect of coordination is resource-sharing. This aspect could be beneficial to poorly resourced rural municipalities such as Mkhambathini Local Municipality. Resource-sharing can benefit the municipality when different better resourced government departments allocate some of their resources to the poorly resourced municipalities so that these municipalities can implement some of their development programmes. Resource-sharingcan also create inter-ward competition for the scarce resources, but this does not seem to be the case in Mkhambathini Local Municipality. The information provided by the participants does not indicate that there is any planned and conscious coordination that involves sharing of resources between various government departments and the Mkhambathini Local Municipality. This creates the risk of the duplication of programmes which could be minimised by effective coordination.

Coordination also involves joint-action (see section 2.3.5), a situation in which two or more implementing organisations or government departments decide to work together in the delivery of services. Joint-action could take place when government departments at the district level partner-up with their counter-parts at the local municipality to plan and deliver services together. Again, the aspect of joint-action was not mentioned or alluded to by any of the individual participants. This indicates that the coordination of the implementation of rural development programmes still remains a challenge for rural local municipalities and in this case, for the Mkhambathini Local Municipality. The three aspects of coordination (information-sharing, resource-sharing and joint-action) are crucial for situations where

[47]At one of the IDP Review and Draft Budget Imbizos held at kwa Dwengu Hall, Ward 6(10 April 2019), the public asked questions about water, electricity, houses and roads. These questions could not be answered adequately by municipal officials because the projects fall under the Umgundundlovu District, and there was no representative from the respective departments from the District to share information with the public regarding the projects.

resources are limited as evident in rural municipalities like Mkhambathini. It was also pointed out (Peters, 2005) that cross-sectoral coordination is essential in situations where various government departments are involved in policy implementation. This prevents policy contradiction and redundancy, and maximises the use of budgeted resources. In this regard, the researcher argues that an effective coordination of the implementation of rural development programmes can strengthen poorly resourced and weak local municipalities in the rural areas. Effective coordination can also help build consensus among implementing departments and address issues of threats to departmental autonomy.

Although individual participants were not asked about the role of the DRDLR in the coordination of the implementation of rural development programmes, the researcher observed that none of the participants mentioned or linked the DRDLR to the role of coordination. The DRDLR is responsible for developing rural development policies at the national government level and also tasked to coordinate rural development programmes between the three spheres of government. Therefore, it is worrying that key stakeholders such as the individual participants who are both policy-makers and implementers at the local government level could not identify the DRDLR as being responsible for coordinating rural development programmes. This suggests that the DRDLR is not visible or is aloof at the local government level, specifically, in rural areas. The researcher asserts that a structure that coordinates the implementation of rural development programmes should be as close as possible to the grass-roots where actual implementation occurs, and must be accessible to the multiple stakeholders involved in the implementation process. It should also be conspicuous by its activities and be well known by policy implementers on the ground.

6.6.4 Approaches to the Implementation of Rural Development Policies in Mkhambathini

Chapter Two (see section 2.3.6) of the study outlined the historical background of implementation studies. The literature survey revealed that implementation studies have been dominated by the top-down and bottom up approaches. Although researchers such as Sabatier and Mazmanian (1981) and Matland (1995) have attempted to synthesise both the approaches in order to construct a third way, evidence on the ground indicates that the top-down and bottom-up approaches remain prominent. The literature on implementation studies indicates that policy outcomes are largely influenced by the approach that is adopted. It is argued in the chapter that the top-down approaches are prescriptive and tend to disregard most of the factors in the policy environment. They for example disregard the multiple stakeholders who are

involved in policy implementation at the grass-roots level. On the contrary, the bottom-up approaches recognise and value the contribution of local stakeholders and aim to promote the participation of the poor in their own development. This indicates that, bottom-up approaches are context based and appreciate the value of local contribution towards policy implementation. This section therefore, attempts to establish the approach that local government has adopted to implement rural development policies in the post-apartheid era in South Africa. Specifically, the section examines the approaches adopted by the Mkhambathini Local Municipality in order to implement its rural development programmes. The aim of this study is to show that sustainable rural development cannot be achieved without the meaningful participation of the people living in the rural areas.

An analysis of the rural development policies adopted by government in the post-apartheid era indicates that they all purport to be bottom-up. As a result, the local government is obliged in accordance with the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act No. 108 (151) (1)) to be the main implementer of rural development policies because it is the sphere of government that is closest to the people. Therefore, the question posed to the participants during the individual interviews was: "Do you think the implementation of rural development programmes in Mkhambathini is being approached from the top-down, bottom-up or combined?"[48] The results noted here are both interesting and also disconcerting. The majority of responses (Participants A, B, D, E, F, and G) indicated that the participants strongly believe that the implementation of rural development programmes is approached from the bottom-up. The participants cited different forums such as *imbizos*, ward committee meetings, war room and other public meetings to justify their responses. Thus, the meetings are viewed as a proof of the municipality's bottom-up approach to the implementation of rural development programmes. One participant (Participant B) gave the following verbatim response:

> "It is bottom-up because in the IDP imbizo people identify their needs".

Participant (D) also stated that:

> "It is bottom- up because the council organises many public meetings to involve local people".

The participants explained that the development programmes contained in the IDP policy document are suggested by the people at the IDP *imbizos* and other public meetings. This

[48] The participants were asked to explain their answers, in other words, they were being asked to provide more details which could reveal if they understood the difference between the two approaches.

resonates with the argument that bottom-up approaches are context based and allow the concerns and input of local people to be considered. Another participant (Participant E) explained:

> "It is bottom-up. People support projects which they identify with, those that come from them. The approach is bottom-up, that is how we work as a municipality, people own the projects and its working well because the projects come from them. One has to understand the community and work with it".

Participant (G) also reiterated that the municipality is using a bottom-up approach. To this end end, Participant (G) stated that:

> "The municipality is using a bottom-up approach because we have ward committees elected by the people and we have IDP Forums and imbizo to engagewith the people. But council makes the final decisions".

Although the majority of the participants were in agreement that the municipality is using bottom-up approaches, one participant (Participant C) was of the view that it is a combination of top-down and bottom-up approaches. The participant explained that, "on the surface it appears that the bottom-up approaches are dominant, but in reality, rural development is still approached from top-down". Furthermore, the participant explained that, although the public gives input at the IDP imbizos, the prioritisation of programmes is done by Councillors and Council Officials in meetings where the public is excluded. Some of the participants also remarked that local people are not given preference for employment when capital projects are implemented by provincial departments and the District. The later contrary view and remarks indicate that efforts to promote bottom-up approaches in the Mkhambathini Local Municipality are undermined by the top-down approaches that are still dominant.

Although the top-down approaches are still dominant, the responses of the majority of the participants suggest that development projects which are suggested by people have more support from local communities because people at grass-roots level identify with them. This requires that policy-makers and implementers work closely with local communities to understand their needs and motivate them to cooperate and develop a sense of ownership of development projects being implemented in their area. The participants live and work in their wards, and are well positioned to mobilise people in their wards to achieve the targeted development objectives. In this regard, Chambers' (1983) argument that rural development fails because the people who define rural poverty and implement rural development programmes do not live in rural communities is still valid. He describes such groups, which

include development practitioners and researchers as development tourists. Therefore, the concerns raised by some of the participants about projects that are implemented by government departments from the provincial and district levels while excluding local people resonate with Chamber's description of development tourists.

The individual participants were also asked whether the approach adopted for the implementation of rural development programmes was aligned with their political party approach.[49] The question aimed at establishing whether the participants make a distinction between approaches adopted in government policies on rural development and those of their respective political parties. The results indicated that the majority of participants do not make a distinction between government policy and the policies of their political party. The researcher established during individual interviews that all the participants (ward councillors) are ANC members. The participants explained that, although they were voted into Mkhambathini Local Municipality by the electorate, they believe that they had been deployed by their party. One participant (Participant D) stated that:

> "It is aligned to the party. The ANC has taught us that people should state what they want, and not to be dictated to. Prioritise the needs of the people and present them to council".

Although the participants thought that the approach is aligned to their political party's approach, it does not contradict the Local Government Municipal Systems Act (Act No. 32 of 2000) which encourages local government to involve local people in decision-making processes. The concern is that the participants believe that they were deployed by their political party to work in local communities. This means that the participants are likely to prioritise the interests of their political party over those of the people on the ground because their allegiance is to their political party and not to the electorate. This attitude to policy implementation can easily lead to the exclusion and non-consideration of the concerns of members of other political parties. It also indicates a poor understanding and knowledge of the distinction between government policy and political party's policy. The researcher established that a few participants (ward councillors), especially those with higher level of education, made a distinction between government policy and political party policy.[50] These participants

[49] Participants were asked: "Is the approach used aligned to your political party's approach? Please explain your answer.

[50] The levels of education of respondents who made a distinction between government policies and their party policies ranged from a BA Degree to a post-graduate qualification, while those who believed they were deployed by their party had obtained a primary to secondary education levels.

displayed a better understanding of policy issues and were more responsive during the interviews. Thus, there is a correlation between the level of formal education and knowledge of policies and their implementation. This also indicates that lack of tertiary education can be a serious problem when it comes to understanding policy issues and their implementation.

6.7 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN THE MKHAMBATHINI LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

Public participation is intrinsically linked to the bottom-up approaches to policy-making and implementation processes. This researcher contends that public participation has the capacity to foster collaboration between the top-down and bottom-up approaches and so both approaches are not entirely opposed to each other. A theoretical understanding of the notion of public participation in the context of rural development is presented in Chapter Two (see section 2.4) of this study. It is argued that public participation should aim at empowering citizens at the local level to make meaningful contribution to decision-making processes and their implementation. Public participation creates opportunities for cooperation between public officials, the poor people living in the rural areas and other stakeholders. As explained by Chambers (1994), public participation approaches such as PRA and RRA promote a holistic understanding of rural life and the conditions that affect people living in the rural areas. Chambers (1994) notes further that, public participation strategies can empower people living in the rural areas and build their self-esteem so that they make a meaningful contribution to their own development. Therefore, this section of the case study, analyses the practice of public participation in the largely rural Mkhambathini Local Municipality. Chapter Four (see section 4.5) of this study demonstrates that the issue of public participation is particularly relevant given South Africa's history of marginalisation.

6.7.1 The role of public participation in the implementation of rural development programmes in the Mkhambathini Local Municipality

According to Reddy (1996:4) and Masango (2001:156), public participation ensures that there is "constant interaction between the governors and the governed". It is described as the vehicle for entrenching democracy in society (see section 2.4.1). This indicates that public participation is not limited to voting in an election but is a process that aims at empowering the poor to play a meaningful role in development interventions. In order to establish whether the individual participants consider public participation in the implementation of rural development

programmes to be important or not, the following question was asked: "Do you think the implementation of rural development programmes can be successful without the participation of the rural people?" The majority of the participants (ward councillors) indicated that the implementation of rural development programmes could not be achieved without the participation of the people living in the rural areas. The participants expressed a variety of views in their explanations. Some explained that rural people preferred to support programmes that would have been first discussed at community meetings than those which are imposed. The participants understood that programmes that are imposed from above are usually resisted by local communities and have very limited chances of success. The following is an example of the verbatim responses made by some of the participants:

Participant D:

> "No, they will not own it. If people are not involved in identifying their needs, they will not own the project or support".

Participant G:

> "No, if people do not support development programmes, they will not succeed. We need to do what people need, otherwise they will not give us support".

The above and other responses reflect that the participants generally appreciate the pivotal role that public participation plays in the implementation of rural development programmes. The participants have indeed learned from experience and through their direct interactions with local communities that public participation at the grass-roots level is paramount toward achieving sustainable rural development. In addition, the participants have learnt that programmes that are imposed on local communities by public officials are likely to fail or be rejected by people at the grass-roots level.

The participants were also asked whether the implementation of rural development programmes excludes any of the local stakeholders. The majority of the participants mentioned that public participation processes were designed to include everyone. However, in reality, there are people who choose not to participation for various reasons. One participant (Participant B) pointed out that:

> "No one is really excluded, but not all people participate. There are people who are well off who usually do not participate in the public meetings or IDP imbizos, they only come when they encounter challenges of service delivery".

The above response indicates that people participate for different reasons with some participating in order to secure their interests such as ensuring that certain services are improved while others as way to ensure that their concerns are considered and addressed. Although it is evident that public participation is favoured by the individual research participants, it is also apparent that it should not be taken for granted that everyone wants to participate. Therefore, people at the grass-root level are motivated by different reasons and personal interests to participate.

