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Where leaders learn

Public participation processes in local economic development initiatives. the case study of the
Great Kei Local Municipality in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa

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ABSTRACT

The coming of democracy in 1994 in South Africa has seen the African National Congress (ANC) led government striving to improve the standard of living of the majority of previously disadvantaged South Africans through the introduction of local economic development initiatives. In doing so, local government encourages public participation in decision making on local economic development to ensure that these initiatives reflect the needs and expectations of citizens. However, public participation in local economic development initiatives is faced with challenges. Amongst others, citizens are viewed as lacking capacities to participate in the decision-making processes in local economic development initiatives. This is primarily attributed to lack of knowledge and skills. The literature also shows that lack of public participation is the result of insufficient resource allocation, ineffective ward committees, language barriers to communication, costly media used for communication, ineffective road shows and ignored community forums. What is not highlighted by the literature is how local government can capacitate communities to actively participate in decision making processes in local economic development initiatives. This thesis analyses challenges associated with the capacity of stakeholder participants involved in decision making processes in local economic development initiatives. This thesis draws on participatory development theory and capabilities approach to analyse public participation processes in the Great Kei Local Municipality. The researcher adopted a qualitative case study research methodology supplemented by purposive sampling and semi-structured interviews to select and collect data from 35 participants in total. The collected data was analysed using the thematic analysis method. The findings reveal that citizens' lack of knowledge and skills affect their ability to participate; public participation platforms are ineffective; there are insufficient resources to foster public participation process. The study recommended channelling of sufficient resources towards public participation processes to help educate and conscientize citizens to participate.

KEYWORDS

Capabilities Approach

Participatory Development

Public Participation

Local Government

Local Economic Development

Great Kei Municipality

Eastern Cape

South Africa

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ACRONYMS & ABBREVIATIONS

ANC	African National Congress
COGTA	Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs
CSO	Civic Society Organization
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
ICPD	International Conference on Population Development
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IDP	Integrated Development Plan
IEC	Independent Electoral Commission
LED	Local Economic Development
MStrA	Municipal Structures Act
MSysA	Municipal Systems Act
ODA	Official Development Assistance

OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
RSA	Republic of South Africa
RUESC	Rhodes University Ethics Standard Committee
SALGA	South Africa Local Government Association
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USAID	United States Agency for Intentional development

CHAPTER 1: BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION OF THE STUDY

Section 152(1) of the Republic of South Africa (RSA) Constitution makes it a requirement for national, provincial and local government to facilitate public participation. The Constitution prescribes several acts to encourage public participation in local economic development (LED). According to Nel and Rogerson (2005), LED is seen as an approach to community development that helps and promotes local citizens to work together to promote economic growth and better quality of life for all residents. LED is important in this study, because it is the duty of every municipality to develop the communities they are mandated to serve (Section 153(a) of RSA Constitution, 1996). In order to achieve LED, this study argues that local communities should be empowered to participate in different forms of participation that include nominal participation, instrumental participation, representative participation and transformative participation (White, 1996). In this regard, nominal participation means that less powerful people get involved in decision making through a desire to be included but this is used by powerful people to legitimize development plans. Instrumental participation believes that members of the community are used to provide their respective skills and knowledge in developmental projects. Transformative participation entails empowering people involved in decision making, particularly the previously marginalised, through altering structures and institutions that lead to exclusion and marginalisation of people (White, 1996).

There are scholars who advance public participation as a significant tool for LED. Ramanadham (2019) showed the importance of economics of public enterprises in local development. Ramanadham emphasizes the role that local people play in the development of their area and argues that public participation has a significant impact on LED and other projects because people organise best around problems they consider most important. Additionally, in a study conducted by MacLavery (2017) on the impact of public participation in community development, it was found that the process of public participation leads to the making of better decisions and judgements since local people always give best attention to the projects they own. By publicly participating in decisions that benefit them, the public tend to become skilled in initiatives that lead to local community development. This could only be achieved through effective management of community development programmes as well as having highly committed professionals, not only in the technical disciplines but also in the community (Rahim & Asnarulkhadi, 2010). Public

participation has been found to be directly related to the attainment of the goals of local economic development because it enhances the skills of the local people. Public participation in LED is not without its drawbacks. In most cases, participation tends to be devoid of equality and equity (Shabangu & Madzivhandila, 2017). This means that public participation lacks equal representation of various groups in the society. Furthermore, it also implies that the previously marginalised groups are not given equal opportunity to actively participate in decision making processes.

There are challenges associated with the capacity of the participating stakeholders such as local community members, government officials, and local authority figures. According to Campbell (1992), there are four common challenges to participation, namely; institutional barriers, cultural challenges, lack of relevant knowledge and financial incapacity. Campbell argues that cultural challenges originate from cultural differences of the participating stakeholders. Knowledge barriers are identified by Campbell (1992) as differences in, or lack of, knowledge capacities relative the public participatory arrangements in place. Section 152 (1) (e) of the Constitution of South Africa promotes community involvement in matters of local government. In this regard, this section of the constitution gives citizens the right to actively participate in decision making processes on matters that affects them in the local government. This also highlights where the citizens derive their right to participate in local government matters.

The literature on public participation and LED shows that public participation is a contested subject and its success towards development is heavily dependent on several factors. Nel (2019) argues that because there is little research that explores the current public participation processes on LED initiatives, the majority of local municipalities, if not all, in South Africa require research that will provide insights into the challenges of public participation processes on the success of the LED initiatives. This study contributes to the literature by providing insights on how public participation processes on LED initiatives unfold. Roman and Ruiters (2020), Nel (2019) and Nomdo et al. (2019) acknowledge that public participation is significant for LED, particularly for poverty reduction and employment creation. Shabangu and Madzivhandila (2017) argue that the existing participation processes for LED results in the exploitation of local communities. Pakade-Yokwana (2013) further argues that government processes are characterised by too many bureaucratic hierarchical structures that do not give room for ordinary people to make their

participation count Campbell (1992) argues that public participation for LED is important but affected by differences in stakeholders' capacities. Pakade-Yokwana (2013) argue several municipalities in South Africa are marred by challenges of lack of capacity, corruption and nepotism which can affect the communities' willingness to participate on LED.

Osborne (2010) argues for the inclusion of the public in the agenda of LED, to enable collective wisdom for society to use its resources wisely. Nonetheless, Osborne's study did not address the question of whether or not the local communities have the capacity to be part of the public participation process. It is not always possible to include individuals in the participation processes. For example, it is not effective to include individuals with little technical knowhow of participatory arrangements, especially if they do not know the requirements for community development. In this regard, advocating for the inclusion of community members in the public participation processes should be coupled with capacitating them so that they can acquire skills and knowledge to effectively participate in decision making processes.

Osborne's study did not address the readiness of government to work with the local communities which have given their consent to participate in various community development programs or initiatives. Even if local communities have experience in working with government, the issues of corruption and inadequate state capacity always remain an impediment to sound public participation. Therefore, this research seeks to understand whether local communities can have the capacity to form part of public participation, and whether their efforts can or have influence on LED.

1.2 Theoretical Underpinnings

Participatory development theory and capability approach are used as the conceptual lenses to understand public participation in local economic development initiatives in the Great Kei Local Municipality. The researcher saw it fit to adopt capacity approach theory in order to explore the possibilities and limitations of the capacity of the Great Kei community in participating in decision making processes in the LED initiatives. Participatory development is the basic needs approach to development (Cornwall, 2002). It is people centred development and seeks to engage citizens in any development project in their community (Cornwall, 2002). According to Mohan (2008),

participatory development is a method of development practice which is being employed by different local governances around the world. Participatory development is the active involvement of citizens in making decisions about implementation of programs and projects that affect their day to day lives (Slocum & Thomas, 1995). It is a way to better the effectiveness and efficiency of formal development programs in a community by involving local and external actors to work together on a particular project (Mohan, 2007). In this thesis, participatory development theory is used to analyse public participation processes in local economic development initiatives in Great Kei Local Municipality.

1.3 Research objectives and research question

The main objective of the research was *to acquire a deeper understanding of public participation processes applied to LED initiatives of Great Kei Local Municipality.*

The subsidiary objectives are:

- i. To understand the existing public participation processes in LED initiatives in Great Kei Local Municipality, Eastern Cape, South Africa.
- ii. To ascertain the extent of the current public participation processes on the success of the LED initiatives in Great Kei Local Municipality, Eastern Cape.
- iii. To understand how people's capacities affect their ability to participate in LED projects of the Great Kei Local Municipality, and
- iv. To explain how to enhance public participation processes in LED within the Great Kei Local Municipality, Eastern Cape.

The study sought to answer this main question: *“How can the Great Kei Local Municipality capacitate its residents to meaningfully participate in LED initiatives?”*

1.4 Methods, procedure & techniques

This study employed a qualitative exploratory case study to allow for the use of a variety of evidence from different sources such as documents and interviews (Collins, 2010; Creswell, 2009). The researcher sampled qualitatively. Qualitative sampling was used by researchers to make

sampling choices that enable them to deepen understanding of whatever phenomenon is under study (Creswell, 2009). The study used a purposive sampling method, which is selected based on characteristics of a population and the objective of the study (Collins, 2010). The case studied was the Great Kei Local Municipality which is divided into six wards. Participants were drawn from three wards: ward three under Qumrha, ward five under Morgan Bay and ward six under Chintsa. Great Kei Local Municipality is chosen because of its significant number of LED initiatives that promote public participation. LED is one of the critical initiatives included in the objectives of local government, and hence forms part of the important functions of municipalities (Municipal Structures Act, 1998).

Semi-structured interviews were used to allow the interviewing process to be as flexible as possible (Collins, 2010) in order to get adequate structured and unstructured information on LED in Great Kei Municipality. The researcher used semi-structured interviews with thirty local community members and five key informants that are involved or interested in LED. The key informants were one chief, one economic development practitioner, one public participation officer and two ward councillors.

1.5 Data Analysis

Having adopted qualitative methodology in this study, after gathering data through semi-structured interviews thematic analysis was applied as it is more applicable to the qualitative research methodology. The researcher systematically collected and organized interview transcripts to gain a better understanding of the phenomena (Robinson, 2014). Different themes that were related to the main research question were coded and classified, to easily answer the research question and address the objectives of the research.

1.6 Thesis Chapter Outline

This thesis is divided into six chapters. Chapter one outlines the background of the study, research objectives, methodology used by the researcher to gather data and a bit of the study theory. In chapter two, the researcher reviews literature on public participation in local governance, and local economic development. Chapter three focuses on the theoretical frameworks guiding the study, namely participatory development and capacity approach whereas chapter four presents the

methods, procedures and techniques employed in the study. Chapter five presents and analyses empirical data on public participation in local economic development initiatives in Great Kei Local Municipality. The empirical data is analysed in relation to the main research question, study objectives and theoretical frameworks guiding and informing the study. Lastly, chapter six provides a conclusion and recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO: A REVIEW OF LITERATURE ON PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT & LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (LED)

2.1 Introduction

The 1996 Constitution of South Africa encourages members of the public to be involved during decision-making in local government matters. The participation of citizens during policymaking, service design and in decision-making processes is a key to good governance in democratic countries. Section 195(1) (e) stipulates that citizen's needs must be responded to and public participation should be encouraged in policy making. In this regard, citizens have the right to participate in government affairs because public participation and engagement creates an opportunity to strengthen the democratic nature of governance, promote accountability and reduce corruption (Louw, 1994; Mzimakwe, 2010). In this regard, it also indicates the need for the citizens to participate in local economic development through the support of their respective municipalities. Based on this background, the chapter is going to define the term public participation from a democracy standpoint. Then the discussion will focus on public participation to better understand public participation in local economic development. The basis of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act 108 of 1996 and other regulatory policies are going to be analysed in this chapter. Lastly, the chapter will focus on the relationship between the local government and communities. The focus will be to explore the possibilities and limitations of the capacity of Great Kei community in participating in the decision-making processes in the LED initiatives.

2.2 Origin and Definition of Public Participation

2.2.1 Origins of public participation

Public participation was institutionalised around the mid-1960s in America through President Lyndon Johnson's Great Society programs (Cogan & Sharpe, 1986). In 1984, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), proposed a people-centred development strategy which incorporates the values of justice, sustainability, and inclusiveness because the prevailing growth-focused development strategy was unsustainable and inequitable (Korten, 1984). The United States Agency for International Development called for transformation of institutions, technology, values, and behaviour, to be consistent with their ecological and social realities

(Korten, 1990). In the report “Getting to the 21st Century” David Korten criticized the common development practice of increased economic output through natural resource depletion and suggested that people-centred development is the only way to develop sustainable communities. Korten further argued for external development partners to support objectives chosen by the people, building communities' capacity to manage resources and meet local needs independently (Korten, 1990). The Manila Declaration on People Participation and Sustainable Development, which was published in 1989, stated that people-centred development was the only way to achieve sustainable communities (Manila Declaration, 1989). As a result, the declaration was able to set forth principles and guidelines for enacting these transformations. According to the Manila declaration, the only way to enhance economic self-reliance and create reliable sources of income was through small-scale community actions (ELIC, 1989).

From 1990 to 2000, the concept of people-centred development fast gained popularity and recognition at several international development conferences like the 1992 Earth Summit, the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in 1994, and the 1995 Summit for Social Development (MOFA of Japan, 1996). In 1990, the United Nations Development Programme championed the concept of people centeredness or public participation in local development. According to a report published by the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in 1996, people-centred development was a target policy for all member countries. The OECD report of 1996 noted that democratic processes were essential in the development of communities in a people-centred manner, because they allow the public and their communities to create their own development goals and influence the decisions that determine their quality of life and standard of living. In 1996, the Official Development Assistance (ODA) annual report by the Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs was the first report by a nation to state that the objective of people-centred development was helping humankind lead an affluent and happy life (OECD, 1996). The OECD: Development Assistance Committee of 1999 further stated that public participation process in local economic development demands that citizens have the means to hold government officials and public institutions accountable and that governments act as enablers for the peoples' agenda, creating policies that enhance citizen actions (OECD, 1999).

The central elements of participation in the context of local economic development includes democratic processes, government accountability, access to relevant information and gender equality, suggesting that each community must have access to relevant and reliable information for its people, so that they make the best decisions for themselves and their communities (OECD, 1999). Global Communities (2018) argue that communities can engage in local economic development by first planning long-term objectives, allowing communities to prioritize and select quick impact projects to solidify support and galvanize local participation. Secondly, identify community priorities and identify community leaders through community assessments. Thirdly, design projects, and hold meetings with community leaders and enlist their support to mobilize community participation. Fourthly, mobilize resource investments and also hold community assembly meetings to elect local representation to coordinate program activities. Finally implement community development projects (Global Communities, 2018).

2.2.3 Defining public participation

The literature on participation and government documents on community development reveals some vagueness and paradoxes in defining participation especially when the public is involved in decision making processes (Phillips, Porticella, Conostas & Bonney, 2018). Various scholars, representatives, and participants in the domain of public participation have found that the concept ‘participation’ is frequently used synonymously with other words such as involvement, interaction and engagement, and its definition depends on the decision-making mechanism involved as well as on the essence of the participants in question (Abbott, 1996; Imperato and Ruster, 2003; Luyet, 2005).

According to Kelly (2001), the definition of participation tends to have different interpretations due to variations in the conceptualisation of words. The World Bank (1996e: 3), defines public participation as “a process through which stakeholders influence and share control over development initiatives and the decision and resources which affect them”. According to Chamala and Keith (1995), public participation refers to a social process whereby specific groups with shared needs living in a defined geographic area actively pursue identification of their needs, take decisions and establish mechanisms to meet these needs. Public participation is also defined as a process whereby the marginalised groups in a community take the initiative to shape their own

future and better lives by taking full responsibility for their needs and asserting themselves as subjects of their own history (Mulwa, 1998). Mulwa's interpretation of public participation is similar but relies more on the citizen engagement angle. The intention of marginalised communities is to win ground in terms of popular participation in participatory structures (Mulwa, 1998). The definitions by Mulwa (1998), Chamala and Keith (1995) and the World Bank (1996) indicate important concepts which are relevant for the study at hand. These definitions indicate that there is supposed to be shared control by stakeholders in participatory arrangements; and the involvement of stakeholders enables them to take full responsibility for decisions or participatory efforts that determine their future.

According to Barry (2013) and Marres (2012), public participation can be understood based on its political, social and material aspects. Politically, public participation requires the intervention of political parties through critical reflections on diverse topics, such as government, economics or even states (Barry, 2013). When these conversations take place together, different ties between the public and the state can emerge due to the forms of participation and the popular cultures involved. Socially, public participation can be seen as guaranteeing the participation of people in public decisions and encouraging them to discuss and vote on popular topics impacting their lives (Marres, 2012). The mechanism includes the collective actions of various people within institutions such as neighbourhood associations or labour unions.

Materialistically, public participation allows for the use of the publicly available infrastructure required for development, where infrastructure is beneficial to growth and development. Moreover, the definitions unpacked above show that public participation is important for various reasons. Due to the increase in the advocacy of public participation, governments across the globe are encouraging the general people to participate in public participatory processes and make choices that concern their lives (Nurudin, Hashim, Hamik, Rahman, Zulkifli and Mohamed, 2016; Zihao, 2017). Policymakers are increasingly becoming aware that public participation is not only helpful to the people, but it goes a long way towards ensuring that policies are viewed as sensitive to public concerns and improving the level of government (Nabe, 2016). Manaf, Mohamed and Lawton (2016) also note that public transparency and accountability are essential to public participation. To this end, Manaf et al. (2016) argue that the advancement of public participation

is based on the belief that civic engagement would be accepted as legitimate if the public were to engage in the creation of interventions and would have a better chance of sustainability.

2.3. Public participation in the local government sphere

Thanyani and Maloka (2014) argue that public participation in local government has been widely described as an important factor for local planning as it allows planners and decision-makers to recognise community needs and allows local authority leaders to assign local planning projects in their order of urgency. Public participation in local governance involves ordinary citizens assessing their own needs and participating in local project planning and budget monitoring (Thanyani and Maloka, 2014). Camay and Gordon (2004) note that public participation in local governance is accepted internationally as an essential component of sustainable development.

As a result, government practitioners benefit from this (Halstead, 2012). Government practitioners benefit through: improved governance (increased democratic legitimacy for institutions because of close links with citizens); greater social cohesion (including bringing diverse and sometimes hostile communities together, bringing ‘hard to reach’ and ‘disadvantaged’ groups into discussions); and improved quality of services, projects and programmes (including ensuring public service investment is based more on people’s expressed needs, reducing management and maintenance costs by reducing vandalism and misuse as a result of engendering a sense of ownership) (Involve, 2005). Other benefits include greater capacity building and learning by increasing understanding of public institutions and the way they work, enabling citizens to better access the services they need, and to understand the boundaries and limitations of different public bodies (Involve, 2005). Moreover, participation in local government affairs brings the public up to date on the new changes in their communities.

Participation in local government involves the decentralisation of the participation processes to enable accessibility by the local people to participate in decision making (Manaf, Mohamed and Lawton, 2016). According to Islam *et al.*, (2002) public participation is an accountability enhancing process by giving people the right to get access to all kinds of government information that were previously hidden from the public and to protect people against corruption and unfair action by government and should make government more transparent. Therefore, through citizen

participation public authorities can be held accountable for implementation. Public participation is important because it improves public resource management and reduces corruption, by making public servants and political leaders accountable to the people (Muriu, 2013; Whitton, 2001).