Some of the participants also explained that certain groups of people are sometimes excluded. They mentioned specifically people with disabilities as the group that is sometimes not included in the implementation of rural development programmes. The participants explained that, at a theoretical level, people with disabilities are included, but in reality they are often excluded. One participant (Participant B) stated that:

> "Yes, sometimes people with disabilities are excluded. There is a need to include people with disability not just on paper but in reality".

The participants seem to understand that the exclusion of people with disabilities from public participation processes can result in their interests being overlooked or not considered. One of the benefits of public participation is that it provides the opportunity to address the concerns of all interested and affected parties. It also allows citizens at the local level to contribute to the designing and shaping of local public service. People with disabilities are an important constituency in the local context and have a right to participate actively in decision-making processes which affect their lives. The concern raised by some of the participants regarding the exclusion of people with disabilities indicates that more still needs to be done to include them in public policy implementation processes.

Some of the participants also mentioned that poor communication leads to the exclusion of some key stakeholders such as traditional leaders from participation. The participants explained that traditional leaders need to be informed in advance before public meetings such as IDP *Imbizos* or War room sessions take place. Informing traditional leaders about public participation meetings is viewed as a sign of respect and a strategy that motivates them to support the implementation of rural development programmes in their areas. Through interaction with the individual participants, the researcher established that traditional leaders in the areas falling under the Ingonyama Trust have enormous power and that it is extremely difficult to implement any development programme without their support. Therefore, this

indicates that a good rapport between ward councillors and traditional leaders is an important factor in the implementation of rural development programmes.

6.7.2 Different Approaches to Public Participation

There are two basic approaches to public participation which are discussed in Chapter Two of this study (see section 2.4.2). The two approaches reveal how public participation is practised in different contexts and especially at the local level. The first approach consists of government efforts to involve citizens in the implementation of development programmes and service delivery processes. It seeks to reduce the gap between government and rural communities in decision-making and implementation processes. This approach is dominated by various government departments operating in the local context. These departments control the implementation of programmes that they sometimes impose on local communities. In this first approach, people living in the rural areas have limited to no influence over decisions that affect them. This approach is also referred to as government-based citizen engagement (Glaser, Yeager and Parker, 2006).

The second approach to public participation is driven by various community-based stakeholders. The stakeholders in this approach are autonomous and independent of government. The potential of the stakeholders to mobilise community resources and lead development initiatives is discussed above (see section 2.4.2). The stakeholders, which consist of community-based organisations and private businesses, provide a unique resource base that can supplement the local government's efforts to deliver service to the poor in rural areas. The absence of autonomous and independent stakeholders in the rural areas can be a huge disadvantage for the development of rural communities.

The study sought to establish whether public participation in the Mkhambathini Local Municipality is driven by government liked organisations or community-based together with private businesses. The participants were asked the question: "Are there any local organisations in your ward?" and they all answered in the affirmative. According to Anderson (2011), community-based organisations have a better understanding of the local context and the concerns of the people on the ground due to their proximity. The individual participants were therefore, asked to list all the organisations that are active in their wards. The table below presents all the organisations that were identified by the participants.

Table 9: List of Local Organisations in the Mkhambathini Local Municipality

Government Departments	Non-Governmental Organisations
Department of Social Department	Lilly of Value Children's Home
Department of Education	Tholulwazi(Community-Based Organisation)
SASSA	Hosiya (Community-Based Organisation)
Department of Health	School Governing Bodies
Cogta	
Department of Human Settlement	
Department of Economic Development	
Department of Sport and Culture	
Department of Home Affairs	
Department of Agriculture	
Department of Transport	
South African Police Services	
Department of Water and Sanitation	

The majority of the organisations identified by the participants are linked to various government departments. This indicates that the terrain of rural development in the Mkhambathini Local Municipality is dominated by various government departments. This raises a question about whether the people living in the rural areas have an influence over development projects that are adopted and implemented in the municipality. It also raises a concern about the nature of public participation being practiced in the local municipality and who actually prioritises development projects and agenda. The first approach is prescriptive and does not give much space for robust citizen participation. The key stakeholders with power to make final decisions are the public officials and government workers. This means that the large numbers of people who attend IDP *imbizos* and other public meetings do so with limited power to influence key decisions. Thus, the situation in the Mkhambathini Local Municipality and other rural municipalities does not favour meaningful citizen participation in the implementation of rural development programmes.

This case study also sought to establish whether local communities participate sufficiently in the local municipality. The following question was posed to the individual participants: "Do you think that there is sufficient participation of local communities in the implementation of rural development policies?" The responses were quite varied and reflected the different experiences encountered by the respective wards. A few participants were quite confident that

there is sufficient public participation in their wards. One of the participants (Participant D) for example, stated that:

> "Yes, there is sufficient participation because people in my ward have never protested, and this means that they are happy with service delivery".

Nonetheless, the reality is that the participant believes there is sufficient participation because people have never protested for service delivery, but this cannot be taken as an expression of sufficient participation. Service delivery protests are part of public participation and people's non-involvement in protests might as well be evidence of insufficient participation. Some of the participants (Participant C) had different experiences, and stated that:

> "There is minimal participation especially for the wards that include the farms. Many people are illiterate and work in the farms. They have no time to participate. They only have Sunday to rest and do their laundry or do their shopping in town".

Public participation requires people to sacrifice their time to attend meetings and other activities of public interest. It is apparent, that people who work on the farms would not put their jobs at risk by attending public meetings. If they spend most of their time at work, it means that they use their resting time for domestic chores and shopping and attending to other personal matters. The fact that many of them are illiterate could also mean that they do not understand the benefits of public participation. The participants also mentioned that the lack of infrastructure such as community halls on the farms discourage public participation as this means that people have to walk long distances to the venue. This means that the farm-based participants need to be provided with transport as an incentive, otherwise they are discouraged by their living environment.

Some of the participants explained that public participation is minimal at the local level because the local municipality does not prioritise it. One participant (Participant F) explained that:

> "Public participation at ward level is important because it helps us to give feedback to the community and to listen to their needs. But it is not given priority by the municipality. For example there is no budget for it and no clear unit to promote in the local communities".

The information provided by the participants suggests that there is generally minimal public participation in the Mkhambathini Local Municipality. This is due to various challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, illiteracy and the remote location of communities that are on the farms. Moreover, public participation has not been prioritised by the municipality as there are

allocated a budget nor dedicated units established within the municipality to promote it. The issue of minimal public participation is exacerbated by the shortage of independent stakeholders in the form of strong civil society organisations operating in rural areas such as Mkhambathini Local Municipality. Therefore, the absence of strong independent stakeholders such as community development organisations and advocacy groups operating in the rural landscape increases rural poverty and underdevelopment.

6.7.3 Mechanisms for Public Participation in the Mkhambathini Local Municipality

This section examines mechanisms of public participation that are used in the Mkhambathini Local Municipality in relation to those discussed in Chapter Four (see section 4.7.1 to 4.7.3) of this current study. The Republic of South Africa has established a solid legal framework for promoting public participation at all three spheres of government. This research focuses on the practice of public participation at local government level. Chapter 7 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act No. 108 of 1996) stipulates provisions for the practice of public participation at the local government level. The objective is to entrench democracy and create opportunities for local communities to contribute to their own development. It is the prerogative of local government to create structures that promote public participation at the grass-roots level. The case study attempted to establish the mechanisms that local government in the Mkhambathini Local Municipality uses to promote public participation in rural settings. As a result, the question to the individual participants was: "What structures exist to promote public participation in Mkhambathini?" The researcher observed that a majority of the participants did not answer the question or gave information that was irrelevant to the question.[51] A few participants correctly identified ward committees as the key structures that promote public participation at the local level. However, the majority of the participants did not mention ward committees. It could be that the question was not clear to them or that they did not view ward committees as important structures for promoting public participation at the local level. Therefore the researcher finds it concerning that the majority of the participants did not mention ward committees because they are the principal structure for promoting public participation at the local level.

[51] In answer to the question, "What structures exist to promote public participation in Mkhambathini?", some of the respondents mentioned things like local newspapers, radio, posters and public announcements. While these can be used for disseminating information or advertising public meetings, they are not structures for public participation. It was interesting to note that respondents who are supposed to be the key promoters of public participation at the grass-root level seemed to be oblivious of the structures that they could utilize.

The participants were asked the question: "Which of the following mechanisms of participation are mostly utilized by stakeholders?": Ward committees, IDP Forums, Council of stakeholders, *imbizo*.

The responses showed that ward committees, IDP Forums and *Imbizo* were the most utilised mechanisms of public participation. Although the council of stakeholders is mentioned in the policy documents as one of the structures, the participants explained that it does not exist in their local municipality.[52] There are other mechanisms of public participation that are practiced in the local municipality, which the participants did not mention. These include war room sessions which always follow immediately ward committee meetings. War room sessions are very important because they are supposed to bring together members of the public, stakeholders from independent organisations and government departments in the local context.

The three mechanisms of public participation (i.e ward committees, IDP Forums and *Imbizo*) seem to be the most preferred by the participants. The researcher observed that the local municipality uses IDP Forums and *Imbizo* mainly for public consultation and information sharing. The researcher also observed that the municipality provides free transport and food at these public gatherings. It is doubtful that without free transport and food the people living in the rural areas would be motivated to attend these meetings in large numbers. The researcher established through informal interactions with some ward committee members that IDP Forums and *Imbizo* are sometimes monopolised by the dominant political party and used to lure voters. Thus, rural development programmes and service delivery success stories are used to enhance the image of a political party and to attract more support from the public to increase party membership. This indicates that mechanisms for promoting public participation at the local level can also be manipulated by the dominant political parties to accomplish their political interests.

The researcher observed that leaders of the opposition political parties, including Proportional Representative (PR) Councillors hardly attend IDP *imbizo* or other public meetings. The researcher also established through informal interactions with one key informant, that some

[52] According to CRDP (2009), the council of stakeholders (COS) is one of the key structures in the local context. It consists of various stakeholders which include: community-based organisations, school governing bodies, government departments, businesses, cooperatives, community development workers, traditional leaders and ward committees. One of the key functions of the COS is to plan, implement and monitor development projects at the local level. Such a structure could play a critical role in the implementation of rural development programmes.

public meetings were designed or organised in a manner that discouraged members of the opposition political parties from attending. For example, the researcher observed that officials from opposition political parties are not given recognition or space in the agenda of public meetings. On the contrary, members of the dominant party are duly recognised and allocated time to address the meetings. As a result, officials from the opposition parties opt to stay away from the public meetings that seem to promote the agenda of the dominant political party. This leaves the dominant political party unguarded and able to utilise the political space to its advantage. This also indicates that the political space in rural areas can easily be monopolised by the dominant party for political gains in the absence of strong opposition parties and independent stakeholders from the civil society organisations. The danger with such a situation, as the researcher established is that, the majority of people living in the rural areas do not distinguish between government programmes and political party programmes. This leads to people living in the rural areas giving the credit, in situations where service delivery is successful to the dominant political party feeling indebted to that party.

6.7.4 Challenges of Public Participation in the Mkhambathini Local Municipality

This section examines the challenges of public participation from the perspective of individual participants (ward councillors) and ward committees. The reason for seeking this information is that both ward councillors and ward committees play a critical role in promoting public participation at the local level. They also play an important role in the implementation of rural development programmes. More importantly, ward councillors and ward committees interact directly with local communities and have a broader understanding of the local context and concerns of the people living in the rural areas. The following question was posed to the individual participants: "Are there any challenges of public participation that you have encountered in Mkhambathini?"

Most of the challenges enumerated by individual participants had already been identified earlier in the interviews. These include lack of resources to promote public participation programmes, lack of interest from council officials to promote public participation, and illiteracy among the people who reside on the farms. It was mentioned that farm dwellers have to walk long distances to the venue of the meeting, such that they do not attend if transport is not provided. One participant (Participant C) stated:

> "Sometimes people are reluctant to participate in activities or meetings where they will not be compensated for their time".

The researcher observed that people living in the rural areas lack an understanding of the benefits of public participation and are not motivated enough to participate. They need to understand that it is their right and duty to participate in the decision-making processes and their implementation. In addition, the challenges enumerated by the individual participants also reveal that the poor people living in the rural areas do have other commitments and that it is a myth that they always have excess of free time (Masango 2009:173; Midgley et al. 1986:36).