Furthermore, participation in local government requires transparency in the decision-making process in all the municipal operations and the existence of open governance that is fuelled by needs of the local population (Jurlina, Alibegović and Slijepčević, 2018). Additionally, participation in local government requires operations that are smooth running and efficient to allow the swift execution of communication between agencies making decisions and the public. This communication will act as an early warning system for public concerns and allow sustainable decision-making. This decision making can apply when public participation is a two-way process—where both the local authorities and the public can learn and gain benefit.

Public participation allows public values to be identified and incorporated into any decisions that will ultimately affect the community (IAP2, 2006). A study by Chess and Purcell (1999), on public meetings, workshops, and community advisory committees discusses public participation based on empirical evidence suggesting that public participation “success” is divided into two categories: those that evaluate the success of the participatory process and those that evaluate the success of the outcome of the process. Therefore, the form of participation through public meetings, or citizen advisory committees alone does not determine outcome success.

Public participation in local governance facilitates a strong civil society by giving society ample opportunity and an appropriate platform to freely approach and access government institutions and officials to discuss social issues that affect them. This offers an incentive for community members and other civic citizens to participate in civil society and community building programs (Chaney, 2016). The process must be a constant exercise of municipal government. As such, elected authorities must not only approach the community when it suits their goals, but rather foster a tradition of community interaction in all facets of local government, since participation goes beyond a one-time meeting between local officials and community representatives (Chikerema, 2013). Public participation in governance is thus an on-going process which should include community stakeholders in the preparation, execution and evaluation of programmes that enhance the well-being of their local areas (Mubangizi, 2010). It should be done by holding meetings,

workshops and advisory committees. The following should also be included: clarifying goals, beginning participation workshop early and investing in advance planning (Garipey, 1991).

For local government to be successful it should have strong leadership, effective government, and active citizenry. If local government legislation is successfully implemented, ‘invited spaces’ which are institutional, legal, organizational, political and policy created by governments for community members to create public value) could be used to share experiences thereby promoting public participation (Naidu, 2011).

‘Invented space’ is the informal, non-legislative space created by citizens to protest against local government inadequacies. In this alternative model, practices of citizenship extend beyond “taking up invitations to participate” in what Cornwall calls “invited” spaces of citizenship; they extend to forms of action that citizens innovate to “create their own opportunities and terms of engagement” (Cornwall 2002, 50). Mirafteb (2004), referring to these alternative spaces of participation as “invented” spaces of citizenship, has underlined the significance of expanding the arenas of practicing citizenship to include both invited and invented spaces of citizenship. Ngamlana (2016) suggested that civil society, including churches and other civil society organisations, should occupy these networked spaces, to be a buffer between government and the people. More active approaches in public gathering are being used to bridge the gap that existed between citizens of a nation and the state by recasting citizenship as practices. In this regard, it can be noted that citizens can be regarded as ‘makers and shapers’ rather as ‘users and choosers’ of interventions or services designed by power holders (Gaventa, 2004).

Public participation in civic politics includes the provision of spaces that will allow community members and community-based organisations to engage in local decision-making (Muronga, 2017). This is normally done at the municipal level by municipal governance who must take into account the language preferences and usage in the municipality (Mngom, 2010). SALGA, (2011:42), suggests that ward committees are also important in fostering relations between ward councillors and key stakeholders at ward level, such as traditional councils and community development workers. The communication channel is needed on matters affecting the ward, including representing the community on the compilation and implementation of the Integrated Development Plan (IDP), attending to all matters that affect and benefit the community and

ensuring active citizen participation in the municipality's budgetary process (COGTA, 2020). Municipalities must be the spearhead of social and political mobilisation, especially in economically marginalised areas, in order to encourage public participation in municipal matters (Williams, 2006). This is supported by Pieterse (2013) through arguing that the South African local government system was built to accommodate public participation in civic affairs by enabling community involvement in municipal matters.

According to the RSA Constitution, section 152 (1) (e) provides for public participation in the sphere of local government by directing local municipalities to involve communities in municipal government. Therefore, local municipalities must ensure that they rule in compliance with the interests of the communities they represent. In this respect, the local governance structures are designed to ensure that local citizens can participate and be active in civic politics. However, municipalities should not only depend on ward committees, but should make use of other ways of public participation. Mechanisms that can assist the municipality in its public participation processes are: public participation in oversight committee, skills development for officials responsible for facilitating public participation, structured community involvement in municipal processes, mechanisms for promoting participation by marginalised and vulnerable groups, continuous interaction with traditional leaders, and contributing to the Integrated Development Plan Representative Forum which is central to a municipality's ability to plan, budget and deliver on its mandate. The Integrated Development Plan is recognised as the business plan for the municipality and determines projects that a municipality plans to undertake in a given financial year (SALGA, 2013).

The mechanisms above are not exclusive but an attempt to assist municipalities to develop policies and processes to enhance public participation platforms in addition to the ward committee structures. Municipalities must develop systems best suited for their unique circumstances in order to ensure maximum public participation in municipal processes and decision making. The effectiveness of public participation will be determined by measuring to what extent the participation of the community influenced the decision making in the municipality (SALGA, 2013). The onus is on the municipality to put in place mechanisms and processes to enable public participation. The council must decide on the processes it wants to establish. It is the municipal

manager's responsibility to implement that decision and set up those mechanisms. Section 55(1)(n) of the Municipal Systems Act states that it is the municipal manager's responsibility to facilitate public participation in the implementation of the IDP. The executive committee or executive mayor is responsible for reporting to the council on the involvement of communities in municipal affairs. The executive committee or executive mayor is also charged with ensuring that public views are considered and with reporting on the effects of public participation on decision making (SALGA, 2011)

According to Camay and Gordon (2004:250-251), public participatory governance is important as “It offers the public a voice to make their views clear to decision-makers, legitimises legislative choices, can be used by under-represented and vulnerable communities and it is an instrument used by leaders to collect input from the grassroots communities on civic issues and needs”. Inclusive governance calls for all people of the community to claim their rightful place in local governance. Therefore, municipalities are required by law to establish ward committees as a way of encouraging community participation in municipal matters (DCG, 2016) and each ward committee must accurately reflect the ward’s registered community-based organisations in all relevant sectors. These include ratepayers’ associations, civic organisations, faith-based organisations, safety and security groups, environmental groups, education organisations, youth organisations, arts and culture groups, sports bodies, the business community, and designated vulnerable groups such as pensioners, women and children, and the disabled (Tschudin, 2016).

Ward committee members must regularly consult their sectors and advise the ward councillor on needs and priorities, including the budget, and make recommendations to the sub-council or other committees of council. Although these formal structures for participation exist, there is an increasing gap between these invited spaces and the informal, or invented, spaces that communities have created for themselves (SA Catholics Bishop Conference, 2016). In this regard, it means that the communities have shunned the use of formal channels of public participation and resorted to the use of informal channels and public platforms such as saloons and beer halls in which they feel more comfortable. According to Cele (2015), public participation helps in building informed and responsible citizens who have a sense of ownership of all amenities and services provided for

them. This also influences the outcomes of projects being undertaken and the community will support such developments.

2.3.1. The criticism on the implementation of public participation in local governance

Public participation can result in a potential conflict between participatory democracy and professional expertise, because the public cannot participate in all decision-making functions, especially those that need high technical competency (Burke, 1968). The lack of critical approaches to public participation has limited marginalized groups from utilising public deliberation to influence decisions that affect their lives (Benit-Gbaffou, 2009). The issues of power, skills and knowledge, gender, social and political marginalization also caused some of the hindrances to public participation local governance (Mngoma, 2010). While public participation is highly recommended at the top structures of governments, the participatory mechanisms put in place do not function properly (Benit-Gbaffou, 2008). These institutional mechanisms include ward committees, development forums, and integrated development processes. The inefficiency of these institutional mechanisms has been identified as one of the factors that affect proper public participation. For instance, ward committees have not proved as functional and effective as expected. Challenges range from lack of appropriate skills and resources of committee members to party politicisation, limited decision-making power of councillors, and limited community knowledge of ward committee functions and responsibilities (Piper & Deacon, 2008; Malabela & Ally, 2011). Moreover, Lund and Skinner (2004) argue that power distribution among the stakeholders determines their ability to participate in decision making processes, making the process of public participation void.

There is a knowledge gap to be bridged between citizens and government officials in complex decision-making processes especially when using specific technical applications like e-mail notifications or web-blogs. Local authorities cannot use television coverage and e-mail notifications only because these channels may not reach the targeted population who may lack electricity (Jiyane, 2017). As the use of the internet for two-way political communication increases, and the degree of participation improves, the incorporation and synthesis of large volumes of email messages and opinions received online may become increasingly difficult. The South African Government uses different platforms both nationally and locally to provide

information. These platforms are also used by the government to receive information from both individual and communities. These include mass communications through television, newspapers, and radio, which are the most popular means of passing information to people due to their wide reach (Andani & Naidu, 2013).

Government also makes use of several platforms that enable direct communication, intended rather as forms of engagement. Such face-to-face processes often take the form of public meetings such as imbizos, “Exco meets the people”, citizen forums and/or operate through structures like ward committees, budget fora and community development workers (Vivier *et al.*, 2015). With the advent of information technologies, new opportunities for communication are also emerging. These range from municipal websites to mobile applications and social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter. Citizens and government have both increasingly started to use these tools to communicate and interact with one another. Government efforts to expand access to ICTs, and to market government services through ICTs, especially into rural areas, have largely taken the form of community centres (Kariuki, 2009). These provide computers for people to access information related to business, government, education, and banking. They are also expected to “enhance the capacity of communities in utilizing ICTs” (Kariuki, 2010).

In urban areas, some of the metros are exploring the potential of mobile applications for a range of matters, including reporting road-related problems to the Johannesburg Road Agency, calling for police support in case of emergency in the City of Tshwane, or using a single portal to access municipal accounts, receive alerts, lodge complaints, and report problems in the eThekweni municipality. Various non-governmental apps and platforms have also been released; examples include the GridWatch, which keeps citizens informed about load shedding schedules (Vivier *et al.*, 2015). The use of government versus non-government apps may be indicative of government strategy and the potential of such tools to impact government-citizen relations.

The challenge for public managers and policy makers is to analyse and interpret the data and present it to citizens and political decision-makers in a comprehensible format (Milakovich, 2010). Despite the innovation of technology in various areas of governance and economic development sector, its use specifically to facilitate public participation in the urban planning process has been limited. The fundamental reasons for the limitation are the digital divide or the unequal distribution

of internet access, and the unique character of the public participation process which makes it difficult to replicate online. Difference in access to internet, speed, language and disability is one major challenge in using technology to enhance the participation process (Apeckchya, 2009). Other challenges include administrative barriers, technical barriers and educating the public about the use of planning tools. Every time new technologies are introduced the expense associated with new hardware and software creates an administrative barrier in an organization. Planning departments or planning firms cannot keep up with the rapid technology change. They fear that the technology they invest in-may be quickly outdated and may need replacement (Evan-Cowley & Maria, 2006). Technical barriers usually occur due to the lack of staff knowledgeable in both planning and technology. If planners are successful in creating a web-based tool, then it is not just sufficient to create the tool but it important to educate the public about its use. Many times, planning support systems fail because of the lack of awareness among citizens about how to use them (Apeckchya, 2009).

Currently there appears to be a dearth of sufficient information exchange between local municipalities and residents in South Africa. The diverse composition of communities, and particularly high levels of poverty and inequality, makes it difficult for local government to understand and meet the needs of all residents. Such differences in experience and resources require different information-gathering, communication and engagement approaches. Conventional participation mechanisms are also plagued by numerous constraints that have been widely acknowledged across the literature (Vivier *et al.*, 2015). Masiko-Kambala, Gorgens & Van Donk (2012) highlight the exclusion of certain groups, especially the poor. This is problematic given the country's history of marginalisation, as well as the importance of inclusiveness for strengthening governance and accountability (World Bank, 2004). Furthermore, citizens and communities often lack knowledge about government policies, budgets and operations, mechanisms for engagement, or even their own rights and responsibilities (Malabela & Ally, 2011).

Participatory mechanisms are sometimes criticised as lacking representativeness by disproportionately involving the wealthy, well-educated citizens. Also, skills are required for quick decision-making. Some administrators who organise the public engagement process are not

equipped with engagement skills. They may also have less experience in public participation. This criticism comes from community members who attend public gatherings. Skilled practitioners are critical to the success of participation as they can facilitate the process, maintain a good relationship with citizens, and generate better results (Vivier *et al.*, 2015). Although some agencies offer external service, courses or workshops to train the administrators about public participation, they are often expensive and do not take the context into consideration. In fact, a simplified engagement process that the practitioner can easily practice is more practical and beneficial.

Another major internal challenge in public participation is inadequate financial resources and human resources. Involving the public in decision-making is time-consuming and costly in terms of money and energy. Starting from the planning process, it needs a lot of time to establish a meaningful process that can effectively engage people and their thoughts. Administrators already have a heavy workload, so it is challenging for them to spend more time and energy on public engagement. In addition, the arrangement of forums, workshops or public meetings requires adequate funds, long preparation time, and enough staff (Vivier *et al.*, 2015). Comparing with the benefits, the transaction cost may be even higher. Therefore, conducting a participation project with a low cost is challenging. Public cynicism and distrust of the process can arise from a feeling that participation is not worth the effort; that decisions have already been made and the opportunity for public input is merely a formality. Overcoming these feelings among the public requires building trust within the community. The best way to counteract this is by being as open and transparent as possible (Cowell, Downe, Martin & Chen, 2012).

The way government organisations function is not always aligned to participatory processes because formal decision-making procedures are often lengthy in nature, which does not correspond to the expectations of citizens involved, who expect quick decisions and results (Mbambo, 2006). Also, municipality authorities must utilise a participatory approach that is more appropriate for development issues and allows a wide range of ethnic groups to participate. According to Mngoma (2010), public participation is about making sure those members of the community who have economic power or political power, or any other kind of power get accommodated in the processes of determining goals and policies on matters that affect their lives and businesses. The participation without redistribution of power is an empty and frustrating process for the powerless and it allows

the power holders to claim that all sides were considered whilst benefiting only certain powerful sectors (Mngoma, 2010). In some instances, community participation is not a genuine attempt to empower communities to choose development options freely but is rather an attempt to sell preconceived proposals. Participation processes often begin only after projects have already been designed. The process is not an attempt to ascertain the outcome and priorities, but rather to gain acceptance for an already assembled package. Community consultation may simply be to legitimate existing decisions, to tell people what is going to happen by asking them what they think about it. As a result, community participation becomes nothing more than attempts to convince beneficiaries what is best for them (Botes & Rensburg, 2000). Botes & Rensburg (2000) further argues that professional experts also dominate decision-making and manipulate, instead of facilitating development processes.

The trademark of 'development experts' are often that they always know best and therefore, their prime function is to transfer knowledge to communities who by definition 'know less'. The reason for this is that professionals are predominantly trained in ways that disempower and tell other people what they should do and think (Botes & Rensburg, 2000). This has contributed to professionals (unconsciously or consciously) regarding themselves as the sole owners of development wisdom and having the monopoly of solutions which consistently underrate and under-value the capacities of local people to make their own decisions as well as to determine their own priorities. It is therefore difficult for development planners to view community needs and opportunities through 'the eyes of end-beneficiaries' (Heymans, 1994; Rowlands, 1995).

Public participation helps to inform, educate and engage the public (Hanyane, 2005). The Municipal Systems Act (2000) also puts emphasis on ensuring that the staff provides the necessary support to the participants in order to be able to participate. This includes dissemination of information and the development of skills to participate effectively in local government affairs. It appears that often government authorities are sensitive about sharing information. In South Africa local municipalities are currently centres of political power struggles so that using them for communicating government information to the public is viewed from a biased perspective. Often even if information is disseminated it goes to selected publics that are aligned to the ruling party rather than the general public. In South Africa and other African countries information passed on

to the public through the municipality is regarded as biased and belonging to voters of the ruling party rather than the country (Sebola, 2017).

In developing countries such as South Africa the publication of municipal proceedings faces not only limitation of transcribing skills, but also dissemination of such information to the overall population has limitation. Some officials regard their transcription responsibility as work as usual and do not see the importance of sending such information to the public. The poor people are often unable to access channels and receive relevant policy information (Warnok 2007). While the broadcasting of legislative proceedings is done and often very clear there are no local language interpreters of debates in the legislature for ordinary South Africans. In Africa many countries use English rather than local languages. This is done to avoid the use of one influential African language over others. Often it is argued that it is difficult for legislatures to move away from such traditional methods of political communication to the people. This was retained through colonialism and to date (Haase 2008).

Engaging with government on matters that impede development, civil society gets an opportunity to be mainstreamed and acquires knowledge, skills, and capacity. Society as a whole also experiences a different way of engaging and interacting with governance and democracy (De Villiers, 2001). Engagement can go through an integrated approach, crowd-sourcing, social media and Citizen Panels. According to Plummer, (2000), knowledge, skill and education among the different members of the population can determine the extent to which the public effectively participate in local government programmes and decision-making processes.

2.3.2 Gender challenges in public participation

Social inequalities along gender lines sometimes disadvantage women. This is because women and men have different views on some issues since they interact with the world differently. Women have largely been excluded from decision making at a local level and have relied on their collective capacity to influence planning and priority setting (Hassim, 2004). The obvious weakness of income inequality between men and women is disconcerting and probably the major contributory factor to social inequality in South Africa and also the differences in earning income show a declining trend for women (Hassim, 2004). A gendered analysis of economic participation

demonstrates that lower wages and the precarious nature of informal employment, creates difficulties for poor households, especially for women to make regular payments for services or contributions for social development (Dayal, 2010). Due their reproductive responsibilities of caring for families and attending to household duties, women spend their time on these activities as priority. In contrast there is a considerable portion of the population who do not access any type of media, including television, for information. Whether employed full time or part time, formally or informally, poor people, the majority of whom are women, have little time to access or engage with activities other than those required for economic survival. Because of this, these members of the community do not hear about public participation gatherings and some do not attend or participate even after hearing about the event.

Personal life conditions and day-to-day coping strategies have a higher priority as explained by Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Harsha & Njeri, 2011). *Izimbizo*'s are more widely accepted as a mode of participation. Even though both men and women support *izimbizo*'s and have high levels of interest in being part of government's decision-making processes, a comparative study of Southern African countries by UNRISD on decentralization using a gendered lens, found that traditional participatory methods are not able to advance gender equity at the local level because of the entrenchment of local relationships and power structures, particularly the power of traditional authorities (Beall, 2005). Narratives and case studies of local contextual factors impacting on participation by women highlight the continued demobilization of women and their effective engagement in planning and sustainable development (Shisana, 2005; Sadan, 2006).