Illiteracy was mentioned as one of the factors that undermine the functioning of some of the ward committees. In this regard, one of the individual participants (Participant F) stated that:

> "There is need to train ward committees on how the municipality works. They need to understand that as councillors we have no power or control over capital projects. These fall under the provincial departments or the district. They also need to be trained on report writing and presentation".

The concern raised by the participant indicates that there is a challenge in relation to the competence of ward committees. However, the challenge of competence could be addressed by equipping ward committee members with the relevant skills in report writing and presentation, and empowering them through workshops on how the local municipality functions. The other challenge which was identified by the individual participants is that the majority of ward committee members are unemployed and those who get employed prioritise their jobs over ward committee meetings. As a result, some wards do not function as expected, and this affects service delivery. This indicates that ward committee members need to be remunerated for the work that they do in their communities.

The following question was discussed during the group interviews: "What are the challenges of public participation that you experience as a ward committee?" Ward committees are an important structure of public participation at the local level and it is imperative that they function effectively. Identifying the challenges experienced by ward committees and addressing them can improve their efficiency. The discussions with different ward committees (at each of the seven wards) revealed that their challenges are of a different nature from those experienced by ward councillors. The majority of ward committee members in all the seven wards (Participants A2, B2, D2, F2, and G2) were of the view that they are playing an important role to serve their local communities. However, the majority of them pointed out that they

found it difficult to work with some people in their communities. The common concern expressed by all the seven wards was the challenge of working with people and meeting all their needs. In this regard, it was explained that some people expect their concerns to be addressed as soon as they are raised. For example in Participant A2, one member mentioned that:

> "It is not easy to work for the community. People think that once they tell us their problems the solution will follow immediately. They do not realise that we have to bring the issues to the ward committee for discussion and it is the ward counciloor who reports to council, not us".

Some of the members of ward committees mentioned that they are sometimes blamed by their communities for poor service delivery. As a result, some ward committee members found their work frustrating and are sometimes discouraging.

The majority of the ward committees (Participants B2, D2, E2, F2, andG2) acknowledged that there was a good working relationship between them and their ward councillors. However, members in one of the wards (Participant A2) expressed dissatisfaction. They blamed their ward councillor whom they accused of not taking the concerns of the community to the council. One ward committee member explained that:

> "Our ward councillor is hardly here. He is always away doing his party's business. This creates a gap in the ward because our concerns are not reported to the Council, and this means that our ward lags behind in terms of development and service delivery".

The ward committee members explained that, in the eyes of the people, it seemed like the ward committee members were not doing their work and yet the problem lay with the ward councillor. Furthermore, the ward committee members revealed that they did not have a good working relationship with their ward councillor whom they also accused of being unavailable most of the time. The researcher established that the ward committee (Participant A2) was dysfunctional due to the bad working relationship between the ward councillor and ward committee members and this affected service delivery and the implementation of rural development programmes in the ward in a negative way. This also indicates that the effective implementation of rural development programmes at the local government level largely depends on the relationship between ward councillors and their ward committees. The nature of the relationship can either strengthen or weaken the efficacy of the ward committee.

Another challenge mentioned by all the ward committees (Participants A2, B2, C2, D2, E2, F2, and G2) relate to the poor compensation for the work that ward committee members do. Ward committee members live in the communities they represent and interact directly with communities at the grass-roots level. Each of the ward committee members is allocated a portfolio which they use to identify and receive concerns from the public that they will present to the ward committee or war room. One ward committee member from Participant (F2) stated that, "Ward committee members are the ears and eyes of the ward councillor in the community". This statement highlights the important work that ward committee members do at the local government level. Their work requires commitment and a lot of time to consult with people in the community. Although ward committee members receive a monthly stipend of R1000-00, most of the members feel this is too little compared to the energy and time they invest in doing their work. The members explained that the stipend is enough for airtime and transport only and yet it seems to be the only source of income for those who are unemployed. The researcher contends that the monthly stipend given to ward committee members is not reflective of the work that they do in the local communities. It is too little to motivate the members to remain committed and give of their best. The issue of poor compensation can also weaken ward committees and cause instability when members vacate their position as soon as they find employment opportunities elsewhere. The researcher contends that ward committees could be strengthened and motivated by awarding stipends that are equivalent to what has been defined as the living wage.

Finally, the researcher observed that in some instances, there is a cultural factor and fear affect public participation in rural areas. The cultural factor seems to be a challenge in those wards in which councillors are elderly men and have been ward councillors for a long time. There are two wards out of the seven wards in which two elderly men have served as ward councillors for three terms and are currently serving their fourth terms. The researcher observed that the majority of ward committee members in each of the seven wards are women and the youths. The cultural factor is a challenge for women and the young generation in a patriarchal society that emphasises respect for the elderly and, especially men. The cultural factor and fear make it difficult for women and the young generation to contest in the local government elections. The participants also narrated different cases in which local councillors had been assassinated in some parts of the Province of KwaZulu-Natal. As a result, women in rural areas consider politics to be too risky for them, hence their minimal representation in the local municipality

as noted in the reality that there is only one out of the seven ward councillors in the Mkhambathini Local Municipality.

6.7.5 The Role of Power in the Implementation of Rural Development Programmes

Power plays an important role in the practice of public participation. One cannot influence decision making processes or policy direction without power or authority. This section therefore, examines whether people living in the rural areas have sufficient power to influence development activities or not. A few specific questions were constructed for individual interviews and one specific question was constructed for the ward committees. The participants in the individual interviews were asked: "Do you think that people living in the rural areas of Mkhambathini have the power to influence development activities that affect them?" The majority of the participants (Participants B, D, E, F and G) answered the question in the affirmative. The participants based their responses in relation to various structures of public participation such as the electoral process, Ward Committees, public meetings, war room sessions and IDP *imbizo* which they regard as platforms that enable rural people to exercise their power. In theory it is true that people at the local level can participate through the mentioned platforms. They are supposed to utilise these different platforms to present their input and concerns, and thereby influence decisions and development initiatives in their communities. Based on the information already provided and regarding the challenges of public participation and the nature of participation in Mkhambathini, it is doubtful that people in the rural areas have sufficient power to influence key decisions and their implementation.

The lack of power to influence key decisions is captured in the following verbatim responses. Participant C stated that:

> "No, they hardly have power because they expect the councillor to do things for them. They say that is why we put you there"

Participant A stated that:

> "Yes they do, but it is centralised on the ward councillor. For example, it is the ward councillor who gives information to the public, it is the council which approves policies and projects, NOT the public. The ward councillor has more power than the people and it all depends on how the ward councillor presents issues to the full council".

The above responses show that people in the rural areas have minimal to no power on key decisions that affect their lives and their implementation. It is thus, clear that power is concentrated in the hands of ward councillors and council officials.

The participants mentioned various platforms of public participation. These are mostly used for information-sharing and public consultation purposes. Although information-sharing and public consultations are important, they in essence do not constitute real participation. Meaningful participation entails having the power to influence decisions and share control over development initiatives and resources. Therefore, if the key decisions and the prioritisation of development projects remains the prerogative of the council and public officials alone, then the people living in the rural areas cannot be said to be participating meaningfully.

The absence of autonomous and independent stakeholders also means that power is not devolved from political structures to independent stakeholders who could be actively involved in the rural areas. The Council of Stakeholders (COS) does not even exist in the local municipality. The COS, however, exists on the CRDP policy document that prescribes its establishment at the municipality level. This indicates that rural development policies are not being implemented in a wholesome manner. The problems of rural poverty and underdevelopment will persist if important sections of the policies such as the establishment of the COS at every municipality, are being ignored by public officials and political structures at the local level.

The theme of power was also discussed at group interviews. Ward committee members were asked to express their views regarding their participation in response to the following: "As a ward committee do you think you have the power to influence development activities in your ward?" Most ward committee members in all the seven wards believe that they are playing a vital role in representing their wards and articulating the needs of the rural people. However, some ward committee members expressed frustration over the lack of action on the issues they would have raised. In this regard, one member of Participant G2 stated that:

> "To a certain degree I can say that we have power to influence development activities as a ward committee because we bring these issues to the ward committee and discuss themtogether with the ward councillor. So what the ward councillor presents to the Council is something that comes fromus. But the Council has the power to make the final decisions whether to accept or reject our proposals. It is discouraging when we bring issues and no action is taken by the Council to attend to those issues, people blame us of not doing our job".

They perceived this lack of action as leading to the creation of an impression that they are not doing their jobs and resulting in their wards losing confidence in them. To this end, most of the ward committee members admitted that they believe that they have minimal power to influence

development activities in their respective wards. This also indicates that ward committees discuss and present issues that affect their communities to the ward councillor but have no power to ensure that such issues are acted upon.

The only person with real power and authority at the ward level is the ward councillor who presents the community concerns to the council. Nonetheless, the observation made during the discussions is that there existed better service delivery and good communication in wards where ward committee members have a good working relationship with their ward councillors. On the contrary, wards experiencing bad working relationships and poor communication between the ward councillor and ward committee members are affected by poor service delivery and lack of response to community needs. This indicates that, a ward committee without the ward councillor has no real power to influence development activities or make any decisions. The ward councillor provides the link between the municipal council and local community, which means the absence of a ward councillor, leaves the local community in the cold. Interestingly, the Proportional Representation councillors do not play an active role at the ward level.

The researcher attended a few ward committee meetings (Participant A2 and F2) where the ward councillors were absent. The powerlessness of ward committees became conspicuous when certain issues could not be discussed in the absence of the ward councillor. As a result, some questions remained unanswered because they could only be answered by the ward councillor. This indicates that, although ward committees are an important structure in efforts to promote public participation and entrench democracy at the grass-root level, they lack real power to influence key decisions and their implementation. Their role seems to be limited to consultation and information sharing.

6.8 ANALYSING PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN THE MKHAMBATHINI LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

It has been argued that public participation has many faces and that, sometimes it is used to describe processes that in reality have little to do with the participation of the poor (Theron, 2008). This section analyses public participation as it is practiced in the Mkhambathini Local Municipality. There are two objectives for analysing public participation in the Mkhambathini Local Municipality. The first objective is to ascertain what is achieved through public participation. To this end, the work of Brinkerhoff and Crosby (see section 2.4.3) is used to

discover the milestones that are achieved through public participation. The second objective is to ascertain the nature of public participation. Power is important in the practice of public participation and it makes the process meaningful. The researcher contends that, one cannot participate meaningfully without the power to influence decisions or policy direction and implementation. In this regard, Arnstein's ladder of participation is used to determine the authenticity of public participation as practiced in the Mkhambathini Local Municipality.

6.8.1 Analysing what is achieved through public participation

Brinkerhoff and Crosby (2002) state that the practice of public participation should seek to achieve five milestones and these are: information sharing, consultation, collaboration, joint-decision making and, empowerment. In essence this means that, citizen participation that does not achieve any of the outlined milestones is not meaningful and cannot be defined as such. The case study findings reveal that ward councillors provide feedback to their wards, which indicates information-sharing and consultations as the main milestones achieved in the Mkhambathini Local Municipality. Consultation is achieved through interactions that take place between people at grass-root level and officials at war room sessions, as well as at the IDP *imbizos* and other public meetings. According to Brinkerhoff and Crosby's framework, the milestone to be achieved should to be identified and clarified prior to mobilising people to participate in the process to avoid wasting resources. The researcher observed that the milestones were identified and articulated in the agenda of ward committee meetings, war room sessions and IPD *imbizos*. Information-sharing is also achieved when feedback is given by each of the ward committee members who report from their respective portfolios. In addition, war room sessions provide an opportunity for public officials from different government departments to interact directly with citizens at the grass-root level. However, the case study established that public officials do not attend the war room sessions as expected. This is a lost opportunity as the public officials could use such sessions to disseminate information directly to citizens at the grass-root level and in turn, citizens at the grass-root level could express their concerns directly to the public officials. Therefore, social justice is undermined when people living in the rural areas are denied the opportunity to interact directly with officials from various government departments to express their concerns.

The IDP *imbizos* are utilised mostly for consultation purposes, which takes place in the form of discussions and exchange of views during the budget review meetings. Although consultation is achieved, the researcher established that key decisions are made by councillors

and other public officials. In this respect, there is no guarantee that information obtained through consultation processes is considered when final decisions are made. This indicates that people living in the rural areas of the Mkhambathini Local Municipality do not have real power to influence important decisions and their implementation. According to Brinkerhoff and Crosby (2002:66), meaningful consultation occurs in situations where strong civil society, labour and private sector organisations contribute their input and play the oversight role. As pointed out earlier, the absence of independent organisations in the Mkhambathini Local Municipality weakens participation processes. Thus, the conclusion here is that people living in the rural areas lack both the power to influence key decisions and skills to bargain and negotiate their concerns.