2.3.3 Skills and knowledge for public participation

Important factors needed by the public are skills and knowledge to effectively participate in decision-making processes around government programmes (Plummer, 2000). The extent communities understand participatory processes and government procedure is affected by their level of education and knowledge. Therefore, local authorities should ensure public participation processes teach stakeholders about participation and the outcomes of participation. Understanding what happens in political institutions is another crucial aspect of knowledge about policy-making processes.

The findings in an article by Masango (2001) revealed that a large majority of respondents indicated that they do not understand what goes on in their local council and do not consider themselves to be well-informed about decisions made in Parliament. Language and literacy also seemed to be a problem. For instance, some respondents from disadvantaged communities complained about a lack of basic education that could have assisted them in a better understanding of the issues at stake. Some respondents acknowledged, during interviews, that their knowledge regarding the implications of certain decisions was limited, or that there were certain issues they did not understand (Masango, 2001).

2.4 Public Participation in Local Economic Development (LED)

There are scholars and officials who advance public participation as a significant tool for LED. Ramanadham, (2019) showed the importance of economics of public enterprises in local development. Ramanadham emphasizes the role that local people play in the development of their area and argues that public participation has significant impacts on LED and other projects because people organise best around problems important to them. Another study by MacLaverly (2017) on the impact of public participation in community development includes social, economic, cultural as well as environmental aspects- The goal is to develop members' capabilities and potentials to affect their well-being and quality of life through maximizing resources utilization to benefit them socially and economically. In MacLaverly's study, it was found that the process of public participation leads to the making of better decisions and judgements since local people always give best attention to the projects they own. By publicly participating in decisions that benefit them, the public tend to gain skills in initiatives that lead to local community development. This could only be achieved through effective management of community development programmes as well as having highly committed professionals not only in the technical disciplines, but also in the community (Rahim & Asnarulkhadi, 2010). Public participation has been found to be directly related to the attainment of the goals of local economic development because it enhances the skills of the local people.

Public participation in LED is not without its drawbacks. Nxumalo and Matsiliza (2020) conducted a study on public participation in LED with the focus on youth participation in local economic

development at uPhongolo Local Municipality. They discovered that youth participation should be broadened and be promoted by local officials and community leaders to enhance LED. One of the findings of this study is that public engagement is exploitative and dishonest to the point that most people, particularly those at the grassroots, are willing to offer their opinion for no reward. They also discovered that organizations involved in LED often lack awareness of community relations, power, cultural beliefs, and other factors that have a significant impact on participatory structures. As a result, this type of civic engagement continues to favour the more powerful people in various dominant positions to the detriment of the least powerful people in society.

Nyamahono (2017) conducted a study which examined how the voluntary participation of people in development oriented environmental management projects can enhance LED. This study was conducted in East London, South Africa; the participants being women in the marginalised coastal communities in Buffalo City Metro. The study found that those who are in the top echelons of power in municipality who initiates and implements decisions tend to benefit from the LED initiatives at the expense of the voluntary marginalised female participants. This means that the LED initiatives are driven to benefit those who hold powerful positions.

While public participation is seen as a necessary move for LED, especially in the reduction of poverty and job creation, it has been associated with its tendencies to hinder success in particular ways (Campbell, 1992). Campbell argues that despite people's willingness to participate in LED, several municipalities in South Africa are plagued by challenges such as lack of fairness. People face many constraints that hamper their ability to participate in public meetings and these constraints are time, language and access to information.

Municipalities also experience poor distribution of important information for LED. In some instances, the institutions leading public participation processes for LED such as ward committees often lack the necessary or adequate expertise to ensure the success of participatory processes (Gaventa, 2005). Gaventa further argues that there is a need to work on participation from 'both sides of the equation': that is, to increase both the participation of civil society, and the responsiveness of government institutions. This means it is also important for civil society to increase its participation in decision making whereas the government institutions such as the municipalities should commit to their constitutional obligations of enabling public participation.

Finally, cultural problems are rooted in cultural differences for example; some cultures will gather at imbizo, a gathering, usually called by a traditional leader but will not attend public participations called on media, within the participatory agreements administered by society or organisations (Campbell, 1992). Cultural variations in the nature of the management of local development may have occurred in the case of this study. Local communities, for instance, have particular cultural ways in which they perceive development. For traditional and cultural protocols might have been in contrary to institutional LED processes. The LED processes in this regard were dominantly guided by the institutional stakeholder's organisational culture, such as the culture of the relevant municipality. This eventually leads to different and conflicting cultures where on one hand there is the societal culture and on the other hand there is the organisational culture. In the end, Campbell (1992) note that LED tends to be affected due to the differences in the cultures of the stakeholders identified here.

For the relationship between public participation and local development to be successful, some factors need to be taken into consideration. For example, factors such as the level of expertise of the participants play an essential role for LED to be accomplished. Brighton and Swift, (2016), suggest that various solutions to challenges should provide a public participatory structure for LEDs. For example, administrative professionals discuss issues that are predominantly technological or organisational, whereas political office bearers address issues that are politically oriented. For this reason, some scholars are of the view that effective processes of participation are those where the institutional stakeholders should be at the front of every participatory arrangement as they are considered to have an institutional understanding of LED prospects (Diamond, 2017).

Osborne (2010) advocates for the inclusion of the public on the LED agenda to allow society's collective wisdom to use its resources wisely. Osborne (2010) maintains that the governance process can only be successful if the regulated consent is given to the institutional stakeholders by the local communities, so that the power holders can be challenged. Osborne (2010) mentions that it is not effective to involve individuals with little technical knowledge of participatory agreements, especially if they do not know the community development criteria. In comparison, the study did not discuss the government's willingness to collaborate with local groups, provided

community willingness to engage in multiple projects or measures for economic advancement. While local communities might also have expertise to deal with the government, the problems of corruption and insufficient state capability are still inevitable (Andrews *et al.*, 2017). This will have an overall impact on the inclusion of all the participants in LED processes.

Other studies done by Bryson *et al.* (2013) as well as Rowe and Frewer (2000) also emphasise the involvement of multiple stakeholders in public participation. Bryson *et al.* specifically mention that this can only be successful if there are accountability measures. If there is good governance in terms of accountability, the public participation processes become effective in the sense that all the participants will be held liable for their actions in the participation process. By holding every participant accountable, the chances of increasing the success of LED become high. Rowe and Frewer (2000), speak of ensuring that there is transparency in the public participation processes. In this light, Rowe and Frewer argue that it becomes clear how public participation for LED is administered, and it also becomes easy to hold participants accountable if the goals of LED are not met. Furthermore, it enables developmental processes to be tracked in terms of meeting sub-goals of LED. However, Rowe and Frewer argue that transparency is not always possible, especially if, for sensitivity or security purposes, any information has to be hidden from the public. As a consequence, the public participation process for LED tends to be biased towards the institutional stakeholders.

As Moschidis and Ismyrlis (2018) note, public participation for LED can be effective if there are three elements available at the disposal of the general public, particularly the marginalised communities. Firstly, the general public are expected to have the right expertise and skills in order to improve the outcomes of their participatory efforts in local development. This suggests that without a knowledgeable effort to empower the vulnerable, changes cannot be accomplished. Exchanging talents and abilities by several preparatory steps are needed to guarantee that the transition is attainable. Secondly, the public participatory process should be backed by capacity building which ensures that individuals have the requisite services available (Moschodis and Ismyrlis, 2018). Thirdly, the establishment of efficient and competent administrative and structural structures should be taken into consideration. This ensures that those in the administration have expertise and knowledge in enabling public participation process (Nurudin *et al.*, 2016). Having

discussed these elements, the following section reviews literature on the institutional frameworks that guide public participation.

2.5 International legislative and policy frameworks guiding public participation

The international community, in a bid to improve public participation among countries, is currently embarking on moves to improve accountability, participation and transparency in the LED processes. (Mossad, 2021). One of the important global frameworks for public participation towards LED is the Rio Declaration of 1992 which is a brainchild of Earth Summit. Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration emphasises the importance of public access to information which is important for LED. Public access to information is important in the sense that it creates the provision with which the general participants or grassroots communities can participate in LED. Through the Rio Declaration, the governments are mandated to encourage public participation in decision-making processes and also in the formulation of local, provincial and national policies that aim towards the achievement of sustainable development goals.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) an international legal instrument emphasize that public participation plays a key role in as far as democracy is concerned (Stec and Jendroška, 2019). It points out that public participation plays a significant part in the formation of a transparent, participatory and accountable governance model. This means that people have the freedom to choose their political, economic, social, and cultural preferences. UDHR (2007) states that it is the primary role of the local government to ensure democratic and accountable governance for its communities with the aim to ensure provision of services in a sustainable manner.

UDHR (2007) further encourages community involvement in decision making processes in the local government. UDHR (2007) stresses the notion of democracy in local economic development. It defines democracy as a form of government in which the powers of the majority are exercised within a framework of constitutional restraints designed to ensure that all people have access to certain individual and collective rights, such as freedom of speech and religion.

Public participation also is emphasized in United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs: Division of Sustainable Development Agenda 21: Preamble Chapter 23.2 states that one

of the fundamental prerequisites for the achievement of sustainable development is broad public participation in decision-making. Furthermore, in the more specific context of environment and development, the need for new forms of participation has emerged. This includes the need of individuals, groups, and organizations to participate in environmental impact assessment procedures and to know about and participate in decisions, particularly those that potentially affect the communities in which they live and work. Individuals, groups and organizations should have access to information relevant to environment and development held by national authorities, including information on products and activities that have or are likely to have a significant impact on the environment, and information on environmental protection measures.

2.6 South African legislative frameworks guiding public participation

2.6.1 The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa

Legislative measures are crucial in the participation of the local government since the national government or authority has a keen interest in the activities or initiatives carried out in local communities (Chowdhury and Aktaruzzaman, 2016). The Constitution requires municipalities to expand participation opportunities by deploying appropriate structures and services closer to the people (Mogale, 2005). Section 152(1) of the Constitution claims that local government must allow for representative and responsive government and promote citizen participation in local government matters. Additionally, Section 195(1) (e) of the Constitution emphasizes the role of public participation in defining the solution to people's needs and promoting community participation in policymaking as part of the fundamental values and principles guiding public administration.

Murray (2006) pointed out that South Africa is a constitutional democracy; therefore, all laws have to be respected by every individual or organisation-operating in this country (Muntingh, 2007). As such, any law that is inconsistent with the Constitution is rendered null and invalid. The Constitution is a basis for public participation in local government and LED because it guides local authority agencies to engage communities in policymaking (Govender & Reddy, 2011). Maphazi (2012) notes that, public participation in local government is a constitutional responsibility of every citizen in South Africa. De Visser (2009) points out that public participation plays an

important role in the democratisation of the local government sector. Democratic participation leads to a democratic society because it guarantees the participation of people in LED matters. In brief, Section 152(1) (e) of the Constitution provides for public engagement in the sphere of local government by directing local municipalities to include local communities on all aspects of LED.

2.6.2 The Municipal Structures Act (1998b)

The Municipal Structures Act 117 of 1998 is the central legislative guide for South African local government matters. This Act provides legislative guidelines on how to organise the municipal boundaries, local councils, and its government. Chapter 2, Section 2 of the Act requires municipalities to work to achieve government goals as laid down in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) with due regard to their ability and authority to do so. Among the priorities that municipalities will accomplish is to establish proactive and versatile mechanisms for public participation to ensure that residents and civic associations are engaged in the execution of municipal duties. Under this Act, community needs should be assessed yearly, and citizens should be active in the process of evaluating municipal goals as set out in the enacted IDPs. The implication of this legislative framework is that it constantly checks on the clauses that have an implication on the public participation for LED.

Chapter 4, part 4, section 72-78 of the Municipal Structures Act requires municipalities to set up ward committees in an effective electoral system, to be governed separately by the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC). The key function of ward committees is to obtain maximum engagement of citizens in matters relating to local government and to encourage good governance. If the committee has been elected after the official award process, the Act stipulates that the ward councillor is automatically the committee chair. In his/her absence, he/she can delegate his/her powers to one of the members. The Act further stipulates that the Municipal Council shall devise and recommend rules for the election of ward committee members. The appointment of the members of the ward committees will be the first step in ensuring public participation (Chapter 4, part 4, section 73-74 of the Municipal Structures Act). This is due to the fact that these committees work at municipal level, hence; they have access to the grassroots communities to the extent that they can initiate public participation processes towards LED.

In addition to stipulating the term of office of ward committee members, the Municipal Structures Act also explicitly defines the responsibilities and duties of such committees and their relationship with public participation. A ward committee may make recommendations on any matter affecting its ward to the ward councillor; or through the ward councillor, to the metro or local council, the executive committee, the executive mayor or the relevant metropolitan sub-council; and has such duties and powers as the metro or local council may delegate to it in terms of section 59 of the Municipal Systems Act, 2000 (Act 32 of 2000).

The Municipal Council will also offer support services, such as financial, technical and administrative support to ward committees. (MSA, 1998, Chapter 5, section 88). This is intended to ensure that the committees are properly motivated and resourced to perform efficiently and consistently on their task. The Act also directs the processes to be followed in dealing with ward committee vacancies and the removal of the ward committee structures. The provision of these services to the ward councillors is also an important step towards public participation. By virtue of them being ward councillors and having different resources at their disposal, the ward councillors will be in a position to initiate public participation processes required in LED. Thus, the Municipal Structures Act will position different institutional stakeholders in places where they can effectively facilitate developmental processes at the municipal level.

2.6.3 Municipal Systems Act of 2000

The Municipal Structures Act is a guideline mechanism for municipalities to ensure that a well-working local governance arrangement complements different stakeholders in the municipality. This is to be achieved by participatory governance and the recognition and constructive participation in local undertakings of neighbouring networks is central to this. The Municipality will create a participatory framework along these lines to ensure that local networks are strengthened by gathering data and using minimal building structures. (MSA 32 of 2000, Chapter 6, section 38-40). This act does not actually end there; it also offers explanations, point by point, about how participating in the network will be impacted. The crucial means by which this is achieved is to ensure the inclusion of democratic institutions developed in the Act. The act also prepares the network for the possibility of carrying complaints or requests from local communities to find the relevant experts until such objections have been duly addressed and dealt

with. Individuals from the Ward Advisory Committee claim the right of attending municipal meetings, consulting for the community, assume network partnerships and traditional experts. The outcomes of these meetings will be regularly sent back to the local network to ensure that they are kept updated of all the problems associated with their lives and regarding public participation (MSA, 2000: Section 17).

In fact, the Municipal Systems Act stipulates that the municipality is responsible for educating different parties, including the local communities on the numerous resources and processes that exist to encourage citizen participation (MSA, 2000: Section 68). In addition, the Municipal Systems Act is certain of the rights and obligations of all stakeholders within local government structures who recognize the system as well as municipal government concerns, the board and change. Despite the above, the Act stipulates that the municipality shall consider the incompetent citizens.

Public participation in LED can include conducting public hearings, public notice in papers and communicating on radio communications or some such form of communication. The Act also arranges for the public and media to travel to meetings of the Local Board and Councils. Public and media should not be banned from any meeting unless the meeting's content suggests that it is wise to exclude them. The clear requirements under which a meeting can be closed must be defined by means of the priorities or by-law of the chambers. All these elements will ensure that public participation is well designed to ensure that it provides support to LED processes.

The Act charges municipalities to keep the public informed by accepting a log paper as a part of public participation towards LED. Adherence to the provisions of the Municipal Systems Act would certainly contribute to higher rates of public participation. Additionally, the Municipal Systems Amendment Act, Chapter 4, Section 7 states that an IDP representative body must be involved in the process. With the support of the Representative Council of the District Municipality, this forum supports the process of public participation in LED to ensure that local concerns are represented in the IDP. Section 7 of the Municipal Structures Amendment Act also stipulates that the role of ward councillors and ward committees in this case is to ensure that meetings are held to remind local residents of the IDP's progress. Public participation ensures that

democratic input will influence the decision. This includes participatory, democratic, or political governance (PTP, 2009).

Based on the legislative frameworks above, the international legislation measures and those based in South Africa are there to ensure the promotion of public participation towards development. The whole idea behind the encouragement of the public to form part of the public participation processes is to ensure that their voices are heard in the processes of LED.

2.7. Conclusion

Having looked at views of various authors on public participation in local government, one can conclude that public participation is an integral part of democracy. The chapter showed that there are international and national legislative and policy frameworks that guarantees public participation such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and section 195(1) (e) of the Constitution of South Africa respectively. It has also been shown that there are mechanisms in place to facilitate public participation in LED initiatives which are nevertheless faced with a lot of challenges such as lack of skills and knowledge on participation, ineffective ward committees as well as the lack of resources to ensure effective public participation. Therefore, there is need to educate and conscientise citizens on public participation as well as to ensure that sufficient resources are channelled towards public participation process. This section has also shown the importance of public participation which includes aspects such as offering the public voice to make the views clear to decision makers, legitimises legislative choices, ensures accountability and transparency as well as improving service delivery. Public participation at local government is faced by multiple challenges which negatively its effectiveness. Additionally, although various mechanisms of public participation in local government are put in place such as ward committees, people's capacity to participate in decision making remains a big challenge. Having looked at the literature, the next chapter will look at participatory development and capability approach as theoretical lenses to inform and guide this study.

CHAPTER THREE: PARTICIPATORY DEVELOPMENT AND CAPABILITIES APPROACH AS THEORETICAL LENSES.

3.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the theoretical framework guiding and informing this study. A theory is a ‘‘set of interrelated concepts, definitions, and propositions that present a systematic view of phenomena, and relations among variables, with the purpose of explaining and predicting a [social] phenomena’’ (Kerlinger and Lee 2000 cited in Kivunja, 2018:45). Additionally, sociological theories help to understand how society is ordered, to understand how society changes, to understand our own role within society, and to understand how to improve and change society in the interests of its citizens (Stewart and Zaiman, 2014). Based on this background, it was decided to use participatory development theory supplemented by the capability approach as theoretical lenses for this study. Participatory development is the active involvement of citizens in making decisions about implementation of programs and projects that affect their day to day lives (Slocum & Thomas, 1995). It is a way to better the effectiveness and efficiency of formal development programs in a community by involving local and external actors to work together on a particular project (Mohan, 2007). The researcher saw participatory development as relevant because the study sought to understand public participation in decision making processes in the local economic development. This chapter first provides understanding of the concept of participatory development. It moves on to focus on different participatory approaches relevant in this study. Then it discusses how the capability approach is relevant to the study.

3.2. Conceptualizing with participatory development

The concept ‘development’ is about the improvement of people’s lives in terms of social, economic, environmental, cultural, and political aspects (Coetzee, 2001; Cypher & Diethz, 1997). Participatory development is the basic needs approach to development (Cornwall, 2002). It is people centered development and seeks to engage citizens in any development project in their community. Participatory development is the active involvement of citizen in making decisions about implementation of programs and projects that affect their day to day lives (Slocum & Thomas, 1995). According to Mohan (2008), participatory development is a method of development practice which is being employed by different local governances around the world.

According to Chambers (1997) people centered development ensures that illiterate, marginalized people of the community represent their own livelihoods and do their own analysis and come up with their own solutions. People centered development also increases the potential of a population's ability to be self-determining by seeing local communities making decisions rather than only contributing to important decisions (Cornwall & Gaventa, 2001).