The third milestone to be achieved through public participation is collaboration. Brinkerhoff and Crosby (2002) note that, collaboration is achieved when public-private partnerships are formed to deliver services, monitor and evaluate public policy implementation. Collaboration applies in situations where the public sector or government alone cannot achieve policy goals without the skills and capacity of independent stakeholders from civil society and private businesses. In the context of Mkhambathini Local Municipality, collaboration could be achieved through a functional COS which by its nature is supposed to bring different stakeholders together. As a result, the terrain of rural development in the Mkhambathini Local Municipality is dominated by different government departments whose activities are poorly coordinated.

The fourth milestone of public participation according to Brinkerhoff and Crosby (2002), is joint decision-making. This milestone involves equal sharing of power over decision making between government officials and the various participating stakeholders. Brinkerhoff and Crosby (2002:68) state that, "[S]hared decision making mechanisms allow stakeholders not simply to develop policy options but to engage in the choice of options and participate in carrying them out". The researcher did not find any evidence or example of joint decision making in the Mkhambathini Local Municipality. The prioritisation of development programmes and projects, as well as the decision making remain the preserve of the council officials. This means that ward committees have limited powers and their role is limited to that of advising ward councillors.

Finally, the highest milestone to be achieved through public participation as noted by Brinkerhoff and Crosby, is empowerment. Empowerment entails that power is shared equitably between the participants. However, it is predicated on the assumption that the disadvantaged groups, and in this case, the poor people of Mkhambathini, have attained a higher level of political awareness. When empowerment is achieved, public officials can delegate their power to the independent participating groups. According to Brinkerhoff and Crosby (2002:69), empowerment allows independent stakeholders "to exert more clout in their interactions with public officials to ensure that policies are adhered to and services delivered". Empowerment also equips independent stakeholders and citizens to hold public officials accountable for their decisions and consequences. In addition, empowerment enables citizens to take control of their affairs and limits the role of public officials to monitoring and support when it is necessary.

The findings of this case study reveal that empowerment is far from being achieved in the Mkhambathini Local Municipality. The absence of strong independent stakeholders is a huge disadvantage for the municipality. The situation is compounded by the fact that the majority of people living in the rural areas are not politically developed and that some still suffer from bad memories of political violence that occurred in the past. This lack of political development and fear renders people living in the rural areas vulnerable to manipulation by politicians and public officials. As a result, incompetent leaders occupy positions of power and influence for long periods of time to the detriment of rural development and service delivery. The researcher established during group interviews that public officials such as ward councillors are voted into office based on their political affiliation rather than merit. This view was expressed by one ward committee member (in Participant A2), who stated that:

> "The ward councillor does not care about people. He has even relocated to town where he is more comfortable. We have complaied about this but his political party keeps him and support himbecause he is working more for the party than people".

In this regard, loyalty to one's political party takes prominence over one's commitment to his/her respective constituency. However, these sentiments were only expressed in one ward where the relationship between the ward councillor and ward committee was evidently dysfunctional. The sentiments were not challenged by the other members of the group, an indication that they shared the same experience. Whereas it is the prerogative of local government to drive the agenda of rural development, it is a disadvantage to give public officials and politicians absolute power to dominate the rural terrain. The current situation

indicates that there is a vacuum in the Mkhambathini Local Municipality that is created by the absence of strong independent stakeholders.

6.8.2 Analysing the nature of public participation in the Mkhambathini Local Municipality

Arnstein's ladder of participation is a relevant tool to analyse the nature of public participation and determine who has the power in the decision making processes. The ladder of participation is relevant to this study which aims to show that, sustainable rural development cannot be achieved without the meaningful participation of the people living in the rural areas. Arnstein's theory must be understood along the degree of power that citizens have to influence key decisions and their implementation. Through public participation, people living in the rural areas exercise their power to determine their own destiny. This case study has revealed four mechanisms through which people living in the rural areas of the Mkhambathini Local Municipal participate.[53] The four mechanisms are used mostly for information sharing and consultations.

Arnstein's ladder of participation has eight rungs which are grouped into three categories. The first two rungs at the bottom of the ladder namely, manipulation and therapy, describe the category of "non-participation". This category is not aimed at enabling citizens to participate with its objective being to create the impression that people at the grass-roots level are participating when in reality they are not since power remains firmly concentrated in the hands of public officials. The participating citizens have no power to influence any key decision or change their situation in the two rungs. Public participation that is being practiced in the Mkhambathini Local Municipality fits into the two rungs. This means that, by inviting the people living in the rural areas to the IDP *imbizo* and other public meetings, citizens are cured from the feeling of being excluded and not being listened to, and made to feel good that they are part of the decision-making processes. The reality is that, final decisions and prioritisation of programmes is done by public officials at full council. This indicates that public participation in the Mkhambathini Local Municipality is characterised by a high degree of non-participation.

The third, fourth and fifth rungs represent progress in Arnstein's ladder of participation. The three rungs namely, informing, consultation and placation make up the category of "tokenism". This is the stage in which the poor and powerless begin to receive information and to have a

[53] The four mechanisms used for public participation in Mkhambathini Local Municipality are IDP Forums, War room sessions, *imbizo*, and ward committee meetings.

voice in the process of participation. This case study revealed that information sharing and consultation are the key milestones that are being achieved. However, the case study established that information sharing is minimal especially at war room sessions because most government departments are not represented at these sessions. Furthermore, the researcher established that people living in the rural areas have very limited power to negotiate with public officials or to compel public officials from government departments to attend war room sessions. Consultation is an important step towards meaningful participation, but on its own it is quite limited and cannot be regarded as full participation since citizens still lack the power to influence key decisions.

Citizens begin to have some degree of power to influence key decisions at the rung of placation. A few members of the local community are handpicked or co-opted into committees or public boards at the rung of placation. In the context of local government, placation occurs in ward committees, which are an important structure for public participation at local government level. The needs of the community are presented and discussed at the ward committee level before the ward councillor presents them to the full council. According to Gates and Stout (1996), the degree of influence that citizens have at the rung of placation depends on the nature of technical skills they possess to present the needs of the community. It also depends on how the local community has been organised to demand its priorities. It emerged that ward committee members in all the seven wards of the Mkhambathini Local Municipality lack the necessary skills in report writing and presentation. In addition, ward committee members of some of the wards do not understand how the local municipality functions. The lack of essential skills reduces the capacity of ward committee members to influence decisions and impacts negatively on their confidence. As a result, the status quo is maintained and the ward councillors remain the power-holders at the ward level. Therefore, placation is simply a higher level of tokenism in which the power to decide is not vested in the ward committee but on the ward councillor and municipal council.

The stage in which power is redistributed in the process of participation is described by the last three rungs at the top of the ladder and these are: partnership, delegated power and citizen control. These three rungs represent the category described as “citizen power”. According to Arnstein, the rung of partnership represents a situation in which power is redistributed between citizens and power-holders through negotiation. In this case, citizens and power-holders or public officials agree to share decision making responsibilities and planning that takes place in

structures such as joint policy boards or planning committees. This prevents public officials from making unilateral decisions on matters of public interest. However, this is not the case in the case of the Mkhambathini Local Municipality where people living in the rural areas lack the necessary skills to negotiate with the power-holders.

The rung of delegated power describes situations in which citizens play a dominant decision making role and have sufficient power to ensure that public officials are accountable for the programmes and their implementation. In the case of the Mkhambathini Local Municipality, it is evident that the people living in the rural areas have not reached the stage where they can play a dominant decision making role or ensure that public officials are held accountable for their actions. In addition, the fact that the prioritisation of rural development programmes and projects is done by public officials indicates that people do not have sufficient power.

The last rung at the top of the ladder represents full participation in which citizens have control and management of their local resources. At this level of participation, the citizens at grass-root level have a degree of power that enables them to oversee development programmes and govern their institutions. This level of participation remains a dream for the Mkhambathini Local Municipality. In fact the category of citizen power as described by Arnstein remains an utopian for the people living in the rural areas. This indicates that power has not been sufficiently distributed to local communities. The absence of third sector organisations in the rural areas, makes it difficult for the people living in the rural areas to share power with public officials and influence key decisions and their implementation. Arnstein's ladder of participation helps to identify roadblocks that prevent people living in the rural areas from achieving full participation. The roadblocks include an entrenched sense of paternalism that manifests itself in the manner in which key decisions and the prioritisation of development projects is done. The concentration of poverty in rural areas, high levels of unemployment and inadequacies in skills and knowledge-base also make it difficult for the people living in the rural areas to participate meaningfully.

In terms of Arnstein's ladder of participation, public participation in the Mkhambathini Local Municipality can be rated between non-participation and tokenism. This indicates that the vision of achieving sustainable rural development remains a mammoth task for rural municipalities, such as the Mkhambathini Local Municipality which are largely rural. The concentration of power in the hands of public officials means that people living in the rural

areas, especially at the grass-root level, have no capacity to hold public officials accountable for their decisions and actions.

6.9 ACCOUNTABILITY ISSUES IN THE MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES

The prioritisation and implementation of rural development programmes requires both resources and that those entrusted with the responsibility and power to decide on policy issues and their implementation be held accountable. The Auditor-general's report released on 23 May 2018 states, accountability failure as one of the key factors that have led to the poor performance of the majority of municipalities. This indicates that there is a lack of a culture of accountability at local government level that leads to poor service delivery and undesirable policy outcomes. In the individual interviews, participants were asked if they were aware of any cases of corruption in the management or implementation of development programmes in the Mkhambathini Local Municipality. All the participants indicated that they were not aware of any cases of corruption in the municipality. On the contrary, the IDP (2018/2019:89) document indicates that the municipality had and irregular expenditure of R5.17 million and fruitless and wasteful expenditure of R4.12 million which was revealed by the Auditor General's report of 2016/2017 financial year. The researcher did not probe the participants further on the issue of corruption. Nonetheless, both accountability and transparency are essential in the delivery of services and in the agenda of rural development. If both were so entrenched in the Mkhambathini Local Municipality as the participants seem to think, rural poverty and underdevelopment would not be so pertinent. The situation of rural development in Mkhambathini could be very impressive, yet as it stands, it is far from being impressive.

The Auditor General's report (AGSA, 2011:2), covering the financial year of 2009/2010 expressed a concern about the increasing number of municipalities that did not "comply with the laws and regulations applicable to municipalities and municipal entities". As a result, many municipalities failed to produce clean audit outcomes. However, in the Auditor General's report (AGSA, 2015:1) covering the financial year of 2013/2014, the Auditor General noted that an "increase in the number of municipalities and municipal entities that received financially unqualified audit opinions with no findings". The improvement was attributed to "the political and administrative leadership" that had ensured that good governance was put in place and implemented effectively at the local sphere of government (AGSA, 2015:1). The report (2015:2) also indicates that, "the total number of municipalities and municipal entities

with clean audit outcomes increased from 30 in the 2012/2013 financial year to 58 in the 2013/2014 financial year, while there were only seven in the financial year of 2007/2008. The provinces that showed improvement in the audit outcomes are "…Gauteng with 13, KwaZulu-Natal with 20, and the Western Cape with 18" (AGSA, 2015:3). Most of the municipalities and municipal entities in the aforementioned provinces had managed to put in place good internal control systems and had also managed to fill in the key positions with with qualified officials (AGSA, 2015:3). This clearly shows that there is a positive correlation between the qualifications and skills of officials and their job performance.

However, the Auditor General's report (AGSA, 2018), covering they financial year of 2016/2017 indicates that the situation of municipalities had changed. The majority of municipalities and their entities had lapsed, and this resulted in poor performance in delivering services and poor audit outcomes. In the same financial year, Mkhambathini Local Municipality had an irregular expenditure of R5.7 million and "fruitless and wasterful expenditure of R4.12 million" (IDP, 2018/2019:89). To this end, the Auditor General's report (2018:3) notes that, "credible financial statements and performance reports are crucial to enable accountability and transparency, but municipalities are failing in these areas". In the same report, the Province of KwaZulu-Natal is placed among the provinces that have not improved since 2015-16, with 13 of its municipalities regressing. In the audit report covering the financial year of 2018/2019, the Auditor General (AGSA, 2020:1) bemoans "the state of financial management in local government". The lack of improvement is the result of non- compliance with legislation and the leadership's failure to take decisive action to address the weaknesses that were identified in the past. The Auditor General notes further that, the majority of municipalities could achieve the vision of a better life for all if they could comply with the basic principles of accountability and transparency. Therefore, entrenching a culture of accountability and transparency at the local government level remains a challenge for many municipalities including the Mkhambathini Local Municipality.