Participatory development projects conducted by the citizens of a community are better at addressing their local needs and are more relevant to local populations than traditional development projects (Jennings, 2000). The participation of those who will benefit from the program, with local authorities can make the project more successful and sustainable. This is done to enhance respect, communication and learning between local authorities and those they serve (Cornwall, 2002). Similarly, Mohan (2008) argues that participatory development enables mutual learning through communication, respect, listening and learning between development workers and those they serve to achieve more applicable, useful outcomes.

According to Chambers (1997), in the so-called top-down approach to development, the entire process of formulating and implementing policies is carried out under the direction of developing country governments and the people tend to be put in a passive position. The social strata that receive the benefits of development have their position as beneficiaries reinforced by this system for promoting development, leaving unsolved deep-rooted problems of poverty and disparities between urban and rural areas. Therefore, participatory development can cause a shift in power relations by valorizing voices that usually go unheard by political and development groups. This speaks to the idea that those who promote this view of participatory development would like to see local communities making, rather than only contributing to, important decisions. These activists hope that participatory development will lead to better civil engagement, whereby people are able determine the ways their own communities function (Cornwall, 2002; Mohan, 2008). Participatory development is a form of development that heightens sustainability and self-reliance and aims for the realization of social justice by improving the quality of people's participation (Chambers, 1997; Cornwall, 2002).

The areas in which participatory development takes place exist on a diversity of levels, ranging from the level of individual, organizations supporting projects, to the communities and local

societies that surround them, up to and including the national level. It is at the levels of rural communities, local societies, and the state that all the aspects of participation in the economy, society, and politics overlap. Mohan (2008) argues that local societies and groups of rural communities can serve as administrative and developmental structures units and direct the focus of participatory development on increasing the quality of participation in these local societies.

According to Tufte *et al.* (2009), participatory development is not only about constructing or restructuring formal institutions, but also to introduce mechanisms from informal institutions in local societies to enhance the effectiveness of existing formal institutions. In this regard, it simply means that informal public platforms such as salons and pubs amongst others are platforms where citizens sometimes discuss and articulate community issues that affect them which should also be encouraged.

Furthermore, efforts to promote a change in the perceptions and enhance the capabilities of public officials and to improve or streamline the government agencies and channels will facilitate and improve the degree of effective and sustainable participation in local societies (Tufte *et al.*, 2009). Cornwall (2002) further stated that when people who live and work in traditional economic and political systems form communities of interest such as grassroots groups or business enterprises, they must also establish new behavioral norms and build a new order within each of their respective organizations by learning from each other, accumulating experience through both failures and successes, settling disagreements that arise among them, and training the next generation of leaders. Support from local organizations for these activities is an important part of efforts to create the conditions for sustainable participation (Siddiqui, 2008). From the discussion on the concept participatory development in this section, one can conclude that it improves the socio-economic well-being of the community. The next section will unpack types of participatory approaches to development and lastly capacity theory will be discussed.

3.1. Types of participatory approaches to development.

This section will first briefly discuss kinds and types of participation before focusing on participatory development. The participatory development approaches are White's Typology of Interests and Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation. These approaches are discussed below.

Jennings (2000) stated that participation can be of three kinds: involuntary participation, transient participation motivated by self-interest, and voluntary, sustainable participation. In this regard, it therefore means that when evaluating public participation in decision making processes in LED, one has to understand the types of participation and how they differ in determining the success of LEDs in meeting the interests of the citizens.

Tufte and Mefalopulos (2009) further stated that participatory development features four different types of participations. Passive participation refers to where the project primary stakeholders are informed about any developments with public's feedback minimal or non-existent. Participation by consultation entails that stakeholders answer questions posed by outside experts with all decision-making done by external professionals that are under no obligation to incorporate stakeholders' input. Participation by collaboration applies where primary stakeholders participate in the analysis of predetermined objectives of the project. Lastly empowerment participation applies where primary stakeholders initiate the project process and analysis, which in leads to joint decision-making about the project execution (Tufte & Mefalopulos, 2009).

3.1.1. White's Typology of Interests

In addition to the theoretical discourses of participation, White (1996) looks at participation in the form of a Typology of Interests presented below:

Table 3.1. : White's Typology of Interests

Form of participation	Top-down: what are the interests of the authorities?	Bottom-up: what are the interests of individuals in a community?	Function: what is the main aim of participation?
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Nominal	Legitimation – to show they are doing something	Inclusion – to retain some access to potential benefits	Display
Instrumental	Efficiency – to limit funders’ input, draw on community contributions and make projects more cost-effective	Cost – of time spent on project-related labour and other activities	As a means to achieving cost-effectiveness and local facilities
Representative	Sustainability – to avoid creating dependency	Leverage – to influence the shape the project takes and its management	To give people a voice in determining their development
Transformative	Empowerment – to enable people to make their own decisions, work out what to do and take action	Empowerment – to be able to decide and act for themselves	Both as a means and an end, a continuing dynamic

Source: table adapted from White (1996, p. 7-9)

Such a ladder-shaped typology of participation attempts to decide whether and why the already dominant power systems will either generate real participation or replicate alternative modes of participation (White 1996). Therefore, when it comes to decision-making and execution of decisions, the power relationships in a society will decide whose priorities dominate over others. This means that those who are powerful in society use their power and authority to circumvent the will of the ordinary and citizens, hence the decisions and priorities of ordinary citizens are outweighed.

White (1996) conceptualises participation across the continuum of interaction as a complex mechanism that evolves over time and is filled with conflicts and competing theories. This continuum defines the four main types of participation and characteristics are given next to each

type. The numerous interests are represented in the second and third columns, namely top-down versus bottom-up. The desires of those in charge who plan the participatory projects can in practise, contradict the interests of those at the receiving end of participation. The structure of this kind is inspired by the desire to hear the participants' voices, that is, their narratives about how they see participation and what they want to learn from it (White, 1996).

White (1996) gives the motivation of both the participants and the implementing agencies in developmental participation. In relation to nominal participation, a differentiation has to be made between top-down and bottom-up participation. White (1996) maintains that individuals attempt to show that they are doing something and is mostly done by occupants of powerful positions. By trying to show that they are involved in some participation, these powerful people tend to manipulate the less powerful individuals to do more work in exchange of little or no benefits at all for their efforts. Cornwall (2008) views nominal participation through the bottom-up approaches as mainly done by the have-nots with the intention of retaining some potential benefits that come out of participation.

Secondly, 'instrumental participation' is one form which sees participation being used as a means towards a stated end – often the efficient use of the skills and knowledge of community members in project implementation. White (1996) maintains that this form of participation is characterised by efficiency where the participants limit the funders' inputs and draw on community contributions thereby making the entire projects cost effective. In relation to 'representative participation' White maintains that the communities are significantly involved in the entire developmental and participative process (White, 1996).

The transformative participation rung gives the participants the propensity to make their own decisions and implement them during the participation process (White, 1996). This theory represents different agendas behind people's participation and the politics of participation, for example, the participants in the upper echelons of the organisations or the most powerful ones may talk about participation, but with only the intention to maintain the status quo. It is only at the 'transformative participation' rung that there is a common reason for participation where all the parties focus towards mutual development goals (White, 1996).

3.1.3. Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation

This section provides a discussion on the citizen participation theory by Arnstein (1969). More advances and other theories have been developed based on the Theory of Citizen Participation, both embedded in the Arnstein (1969) original phenomenon and dimensions. Although Arnstein's philosophy about participation has undergone several developments, the theory of citizen participation remains prominent in participatory literature, research, policy and practice, although it has been developed over the last five decades. Arnstein's theory was formulated initially to conceptualise political power dilemmas within the 1960s American urban planning system and later to be used in various development initiatives marked by citizen involvement.

As presented in the figure above, Arnstein's hierarchy describes participation as an eight-step hierarchy split into three phases: non-participation at the bottom, middle rungs - tokenism, and top rungs - citizen power. There are successive rungs from the level of Manipulation to the level of Citizen Control; Therapy, Information, Consulting, Placation, Partnership, and Delegated Authority (Arnstein, 1969). The successive rungs or rates of civic engagement each reflect the people's control over development or their role in managing some participatory structure in a given area (Arnstein, 1969).

Manipulation in participation – Arnstein (1969) defines the 'manipulation' type of public participation as a 'non-participatory' process in which some classes of citizens in society are put in some form of rubber stamp advisory boards or councils with the purpose to 'educate' and 'advise' local populations on such participatory schemes. To a certain degree, the participation arrangement committees carry out outreach programs to support the planned development and participative projects. Consequently, Arnstein (1969) argues that this degree of manipulation in the ladder of citizen participation may not imply true engagement but is merely an act of deceit through which participatory processes are channelled into the power holders' public relations vehicle to disseminate knowledge on such development initiatives.

Therapy in participation – Therapy in participation is typically associated with power-holders' corruption and dishonesty because they commonly correlate powerlessness with 'internal disorders'. Arnstein (1969) suggests that consultants or authority leaders' subject ordinary

residents to ‘legal community therapy’ through the manipulative and masquerading presence of ordinary groups in the planning sector in such a way as to create a type of ‘correct thinking’ in every participatory structure. Therapy theory by Arnstein (1969) specifically shows that those who have differing views than those considered ‘natural’ should be ‘healed’ of their ‘pathogens’ or mental disorders. However, that is troublesome, since it is unduly distorted to the advantage of the power-holders or the ruling classes, most of which are in the upper echelons of the institutions administering participatory negotiations. The power-holders’ demean other forms of thinking in the participation process, especially those offered by local participants who do not have considerable power over decisions within the participative context in consideration. In this study the therapy is appropriate but with reservations.