6.10 CONCLUSION

The Mkhambathini Local Municipality is small and rural and as a result, lacks the capacity to deliver services to the satisfaction of the majority of its residents. Unemployment is viewed as the major cause of poverty and has forced many young people to migrate to urban areas in search of economic opportunities. The municipality has no centres where young people can acquire various skills that can enable them to compete in the job market. The lack of skills

exacerbates the problem of unemployment and in turn, forces some young people, especially young women, to engage in risky behaviour in their struggle to survive.

The lack of institutional and infrastructural capacity means that the municipality is unable to implement capital projects on its own. As a result, capital projects are left to the uMgundundlovu District and the Provincial Government to implement. This means that the local municipality exercises minimal influence and control over such projects.

The implementation of rural development policies is still encountering common roadblocks that have been identified in the past. These roadblocks include poor coordination, poor monitoring and evaluation of the implementation process, limited implementation capacity and to some extent, insufficient political will to prioritise the implementation of rural development policies. The Comprehensive Rural Development Programme (CRDP) is the most comprehensive rural development policy of the post-apartheid era. It addresses the land question, and outlines land reform processes aimed at making the land productive for the formally disadvantaged and excluded groups. The Mkhambathini Local Municipality's farm workers and dwellers remain the most disadvantaged group when it comes to accessing land. As a result, people feel let down by the government and believe that expropriation of land without compensation is the only viable solution to the land question.

Although the majority of the population of Mkhambathini resides on traditional land, which falls under Ingonyama Trust, the biggest challenge is that there is no security of tenure. The lack of security of tenure reduces the property value and restricts the rural people's access to loans as they cannot mortgage their property with banks. The issue of security of tenure also makes it risky for private investors to open businesses in the rural areas. Without massive investment from both government and the private sector, rural economies will remain underdeveloped, and the problems of unemployment and poverty will persist. Therefore, security of tenure is an integral part of rural development.

South Africa has developed the most forward looking rural development policies in the post-apartheid era with policies that purport to be bottom-up in nature. However, the case study has shown that top-down approaches still dominate the terrain of rural development. The various mechanisms designed to promote public participation in rural areas have not empowered people living in the rural areas with sufficient power to influence key decisions and their implementation. This indicates that power remains concentrated in the hands of public officials

who make key decisions and prioritise development projects. In addition, rural residents cannot call public officials and power holders to account for their actions. As a result, accountability failure and lack of transparency account for the poor performance of municipalities.

CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 INTRODUCTION

The objective of this study was to investigate the reasons behind the persistence of rural poverty and underdevelopment in the post-apartheid era. The study has demonstrated that in the democratic era, South Africa has developed many policies to address rural poverty and other injustices from the past, yet the problems of poor service delivery and slow development continue to deprive rural dwellers of a better life. Nonetheless, while both the impact of colonial and apartheid histories is significant here, the findings of the study show that, these can no longer be used to justify the continued existence of rural poverty and underdevelopment in the post-apartheid South Africa. Therefore, the study concludes that, the problems of rural poverty and underdevelopment are not the result of policy deficiency, but a result of failure to effectively implement the existing policies. All the rural development policies that have been formulated in the post-apartheid era recognise the importance of public participation and purport to promote bottom-up approaches to rural development. However, the findings of this study have shown that top-down approaches still dominate the landscape of rural development. This is contrary to the central argument of this study, which suggests that sustainable rural development cannot be realised without the active and meaningful participation of the people living in the rural areas. The study concludes by highlighting areas that contribute to implementation failure and makes some recommendations.

7.2 MAIN AREAS AND ISSUES OF CONCERN PERTAINING TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT POLICIES AND KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

The areas of concern that need to be addressed relate to perceptions of the concept of rural development, the issue of land, factors affecting the implementation of rural development and public participation. The issue of power dynamics in relation to public participation and policy implementation at the local level is also highlighted.

7.2.1 Understanding Rural Development from the Grass-roots Level

The objective of the study was to investigate how rural people in the Mkhambathini Local Municipality perceive rural poverty and rural development. The findings of the study indicate that people in the rural areas perceive poverty and development in practical terms, as something observable and tangible. Therefore a definition of rural development should include the

aspirations of rural people and be compatible with their vision of a better life. The study concludes that the current working definition of rural development which is guiding rural development policies is more theoretical and does not embody the aspirations and collective vision of the people living in the rural areas. That is, the working definition does not speak directly to their situation and articulate what a better life entails for them. The rural areas in South Africa have been described as unique because of their historical background (see sections 3.3 and 3.4). The definition of rural development must therefore, be informed by that unique historical background and be pragmatic enough to offer a realistic vision of a better life for the people living in the rural areas.

The inclusion of the people living in the rural areas in all processes of policy development including the definition of the problem will improve rural development policies and ensure that such policies are relevant to the rural context. People living in the rural areas have existential experience of rural poverty and given the opportunity, they can contribute to its eradication. However, depriving them the opportunity to define their problems and articulate their vision of a better future amplifies their vulnerability and powerlessness (Sen, 1999; Friedman, 1992; Chambers, 1983). Although the theoretical definition of rural development that has guided the development of rural development policies in the post-apartheid is impressive, it is essentially theoretical and idealistic. The findings of the study indicate that rural people associate rural development with concrete indicators or things that they can see or experience in their life (see sections 6.2 and 6.3). Based on the findings of this research, the researcher concludes that the majority of people living in the rural areas do not relate to the theoretical definition of rural development because it does not speak to their situation or concrete experiences. Furthermore, the majority of rural dwellers are not mobilised to play a role in their own development so that they begin to see themselves as partners, and not as mere beneficiaries. The above-noted inclusion will build their own confidence and extricate them from welfare dependency in which the majority are currently entangled. In this regard, the study answers the question of the relationship between public participation and rural rural development, meaning that, sustainable rural development cannot be achieved without the meaningful participation of the people living in the rural areas.

To improve rural development policies and their implementation, the researcher therefore, makes the following **recommendations**:

- That the definition of rural development be reviewed and redefined so that it takes into account the insights and experiences of the people living in the rural areas.
- That the people living in the rural areas be mobilised to play an active role in their own development. The process of mobilisation should entail conscientising the people living in the rural areas about their own energies and the local assets that they can utilise productively to contribute to their own development.

7.2.2 The Issue of Land in Rural Development

The objective of the study was to investigate why rural poverty and underdevelopment have persisted in the post-apartheid era. The findings of the study indicate that land is an essential factor in the development matrix. Any development agenda aimed at addressing the injustices of the past must prioritise the land question. For the people living in the rural areas, land is synonymous with life and defines their existence. The conducted literature review and findings from the case study indicate that land reform programmes have been too slow and not successfully implemented, hence the call for the expropriation of land without compensation (see section 4.4.5). The findings have also shown that vast tracts of arable land still remains in the hands of the minority and thus, the majority of people living in the rural areas, especially on the commercial farms, still do not have adequate access to land hence the problems of rural poverty and underdevelopment.

The majority of people in the rural areas reside on communal land which is under the custody of traditional authorities. In the Province of KwaZulu-Natal, large rural areas are under land that is owned by the *Ingonyama* Trust. The land is administered by traditional chiefs on behalf of the King. Although people have access to land to build their homes, they have limited access to arable land which is still owned by commercial farmers and private companies. Access to the land under traditional authority is not based on gender but allocated to anyone who needs it. As a result, women who are the majority of the rural population have been able to access the land under traditional authority. However, the major challenge concerning land under traditional authority is that it has no security of tenure. Once the individual has been allocated a piece of land, he/she is given a letter from the local chief as confirmation that a site has been allocated to them. However, the letter is not an official proof of ownership or security of tenure. The lack of official ownership in the form of a title deed reduces the value of rural people's property and limits their access to loans as they cannot use their property as collateral. The limited access to arable land also means that people living in the rural areas have minimal

opportunities to establish small farms to grow their own food and increase their livestock. As a result, the majority of rural people depend on government grants for income to buy necessities such as food. The problem of land ownership in rural areas creates uncertainty for investors who find it too risky to commit their resources on land without security of tenure. Ultimately, the lack of investments in the rural areas exacerbates the problems of rural poverty and underdevelopment.

Therefore, to effectively address the land question and security of tenure of land in the rural areas, the researcher **recommends** that:

- The Department of Rural Development and Land Reform (DRDLR) should prioritise the redistribution of land and reform of tenancy laws in the rural areas.
- The land redistribution process must include the provision of training facilities so that land beneficiaries can be equipped with simple skills to utilise their land productively.
- As part of land reform, the DRDLR should promote agro-industries as the backbone of rural economies.
- Commercial farmers should play a critical role of mentorship and train land beneficiaries on how best to utilise land.
- The *Ingonyama* Trust Act No. 3KZ of 1994 should be reviewed as part of implementing the broader land reform programme and rural development agenda. The circumstances that led to the establishment of the Act may have been overtaken by events and therefore, its relevance today is questionable.

The reform of tenancy laws will make it possible for private investors and individuals to buy land that is currently owned by the *Ingonyama* Trust. This will also make it possible for local municipalities such as Mkhambathini which is currently constrained in terms of access to land, to buy land and expand or venture into major projects that can generate revenue. Therefore, the issue of the *Ingonyama* Trust's land ownership rights needs to be reviewed in the interest of rural development.

The findings of the case study revealed that the DRDLR is not visible at the grass-root level. This is worrying, considering that the DRDLR was established with a clear mandate of driving policy development and implementation in the rural development agenda. The DRDLR needs to establish satellite offices in every rural local municipality to fast track land reform programmes and initiate negotiations with commercial farmers so that these farmers can sell

some of the land to government or give it up for redistribution to the people living in the rural areas, especially the farm dwellers. The farm dwellers are the most vulnerable group because their stay on the farms is dependent on their employment status on the farm. It is also dependent on the goodwill of the respective farm owner. To this end, the DRDLR needs to bring key stakeholders to the negotiating table to find a lasting solution to the problem of land reform in the context of rural development. The issue of expropriation of land without compensation should be considered as the last resort in the interest of the common good when negotiations have failed. To this end, the study has shown that landlessness and insecure tenure contribute to the problem of rural poverty and underdevelopment.

7.2.3 Creating Employment Opportunities in Rural Areas

The study has identified unemployment as a major problem in rural areas. As a result, rural areas are being drained of human capital when young people and the economically active adults migrate to urban areas in search of economic opportunities. This is another reason behind the perstence of rural poverty and underdevelopment in the post-apartheid era.There is a shortage of skills training centres in rural municipalities such as Mkhambathini Local Municipality to empower young people with various skills. This study has established that the majority of young people who fail grade twelve and those who do not proceed to University or other tertiary colleges enter the job market unprepared and unskilled. As a result, various young people remain unemployed and the most affected are those from rural areas. There is a dire need to motivate and empower the youth in rural areas with skills that enable them to create employment for themselves.

To address the problem of unemployment in the rural areas, this researcher makes the following **recommendation**s:

- The programmes of rural development should prioritise skills development and train the youth in various skills which should include: bricklaying, plumbing, carpentry, welding, road maintenance, electrical engineering, catering, tailoring, hairdressing, craftwork and project management. These skills will enable the youths to be self-employed and create employment for others.
- Local municipalities in rural areas should work with the Department of Higher Education (DHE) and convince it to establish training centres that are easily accessible to the youth in rural areas. Moreover, rural municipalities need to demonstrate how

training centres can reduce youth unemployment and help to curb other social ills such as drug abuse and other forms of risky behaviour.

Most rural municipalities, which include the Mkhambathini Local Municipality, have cultural, historical and natural assets that can form the backbone of their tourism industry. The potential of rural tourism, as part of rural development, has not been fully exploited to benefit the people living in the rural areas. The rural tourism industry should be opened up to include local people, especially women who form the majority of rural populations and have been economically disadvantaged for a long time.

7.2.4 The Issue of Coordination

Coordination is an integral part of public policy implementation. The literature review conducted in this study revealed that various scholars concur that coordination is essential for the successful implementation and better delivery of services (see section 2.3.4). In the South African context, research has shown that coordination is one of the implementation challenges that have resulted in poor policy outcomes (see sections 4.3 and 4.4.5). The findings of this research revealed that the coordination of rural development programmes still remains a challenge. At the local government level, there is no clear structure that coordinates the interdepartmental relations. As a result, the same mistakes that include poor communication, duplication of programmes and wastage of scarce resources are repeated. The DRDLR whose task it is to coordinate the implementation of rural development programmes is not visible at the local government level, especially in the rural areas. It is therefore, not surprising that the problem of poor coordination which leads to implementation failure persists. In this regard, the study achieved the aim of investigating implementation failure.

Therefore, the researcher makes the following **recommendations** in order to address the problem of coordination in local municipalities that are largely rural:

- The DRDLR and Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA) should work closely with local municipalities in rural areas and be part of the local structures such as ward committees.
- A rural development coordinating office should be established at every local municipality with a clear mandate to coordinate all rural development programmes.
- The coordinating office should have sufficient personnel resources.

- The coordinating office should not be a replica of the Council of Stakeholders (COS), a structure which failed to function because it could not attract intended participants and only exists on paper (see section 4.8). The coordinating office should instead replace the COS and be the engine that drives rural development at the local level.
- The coordinating office should not work in isolation from other departments and stakeholders but be the link between all stakeholders who participate in rural development and provide information on development projects being undertaken in the municipality.
- The coordinating office should promote joint- action and cooperation between different government departments and other stakeholders (see section 6.7.3).

The establishment of a rural development coordinating office will bring the coordination of rural development programmes to the local level. The same office can be entrusted with the task of managing the implementation of rural development programmes. Failure to manage the implementation process could lead to poor performance and must be addressed together with coordination (see section 6.7.2). The establishment of the rural development coordinating office at the local level should give new impetus to rural development and create space to develop more pragmatic approaches that are context based. As it stands, the DRDLR which operates at a national and provincial level, without a satellite structure at the local municipality level, is officially responsible for the coordination of the implementation of rural development programmes. This perpetuates the top-down trend, which is contrary to the spirit of the current rural development policies that claim to be bottom-up in nature.

7.2.5 The Issue of Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation is a scientific process that focuses on the systematic and routine collection of data on the implementation of programmes. It is a formal process that must be conducted at different stages of programme implementation. Those who conduct monitoring and evaluation must possess the necessary skills in the field. The case study findings revealed that monitoring and evaluation of rural development programmes is conducted informally by various structures which include portfolio committees, oversight committees and full council. In some instances it is also conducted by ward councillors and ward committees. Monitoring and evaluation holds the key to the many factors that affect policy making and implementation. It can generate vital information that answers the “why” question about any results that the implementation process yields. The findings of this research indicate that there is no formal

structure entrusted with the task of monitoring and evaluation of rural development programmes in the Mkhambathini local municipality (see section 6.6.1).

The lack of a formal structure to conduct monitoring and evaluation at the local level leads is one of the reasons behind implementation failure. The monitoring and evaluation unit would generate detailed reports about the strengths and weaknesses of the development programmes implemented in the local municipality and make concrete recommendations on the way forward. In addition, the formal structure of monitoring and evaluation would analyse the budget of every project or programme and weigh the end results against the resources expended. In this regard, monitoring and evaluation minimises cases of corruption and enhance accountability at the local level.

The absence of a formal structure of monitoring and evaluation at the local municipality contributes to poor service delivery and implementation failure. This researcher therefore, **recommends** that:

- Every local municipality should establish a monitoring and evaluation unit which will focus on examining the implementation of rural development programmes at the local level.
- The established monitoring and evaluation unit should provide key stakeholders with well researched and updated information on the progress of rural development programmes in the respective local municipalities.

Implementation has been identified as a problem and reason for slow progress in the implementation of rural development policies. The task of the monitoring and evaluation unit will be to diagnose the specific aspects of implementation that are problematic and ensure that they are addressed on time. The monitoring and evaluation unit should collaborate with the rural development coordinating office and serve as a resource to the provision of relevant information that will improve the development and implementation of rural development programmes.

7.2.6 The issue of Approach: Top-down vs Bottom-up

The aim of this was to demonstrate the importance of meaningful public participation at the local government level, especially by people living in the rural areas. The researcher contends that rural development should be approached from bottom-up, and where it is feasible, top-

down and bottom-up approaches could be combined to maximise the outcomes. All the reviewed rural development policy documents purport to be bottom-up, yet the findings of this study have shown that top-down approaches still dominate the terrain of rural development. Top-down approaches are prescriptive and limit the number of stakeholders in the policy environment. There is a need to promote bottom-up approaches which recognise and encourage the contribution of multiple stakeholders in the policy environment.

There is a need to educate ward councillors and ward committees about bottom-up strategies that can empower the people living in the rural areas and motivate them to play an active role in their own development. The promotion of bottom-up strategies should create the awareness that rural development is not the responsibility of government alone but that, other stakeholders such as private businesses, civil society organisations and community based organisations and individuals can play a role in the decision making processes and their actual implementation. Educating the people living in the rural areas and their leaders about different bottom-up approaches such as the participatory rural appraisals (PRA) and appreciative inquiry (AI) can animate and mobilise them to play an active role in their own development. The aim of this study is to show that sustainable rural development cannot be achieved without the meaningful participation of people living in the rural areas. The findings of the study indicate that in practice, meaningful participation in rural areas is still limited as the top-down approaches still dominat the rural landscape thereby impeding rural development.

7.2.7 The Issue of Collaboration between Political and Traditional Leadership

Rural development requires the collaboration between traditional leadership and political leadership at the local level. The findings of this case study research reaffirm the conclusion reached by other researchers, such as Galvin (2010:177) and Rugege (2003:172) that, traditional leaders possess enormous power in rural areas and should be regarded as key players in the implementation of rural development programmes. Their exclusion or lack of cooperation can hinder the effective implementation of rural development initiatives. To this end, the case study revealed that wards in which there is cooperation between traditional leadership and ward councillors experience more development, unity and better delivery of services. On the contrary, wards in which there is a lack of cooperation between the two centres of power experience slow progress in the implementation of development programmes and service provision. In this regard, traditional leadership at grass-roots level should play an active role in policy making processes and support development programmes aimed at improving the

living conditions of rural local communities. Situations in which there is contest for influence between traditional and political leadership should be eschewed and effective communication and mutual support encouraged. In this regard, establishing good rapport between the key stakeholders, especially between traditional leaders and political leaders at the local government level, will enhance the implementation of rural development policies.

The case study findings also reveal that some rural areas with a history of political violence are still struggling to reconcile with the past. As a way of creating an enabling environment for rural development, both traditional leaders and political leaders should be encouraged to work together toward reconciling people and fostering unity and peace in rural communities. Both traditional and political leaders must be challenged to understand that rural development is not premised on narrow political party or individual interest but on the constitutional mandate to provide a better life for all. Moreover, peace and political stability provide an enabling environment for rural development. In this regard, Tshitangoni and Francis argue that tensions and conflicts between traditional leaders and political (ward councillors) leaders at the local level weaken efforts to champion rural development. It is essential therefore, that good working relationships between traditional leaders and political leaders should be promoted as a way of creating a positive environment for effective implementation of rural development prolicies.

7.3 MAIN ISSUES OF CONCERN PERTAINING TO PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Public participation is the main vehicle for promoting bottom-up approaches to policy making processes and their implementation. Provisions for public participation in policy-making and implementation at the local government level are delineated in chapter seven of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996). The Constitution encourages an effective involvement of local communities and other stakeholders in matters of local government. Chapter four of the Municipal Systems Act (Act 32 of 2000) obligates municipalities to create conditions that encourage local communities to participate in the affairs of the municipality. However, this study has shown that public participation is not being implemented as prescribed in the policy document (e,g, Chapter four of the Municipal Systems Act No. 32 of 2000). This indicates that, there is still a dire need to strengthen public participation at the local sphere of government, which is obligated to deliver services and drive the development of local communities. In this regard, strong and functional public participation

structures need to be established to improve local governance and enhance the implementation of development projects.

The objective of the study was also to investigate whether the structures of participation at the local government level have sufficient power for people in the rural areas to influence policy decisions and their implementation. The findings of the study revealed that people living in the rural areas have limited power to influence decisions that affect their life and their implementation. To a large extent, public participation in rural areas is reduced to information sharing and consultation processes, which are forms of tokenism (see section 2.4.3). To this end, the study findings show that public participation structures in rural areas are weak and do not give suuficient power to rural people to inflence key policy-decisions.

7.3.1 The Participation of the Public

The intention to include the public in policy making and implementation processes is evident in all rural development policy documents. However, this intention has not been effectively translated into active involvement of the people at the grass-roots level. There is still a lack of appreciation of the importance and value of public participation. To this end, the case study findings revealed that programmes of public participation are not included in the annual budgets of the municipality. As part of promoting public participation, elected office-bearers, such as ward councillors, should be educated to understand that active participation of citizens does not undermine their right to perform their functions as the representatives of the electorate. Rather, ward councillors need to understand public participation as a fundamental principle for entrenching democracy at the local government level.

The case study findings revealed that individual participants (ward councillors) generally believe that public participation is important for rural development. However, the participants understand public participation in terms of information sharing and consultations that occur during IDP *imbizo* and other public meetings. Public participation must be understood by both elected office-bearers and citizens in broader terms, which go beyond information sharing and consultation, but in terms that include partnership, citizen empowerment and management of local resources (see section 2.4.3).

The programmes that are designed to promote public participation in the rural areas tend to exclude vulnerable groups such as women and people living with disabilities. Public participation should be inclusive enough and pay attention to the vulnerable groups who need

to be empowered and given space to express their concerns and also play an active role in decision making and implementation processes. When vulnerable groups, such as people with disabilities are excluded, their needs and interests will be neglected. It should be the duty of public officials and elected office-bearers at local government level therefore, to educate the public about the rights of people with disabilities and the need to include them in the decisions that affect their lives.

This researcher therefore, **recommends** that:

- Local municipalities should ensure that their public participation structures are inclusive.
- Local municipalities should collect statistical data of people with disabilities within their jurisdiction and ensure that they are fairly represented in the decision-making structures.
- Local municipalities should clearly identify all vulnerable groups such as women, children and people with disabilities, and ensure that their rights are protected and their needs are robustly addressed at the local government level.
- Policies that promote public participation at the local level are revised and that sufficient power is devolved to public participation structures at the local level.

7.3.2 The Role of Civil Society Organisations in Rural Development

Civil society organisations in their various forms are part of the public. Public participation that excludes civil society organisations is therefore, weak and narrow in its perspective. Civil society organisations that focus on community development activities and policy reform play a vital role in rural development initiatives. In addition, civil society organisations that are community-based have the capacity to promote cooperation at the grass-root level and understand better the concerns of the local people (see section 2.4.2). Some civil society organisations are skilled in various fields and as such they can deliver services and engage in activities aimed at ameliorating the conditions of the poor in the rural areas. Furthermore, the participation of civil society oprganisations in the policy making processes and implementation can strengthen public participation at grass-roots level.

However, the findings of this research reveal that the rural space is dominated by organisations that are linked to the government. There are only a few independent organisations that are active in rural areas owing to the shortage of resources. As a result, various independent

organisations are forced to scale down and in some cases, terminate their activities. The absence of independent organisations in the rural areas exacerbates rural poverty and underdevelopment. These organisations possess vital skills that can benefit rural development and as such, they can be contracted by the local government or the DRDLR to design and implement rural development programmes. In addition, partnerships between the local government or the DRDLR and civil society organisations can be formed where it is feasible. In this regard, it is important that politicians do not view civil society organisations at the local level as their rival but, should rather view them as partners with a common agenda and interest in rural development.

The independence and autonomy of civil society organisations mean that they can play the watchdog role in order to curb cases of corruption at the local government level, and foster more accountability. Their autonomous position also allows them to stand at a critical distance to monitor and analyse policy making processes and their implementation and in this way, articulate the concerns of the poor. Finally, the absence of strong and independent organisations in the rural areas creates a vacuum that the various government departments cannot occupy due to the lack of skilled personnel.

7.3.3 The Issue of the Ward Committees

Ward committees are the main structure for promoting public participation at the municipality level. However, this research established that in practice, ward committees are weak and only exist as consultative structures. They lack the power to influence key policy decisions and their implementation. Ward committee members reside in their local communities and have a better understanding of the concerns and needs of the people at the grass-root level. This indicates that they are well positioned to contribute vital and up-to-date information to enrich policy making processes. Although ward committees are established in accordance with the law, their role is sometimes not appreciated as the ward committee members are given a minimal monthly stipend that only caters for transport and airtime. As a result, the majority of ward committee members are discouraged and despondent. The study findings also reveal that ward committees are also politicised and used to advance the interests of political parties instead of the local communities whose interests they are supposed to represent.

The researcher therefore, makes the following **recommendations:**

- The ward committee members should be allowed to participate in the key decision-making processes at the municipality level.
- The ward committee members should be given salaries instead of minimal stipends as is the case currently.
- More power needs to be devolved to the ward committees so that they can influence key decisions about development projects and their implementation in their respective wards.
- The politicisation of formal public participation structures such as the ward committees needs to be addressed by the responsible sphere of government and strict rules need to be introduced to protect these structures from manipulation by politicians.
- The Handbook for Ward Committees (2005), the National Guidelines for the Establishment and Operation of Municipal Ward Committees (2005), and the National Ward Committee Resource Book (2005) should be translated into the local language of each respective municipality.

Despite a solid legislative framework to guide ward committees, the findings of this research reveal that some ward committees are dysfunctional. The majority of ward committee members in rural areas have primary or secondary school education hence they are more comfortable in their local language. Therefore, it makes sense that the resource documents that include the IDP should be translated into the local language in order to be easily accessible to the local people, especially the ward committee members. This will make it easier for ward committee members to study the resource documents and use them for reference purposes.

The handbook for ward committees (2005:7) stipulates that the ward councillor is the chairperson of the ward committee and has a final say over the items on the agenda. This renders the ward councillor the most powerful member of the ward committee and relegates the rest of members of the ward committee to the subordinate position. It also means that the ward councillor can unanimously discard items suggested by other ward committee members for the agenda of a ward committee meeting. To this end, ward committees need to be empowered adequately in order to be effective. They need to elect their chairpersons so that the councillors can serve as ex office members of ward committees. In this way, ward councillors can balance the expectations of their ward with those of their political party. The current situation is that some ward councillors are more loyal to their political parties and prioritise their organisations' political programmes over the needs of their respective wards.

There is a need to review both the Handbook for Ward Committees (2005) and the National Guidelines for the Establishment and Operation of Municipal Ward Committees (2005) and take into account the weaknesses that researchers including this study have identified.

7.3.4 Strengthening IDP Forums for Public Participation

The model of integrated development planning (IDP) is aimed at building local capacity and getting local people actively involved in the identification and prioritisation of development programmes. IDPs enable local people to select development programmes that are relevant to their local context. Chapter Five of the Municipal Systems Act (Act No. 32 of 2000) obliges local municipalities to be developmentally oriented. The chapter also stipulates processes to be followed by local municipalities in order for them to adopt their IDPs. The IDP Forums are the main vehicles for consulting local communities on their development needs. The Act (Act No. 32 of 2000) stipulates that, local municipalities must identify and consult various government departments, traditional leaders and other stakeholders when drafting their IDPs.

IDP Forums in the rural municipalities employ the same approach of holding public meetings such as *imbizos* in which local people raise their concerns while public officials listen and make promises. The IDP policy document is adopted by councillors who are the policy makers at local government level. Although it is assumed that the IDP policy document consists of the issues and insights from the IDP Forums, the public has no power to ensure that the issues raised in the IDP Forums are included in the final policy document which is compiled by consultants. This makes IDP Forums are another form of tokenism. Thus, there is no guarantee that the development projects identified and prioritised by the public are considered. In addition, the IDP policy documents are written in English, which makes them inaccessible to the majority of the people living in the rural areas.

It is clear that IDP Forums are important instruments for promoting public participation at the local levels. However, the manner in which they are structured and conducted needs to be reviewed in order to give them more power and make them more representative of all the stakeholders in the rural municipalities. The researcher also **recommends** that IDP Forums be given the power to prioritise identified projects for each respective ward for adoption by the Council. In this way, the development needs of the local people will be included in the IDP policy document, and addressed. This will also ensure that public participation at the local levels moves beyond tokenism to partnership and empowerment.

7.3.5 Strengthening War Rooms for Public Participation

War room sessions are also an important structure for promoting public participation at the grassroots level. These sessions are supposed to bring representatives from various sector departments, civil society organisations operating in the local communities, ward committee members and traditional leaders or their representatives together. They are open to the public so that individual citizens can also attend freely. War room sessions provide a platform for public officials, various sector departments, independent stakeholders and ward committees to interact and share information. As a result, war room sessions provide policy implementers with empirical data to evaluate the impact of rural development programmes and service delivery at the local level. This suggests that gaps in the implementation processes can be identified and corrective measures can be instituted to improve the situation.

However, the study findings reveal that in the current situation, war room sessions are poorly attended by both representatives of various government departments and civil society organisations. As a result, most of the concerns that are raised by rural residents and their representatives remain unaddressed. Furthermore, rural communities are frustrated particularly with government departments that do not send their representatives to attend war room sessions. The phenomenon of non-attendance by sector departments undermines the value of war room sessions and creates the impression that rural communities are not a priority. The study also established that public participation structures such as ward committees and IDP Forums do not have the power to force sector departments to send representatives to attend war room sessions.

The researcher therefore, **recommends** the following measures to strengthen war rooms at the local government level:

- Local municipalities, in the rural areas should include war rooms in their policy documents and officially recognise them as part of public participation mechanisms.
- Local municipalities should clearly define and outline the objectives of war rooms.
- The co-ordinating office/unit suggested earlier (see section 7.2.4) should be responsible for building up robust war rooms at the local government level and ensure that the relevant sector departments and other relevant stakeholders are included.
- The co-ordinating office/unit should draw up a schedule of war room sessions for every ward in consultation with all the stakeholders so that stakeholders can include the war

room sessions in their own plan of activities. The schedule should clearly state the date, time and venue of every war room session. The war room sessions should not be held on the same day as ward committee meetings but should be organised separately and be given sufficient time.

- The co-ordinating office/unit should communicate the war room sessions to the public and encourage the public to attend and interact directly with public officials.

It is clear that public participation is a fundamental anchor of rural development in South Africa. Its objective is to allow people at the grass-roots of society to decide on matters that concern them. War rooms are an important component of participatory democracy. They are supposed to give local communities the power to hold public officials accountable for their actions. The researcher contends that weak structures of public participation at the grassroots level, as the study reveals, have an adverse impact on the implementation of rural development programmes. As part of promoting democracy at the grass-root level, it is imperative that local government develops and puts in place structures of public participation that are robust, inclusive and meaningful. This in turn could promote a culture of transparency and accountability which remains a problem for the majority of local municipalities in South Africa.

7.3.6 Strengthening Accountability at Local Government Level

The issue of public participation in rural development is related to the question of accountability. The Auditor General's reports of 2013 and 2018 identify the lack of accountability at local government as one of the underlying causes of poor audit results for the majority of municipalities. Contrary to the study findings that there are no cases of corruption in the Mkhambathini Local Municipality, various reports of the Auditor General reveal that the majority of local municipalities are failing in the areas of transparency and accountability. The Auditor General (2018) also notes that, the majority of municipalities produce financial and performance reports that are not credible. Finally, the (2018) report notes an increase of 75% in municipal irregular expenditure, which is a clear indicator of the lack of accountability and compliance in most local municipalities, especially the rural ones.

This researcher contends that, the lack of accountability and transparency in the majority of local municipalities is compounded by weak structures of public participation at the local government level. Thus, structures of public participation at the local government level must

be reviewed and given sufficient power to hold public officials accountable for the resources allocated for every development programme or project. In addition, local municipalities need to develop a culture of transparency and accountability and inculcate it in public officials. For example, tenders should be processed and awarded in a transparent manner. In this respect, the current tender system needs to be reviewed and strengthened to protect it from any form of abuse. Furtheremore, steps need to be taken to entrench a culture of accountability and transparency at the local government level to avoid a situation in which implementation failure is simply explained away, with no one taking responsibility for it and account for the poor policy outcomes.

While the study has achieved its main objective of investigating the reasons behind the persistence of rural poverty and underdevelopment in the post-apartheid era, despite the numerous rural development policy interventions, the researcher **recommends** that:

- A similar study shoud be conducted in the future and should include the voices of other constituencies such as the opposition political parties, civil society organisations and business people in the rural context.

7.4 CONCLUDING REMARKS

In conclusion, the researcher holds the view that the study has fulfilled the objectives stated in Chapter One. The main research question, the sub-questions, aims and objectives of the study have been evaluated in this final chapter. Thus, the study contributes to the limited existing literature on the implementation of rural development programmes and public participation in the context of South Africa. The thesis provides a comprehensive description and explanation of the most important challenges that hinder effective implementation of rural development programmes. The identified challenges weaken the structures of public participation at the local government level, especially in the local municipalities that are largely rural.

It is imperative to point out that the findings of this research's case study justify the need for further research on the challenges that limit effective participation of the people living in the rural areas in both policy-making and implementation processes. Although the policy documents purport the approach to rural development to be bottom-up, this study reveals that in reality it is still top-down and very paternalistic. As a result, public participation in decision making and implementation processes at the local level is relegated to manipulation and tokenism. Furthermore, structures of public participation at the local level lack the power to

influence decisions and their implementation. The absence of strong and active civil society organisations at the local level creates a vacuum and exacerbates the problems of rural poverty and underdevelopment.

This study notes that South Africa has succeeded in developing numerous rural development policies in the post-apartheid era. However, the definition of rural development which guides these policies tends to be more theoretical and ditached from the existential reality of the people living in the rural areas. The definition of rural development should be informed by the input and concrete life situation of the rural people as much as possible. Implementation failure is identified as one of the underlying problems that perpetuate rural poverty and underdevelopment. However, the study argues that, it is not sufficient to state that implementation is a problem without conducting implementation analysis and evaluation in order to determine the exact problems of implementation and institute corrective measures. To this end, the study recommends that local municipalities need to prioritise and consolidate their monitoring and evaluation units to improve policy implementation processes.

The researcher also highlights some of the questions that continue to be pertinent to the implementation of rural development policies and public participation at local government level:

- Is enough being done to manage the implementation of rural development policies in South Africa? What measures is the local government taking to address the co-ordination of rural development programmes?.
- Do the DRDLR, COGTA and local government at municipality level cooperate enough in implementing rural development policies?
- Is the local government doing enough to strengthen structures of public participation at the community level?
- What can the DRDLR do to speed up the implementation of land reform programmes?

The researcher holds the view that the above questions need to be investigated further in order to expand the limited literature on the challenges of rural development in South Africa. The role of public participation in rural development needs further investigation. In addition, land reform needs to be prioritised by the DRDLR and must include skills development so that land beneficiaries can utilise it productively. In particular, the Ingonyama *Trust* needs to be reviewed taking into account the changed circumstances that prevail now. The

recommendations of the CRDP in relation to land reform must be implemented in full. Finally, the issue of security of tenure is part of the agenda for rural development. The reform of laws governing land ownership should protect and benefit women who are the majority of rural residents and add value to their properties. While progress has been made in addressing both the colonial and apartheid legacies of rural poverty and underdevelopment, this study has shown that the triple challenges of poverty, inequality and unemployment remain unacceptably high in the rural areas, a situation which exercebates the problem of rural-urban migration. The vision of a democratic and open society in South Africa cannot be realised when the majority of rural people are still disenfranchised and powerless.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR WARD COUNCILLORS

Hello, my name is Gideon Sibanda, a PhD student from the University of KwaZulu-Natal. For my PhD studies, I am conducting a study regarding public participation and the implementation of rural development policies in a post-apartheid South Africa. The study is being conducted in Mkhambathini Local Municipality in the Province of KwaZulu-Natal.

I would like to ask you some questions regarding the implementation of rural development programmes and public participation in Mkhambathini. This should take about I hour of your time. You do not have to answer any question you do not wish to answer. Your identity will remain confidential and anonymous, and will only appear on any document or publication with your express permission. Please answer the questions as openly as possible. There is no "right" or "wrong" answer, rather your knowledge and experience are important to her about.

Part I: Identification details

1. Ward
2. Date of interview
3. Time of interview
4. Name of participant

Part II: Understanding the work of local Councillors

5. What level of formal education did you obtain? Please tick the relevant response.

1. Primary School
2. Secondary School
3. College Diploma/Certificate
4. BA Degree
5. Honours/Masters'Degree
6. Doctorate
7. None

6. If you ticked number 7 as your answer to question 5, please explain how lack of education has affected your work.

7. When did you become the Councillor of your ward?

8. What work and activities do you do as a Councillor for your ward?

_____
_____
_____
_____

9. How many terms have you served as a ward Councillor?

1. One term
2. Two terms
3. Three terms

10. Does your political affiliation influence how you do your work as a ward Councillor?

1. Yes
2. No

11. If your answer to question 10 is yes, explain how your political affiliation influences your work as a ward Councillor.

_____
_____
_____
_____

Part III: Rural poverty and development in Mkhambathini Local Municipality

12. Mkhambathini Local Municipality is said to be the most rural and the poorest of the seven local municipalities under uMgungundlovu District? Please explain why this is the case.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

13. What is your understanding of rural development?

_____
_____
_____
_____

14. What indicators can you identify to describe the level of rural poverty in Mkhambathini Local Municipality?

Indicator:	Indicator:
1.	5.
2.	6.
3.	7.
4.	8.

15. Are there any indicators that you would associate with rural development? If Yes, name them.

Indicator:	Indicator:
1.	5.
2.	6.
3.	7.

4. 8.

16. Which of the following rural development policy documents are you most familiar with? (Tick all that apply)

1. The Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP).
2. The Rural Development Strategy (1995).
3. The Rural Development Framework (1997).
4. The Integrated Sustainable Rural Development Strategy (ISRDS) of 2000.
5. The War on Poverty campaign (WoP).
6. The Comprehensive Rural Development Programme (CRDP) of 2009.
7. The Mkhambathini Integrated Development Plan (IDP)
8. Other

17. Which one of the rural development policies listed in question 16 do you think has been implemented effectively in Mkhambathini Local Municipality? Please explain your answer.

_____
_____
_____
_____

18. Are there other rural development programmes/projects that are anticipated for Mkhambathini Local Municipality?

1. Yes
2. No

19. If your answer for question 18 is Yes, name some of the programmes which you remember:

_____
_____
_____

20. Do you think people of Mkhambathini Local Municipality own enough land? Please explain

_____
_____
_____
_____

Part IV: Implementation of public policy at Mkhambathini Local Municipality

21. Can you please identify government departments that are involved in the implementation of rural development programmes at Mkhambathini Local Municipality?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

22. Are there any independent organisations that are also involved in the implementation of rural development programmes at Mkhambathini Local Municipality? If Yes, name them.

_____
_____
_____
_____

23. Who manages the implementation of rural development programmes at Mkhambathini Local Municipality?

_____
_____

24. Do you think the implementation of rural development programmes at Mkhambathini Local Municipality is being managed well? Explain your answer.

_____
_____

_____
_____

25. Who coordinates the implementation of rural development programmes at Mkhambathini Local Municipality?

_____
_____
_____

26. Describe how the coordination of various implementation activities takes place.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

27. From your experience, are there any challenges associated with coordination that you can identify? If Yes, what are they?

_____
_____
_____
_____

28. From your experience, is the implementation of rural development programmes at Mkhambathini Local Municipality being monitored and evaluated? If Yes, explain your answer.

_____
_____

29. How often is the implementation of rural development evaluated?

_____
_____

30. Do you think the implementation of rural development programmes at Mkhambathini Local Municipality is being approached from the top-down, bottom-up or combined? Please provide details.

_____

_____
_____
_____
_____

31. In your opinion, which approach do you think would best suit rural development? Please explain.

_____
_____
_____
_____

32. Is the approach adopted by Mkhambathini Local Municipality aligned to your political party? Please explain.

_____
_____
_____
_____

Part: Public participation at Mkhambathini Local Municipality

33. Do you think the implementation of rural development programmes can be successful without the participation of the local people living in the rural areas? Please explain.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

34. Who do you think is not included in the implementation of rural development programmes at Mkhambathini Local Municipality? Please explain.

_____
_____
_____
_____

35. Are there any local organisations in your ward? If Yes, please list them in the table below.

1.	5.	9.
2.	6.	10.
3.	7.	11.
4.	8.	12.

36. Which of the organisations listed in question 35 are linked to government departments?

_____
_____
_____

37. Which of the organisations listed in question 35 are independent?

_____
_____
_____

38. Between independent organisations and those linked to government departments, which ones do you think work closely with local communities? Please explain your answer.

_____
_____
_____
_____

39. Do you think that there is sufficient participation of local communities in the implementation of rural development programmes at Mkhambathini Local Municipality? Please provide details.

_____
_____
_____
_____

40. Do you think the public has sufficient power to influence key decisions in matters that concern them? Please explain your answer.

_____
_____
_____
_____

41. What structures exist to promote public participation at Mkhambathini Local Municipality?

_____
_____
_____

42. Which of the following forums of participation are mostly utilised by stakeholders? (Tick all that apply).

Ward committee	IDP Forums	Council of Stakeholders	Imbizo/Public meetings	Other

43. Do you think the rural people of Mkhambathini Local Municipality have the power to influence development activities that affect them? Please explain

_____
_____
_____
_____

44. Which of the following is achieved through public participation? (Tick all that apply)

1. Information-sharing
2. Consultation
3. Collaboration
4. Joint-decision making
5. Empowerment
6. Other

45. Are there any challenges of public participation that you have encountered at Mkhambathini Local Municipality? Please explain

_____
_____
_____
_____

46. Do you think public participation increases accountability amongst public officials at Mkhambathini Local Municipality? Please explain

_____
_____
_____
_____

47. What do you think should be done to improve the implementation of rural development programmes at Mkhambathini Local Municipality?

_____
_____
_____
_____

Part VI: The role of power in the design and implementation of rural development programmes

48. Do you think power is an important factor in the design and implementation of rural development programmes at Mkhambathini Local Municipality? Please explain your answer.

_____
_____
_____
_____

49. To what extent do you agree with the following statements:

	1. Strongly agree	2. Agree	3. Average	4. Disagree	5. Strongly disagree
Stakeholders are given the opportunity to Participate in the selection of development Programmes/projects.					
Stakeholders are given the opportunity to monitor the implementation of development programmes/projects.					
Stakeholders are given the opportunity to determine the location of development programmes/projects.					
Stakeholders are given					

50. Briefly describe the nature of power relations between the various stakeholders involved in the implementation of rural development programmes at Mkhambathini Local Municipality.

_____

_____

_____

Part VII: Accountability issues in the management and implementation of rural development programmes at Mkhambathini Local Municipality.

51. Do you know of any cases of corruption in the management and implementation of development programmes at Mkhambathini Local Municipality?

1. Yes
2. No

52. If your answer for question 51 is yes, what forms of corruption do you know of?

1.

2.

3

53. Explain how the identified cases of corruption were addressed.

_____
_____
_____
_____

54. How would you rate the level of transparency in the management and implementation of rural development programmes at Mkhambathini Local Municipality.

Very high High Low Very low

55. Are there any additional comments that you would like to make regarding rural development at Mkhambathini Local Municipality? If Yes, please go ahead.

_____
_____
_____

Thank you for your time and cooperation. I have learnt a lot.

APPENDIX 2: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR THE WARD COMMITTEES

Hello, my name is Gideon Sibanda, a PhD student at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. I am conducting a study for my PhD regarding public participation in the design and implementation of rural development policies and programmes in a post-apartheid South Africa. The study is being conducted at Mkhambathini Local Municipality.

I would like to ask you some questions regarding the public participation in the design and implementation of rural development programmes at Mkhambathini. This should take about I hour of your time. You do not have to answer any question you do not wish to answer. Your identity will remain strictly confidential and anonymous, and will only appear on any document or publication with your express permission. Please answer the questions as openly as possible. There is no "right" or "wrong" answer, rather your knowledge and experience are important to her about.

1. Mkhambathini Local Municipality is said to be the most rural and poorest of the seven local municipalities within uMgungundlovu District Municipality, can you explain why this is the case after more than twenty years of democracy?
2. Can you identify any rural development programmes that have been implemented at Mkhambathini since 1994?
3. Do the rural people of Mkhambathini own enough land?
4. What do people use land for?
5. Between men, women and the youths, who do you think own more land? Please explain.
6. Explain how the public has been included or excluded from the implementation of rural development policies at Mkhambathini.
7. As a ward committee do you think you have the power to influence development activities in your ward? Please explain.
8. Please describe the forms of public participation practiced at Mkhambathini.
9. What are the challenges of public participation that you experience as a ward committee?
10. What do you think should be done to improve the implementation of rural development programmes at Mkhambathini?
11. Do you have any other concern you would like to raise regarding public participation and the implementation of rural development programmes at Mkhambathini?

APPENDIX 3: INFORMED CONSENT

University of KwaZulu Natal

Private Bag X01, Scottsville
3209

Pietermaritzburg

South Africa

Dear Respondent

Informed Consent Letter

I Gideon Sibanda of University of KwaZulu Natal, kindly invite you to participate in the research project entitled

This research project is undertaken as part of my doctoral studies in Policy and Development Studies, which is undertaken through the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Policy and Development Studies Department.

The aim of this study is to investigate the challenges of implementation rural development policies and public participation in rural municipalities such as the Mkhambathini Local Municipality.

Participation in this research project is voluntary. You may refuse to participate or withdraw from the research project at any stage and for any reason without any form of disadvantage. There will be no monetary gain from participating in this research project.

If you have any questions or concerns about participating in this study, please feel free to contact myself or my supervisor at the numbers indicated.

Gideon Sibanda
Institution: University of KwaZulu-Natal
Telephone Number: [redacted]
Email: gjsibanda@gmail.com

Supervisor: Dr. Sharmla Rama
Institution: University of KwaZulu-Natal
Telephone number: 033-260 5309
Email address: stanton@ukzn.ac.za

Thank you for participating in this research project.

---------- ----------

Signature Date

I ..... hereby consent to participate in the above study.

Name: ..... Date: ..... Signature: .....

Supervisor's details

Dr. Sharmla

Institution: University of KwaZulu-Natal

Telephone number: 033-260 5309

Email address: stanton@ukzn.ac.za

Student's details

Gideon Sibanda

Institution: University of KwaZulu-Natal

Telephone number: [redacted]

Email address: gjsibanda@gmail.com

APPENDIX 4: GATEKEEPER PERMISSION

Private Bag X04 • Camperdown • 3720

Tel: 031 - 785 9317 • Fax: 031 - 785 1288 • E-mail: mosest@mkhambathini.gov.za

OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

07 October 2014

University of Kwazulu Natal

To whom it may concern

This letter serves to confirm that Mr Gideon Sibanda is given permission to interview the Councilors of Mkhambathini Local Municipality, to assist him with his focus of studies.

It would be highly appreciated if this information is considered.

Thank you Yours faithfully

[redacted]

Cllr E Ngcongo

Cllr E Ngcongo
Speaker

Mkhambathlnimunicipality

2014 -10- 0 7

Office of thO

APPENDIX 5: ETHICAL CLEARANCE

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL
INYUVESI YAKWAZULU-NATALI

06 November 2019

Mr Gideon Sibanda (207504805)
School of Social Sciences
Pietermaritzburg Campus

Dear Mr Sibanda,

Protocol reference number: HSS/1222/014D
Project title: Implementing Rural Development Policy in Mkhambathini (South Africa)

Approval Notification – Recertification Application

Your request for Recertification dated 15 October 2019 was received.

This letter confirms that you have been granted Recertification Approval for a period of one year from the date of this letter. This approval is based strictly on the research protocol submitted and approved in 2014.

Any alteration s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study must be reviewed and approved through the amendment /modification prior to its implementation. Please quote the above reference number for all queries relating to this study.

PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the school/department for a period of 5 years

Yours faithfully

.....[redacted].....
Professor Urmilla Bob
University Dean of Research

/ms

Cc Supervisor: Dr Anne Stanton/Dr Sharmla Rama
Cc Academic Leader Research: Professor Maheshvari Naidu
Cc School Administrator: Ms Nancy Mudau

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee
Dr Rosemary Sibanda (Chair)
Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building
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Telephone: +27 (0) 31 260 3587/8350/4557 **Facsimile:** +27 (0) 31 260 4609 **Email:** ximbap@ukzn.ac.za / snymanm@ukzn.ac.za / mohunp@ukzn.ac.za
Website: www.ukzn.ac.za

APPENDIX 6: TURNITIN

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