Tokenism in participation – Tokenism is characterized as a notion of making purely symbolic or perfunctory efforts to be inclusionary of members of minority groups, especially by employing a small number of people from under-represented groups to give the appearance that there is equal representation on the job. In Kanter’s seminal paper released in the 1990s, a token employee refers to an individual belonging to a minority group that constitutes an insignificant proportion of the company’s overall workforce (Kanter, 1993). Looking from a related perspective at the concept of tokenism, Hogg and Vughan (2008) argue that this is intended to establish the illusion that there is variety and inclusiveness in all ways while at the same time deflecting future prejudice allegations.

Placation in participation – Placation’ falls at the top of the spectrum of tokenism which representing the condition when local members begin to exert a degree of control in the participation. While tokenism still remains, the placation rung represents a step towards full citizenship (Arnstein, 1969). An example of the placation described by Arnstein (1969) is the situation where particular disadvantaged community leaders are appointed on committees, such as councils or neighbourhood watches. In a way, the participation of these people in municipal councils is a high degree of tokenism, but it is veiled as complete engagement. The few people who are members of municipalities who have entered into a participatory system are not usually delegates at all.

In brief, the placation method of participation encourages neighbourhood associations or well-deserved vulnerable members of local communities to have a voice in decision-making in structural participatory processes, but the power-holders maintain the ability to assess the efficacy and relevance of the advice given.

Delegated/citizen power in participation – While talks are going on between local players and members of the institutional stakeholders, the former are gaining momentum gradually and becoming active in participatory agreement decision making. Arnstein (1969) suggests that council leaders are assigned to decision-making positions in which they represent the vast majority and have actual democratic decision-making control. The ‘delegated power’ and ‘citizen power’ as a means of participation are largely distorted to the extent that the local participants have a substantial role to ensure transparency to them for a development project. There are major improvements at this point as the local people seem to have more control over development compared to the power-holders. Arnstein (1969) claims that, in order to overcome such differences, power-holders can attempt to sacrifice control or attempt to participate in power-sharing agreements instead of responding to the pressures of more powerful local participants.

3.1.3.1. Weaknesses of the Participation Development Approaches.

Having discussed White (19996)’s typology theory, it is also important to note that the theory is silent on the importance of people’s capacities to participate in their development. This is key and has been identified in the literature chapter as one of the barriers to meaningful participation. Arnstein’s Ladder of Citizen Participation is also not free from limitations. Firstly, the Ladder of Citizen participation views manipulative participation as a situation in which the power-holders in the participatory process coerce the less powerful individuals into agreeing to every process that is put before them. However, it should be noted that in certain cases the local communities may be performing their duties in good faith without being manipulated in any ways – a view which is contrary to manipulation rung in the ladder.

Secondly, unlike manipulation, which compares power-holders with weak ones, in actuality there are different individuals in community groups who see things in different ways and who have differentiated input based on a wide variety of diverse motives. Power-holders and powerless are

also not homogeneous blocs, as each group includes a number of divergent views, major differences, competing interests, and fractured sub-groups. Therefore, to assume that participation as manipulation happens as expected by the power-holders is an underestimation of the influence of the local people over decisions, particularly those that affect them. This is similar to the idea put forward by Abram (2005) that explains that individuals or groups are made up of individuals who have differences due to their diversity, influence over decision-making, norms, values and taste, among other factors which suggest that non-manipulation in participation must be viewed from different angles.

Thirdly, Arnstein's (1969) views tokenism as a form of participation where particular persons from the minority groups are placed in some organisational positions to disguisedly show a picture that there is a representation of such populations. Contrary to that, attention must be extended to groups that are 'neutral' from tokenism and actually participate in LED participatory arrangements for a good cause. It is likely that such neutral parties would act in good faith to serve their assigned positions and to represent their communities at large. In addition, the issue of participation 'therapy' presents a lot of gaps in the participation theory. Contrary to the wide view of the participation theory, it is equally important to understand that therapy, sometimes assumed to be camouflaged as citizen participation, may in some cases reflect legitimate participatory efforts. For example, with regard to public participation in LED, some participants may actually be operating ethically without them being subjected to therapeutic ideologies in any ways.

Fourthly, the study also considered participation by 'consulting' in a different angle. While Arnstein (1969) views consulting participation as one that is mostly skewed towards the needs and expectations of the power-holders and requires little input from large number of general participants, it is worthwhile noting that the 'numbers' do not represent actual performance. Perceiving the number of participants as a determinant for the success or failure of a participatory process is biased because people have different motives for participating, attending meetings or signing petitions. For example, in the event of community meetings arranged by the institutional stakeholders, neighbourhood committees or other community groups to 'inform' or 'consult' local communities about LED, some people may attend just to 'represent' their families or certain interests but without any attachment to the agenda under discussion. In light of this establishment,

this study takes it into consideration that some influential parties or power-holders may want to spread their tokenism agendas through consultation, but may fail to do so resulting in the distortion of their participatory framework. Considering the limitations of White's typology theory and Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation, the study also draws from a complementary theory – the Capability Approach to cover this gap.

3.2. Capability Theory

This research uses the Amartya Sen (1992) Capability Approach as the theoretical basis of human driven development. Capability Approach is widely debated in academia, making Sen one of today's most influential philosophers and economists. The capability approach is a highly influential theory in modern political science, social justice, development research, poverty and injustice studies, and public policy. The capability approach is defined by its preference of focusing on the moral culpability of the ability of people to achieve the kind of life they have reason to value (Robeyns, 2007). The distinguishing feature of the capacity approach is its focus on what people are effectively able to do and to be (i.e. their capabilities). Capabilities are related to the principle of inclusion and represent a real opportunity for people to lead. This points to two essential human development concepts, as developed by Sen, namely capacities and functions.

3.2.1. Capacity as part of the Capacity Theory

Capacity is "the ability of a person to perform valuable acts or to reach valuable states of being and it represents alternative combinations of things that a person can do or be capable of doing" (Sen, 1992:28). Capacity is the ability of an individual to perform useful actions. It also reflects the alternate combination of things that a person should do or be able to do (Sen, 1993). Thus, the skills or capabilities reflect separate 'combinations of roles' (Sen, 1999). Capability is often a collection of vectors of working, representing the right of an individual to lead one form of life or another (Sen, 1995). These fundamental capacities refer to the right to do any of the basic tasks required for one's life or to keep one out of poverty.

According to Sen (1992), the value of a person's skill derives from two different yet interrelated influences. The first is the functioning which entails the various states of a human being and activities that human beings can undertake such as being educated whereas capabilities refers to

real opportunities that human beings have to achieve the activities such as being educated (functioning). In this case, it simply means that the activities that people undertake in life falls under functionalities and the real opportunities that people have to get in order to achieve the activities refers to capabilities. Capabilities further refer to the notions of equality, representing the actual possibilities people have to pursue or accomplish a certain form of life. Capacity to be successful must consider the socio-cultural aspects that minimise the wellbeing of humans within society (Sen, 1987; 1992; 2004).

The second link between well-being and ability brings into consideration the particular way well-being is accomplished, depending on the desire to function. Throughout this sense, the process of selecting itself can be a desirable aspect of life, and a life of true choice of real choices can, for that reason, tend to be richer (Sen, 1992; 2004). Capability here can improve the functioning of society. Sen (2004) does not mention the skills needed for human growth to be realized in society. Specifically, the skills reflect the individual's freedom to perform useful functions.

According to Sen (1993), the ability of an individual, depends on a number of variables, including personal characteristics and social arrangements. In other words, potential as actual opportunities engulf personal skills as well as social opportunities such as safety nets, social services and economic opportunities. This combination creates a collection of capabilities that refers to the different available roles from which a person can freely select. A selection of skills represents one's right to choose from available array of options (Sen, 1995). A selection of skills provides a wider menu of real opportunities, unlike functioning, which present one of the options available in the capability set.

3.2.2. Functioning as part of the Capacity Theory

Functioning simply relates to being involved in an activity, or specifically 'to function' (Sen, 1999). According to Sen (1992), functioning is the success of individuals, that is, whether they accomplish or excel in becoming or doing. Such 'beings' and 'doings,' which Sen (1980; 1984; 1985b; 1987; 1992) terms 'achieved functioning' together, represent what renders life meaningful. There is a thin line between capabilities and functioning. According to Sen (1987) functioning is an accomplishment, while capability is the potential to accomplish it. In a way, the functioning is

more closely related to living circumstances, because they are separate facets of living conditions. Capabilities are notions of freedom, in a constructive sense: what actual possibilities you have for a life you should lead. In addition, capability is a true notion of independence and the real opportunity individuals have to lead or accomplish a certain sort of lifestyle; while functioning is an element of living circumstances or various successes in leading a certain sort of experience.

Sen's capability approach can well be applied to explain the issue of why the majority of people at local, provincial and national level are excluded from participating in LED. In most cases, the exclusion of these individuals implies that they are barred from their economic entitlements and other benefits that can be derived from LED due to several factors which include political and market conditions, or even other socio-economic factors which may influence their public participation. For example, one may talk about the increased migration of the working populations from the rural communities such as the Great Kei Local Municipality (GKLM) to urban centres to look for economic opportunities while, at the same time, it is presumed that the rural communities have various resources for local development. In this regard, it is important to pose a question as to whether the people are forced to leave these rural communities due to insufficient economic entitlements, poverty or it is simply because the areas present inadequate LED possibilities. In this light, it is also important to consider whether the people also have the 'capabilities' to publicly participate in LED. If the people do not have the required capabilities to participate in LED, it is imperative to question the LED policies in place in terms of whether they encourage public participation, or they are merely pro-market policies aimed at satisfying a few individuals in local economic developmental initiatives.

Sen's capacity approach also highlights the issue of freedom in human development. Freedom in this regard unpacks two aspects, namely; (i) 'the opportunity'; and (ii) 'the process'. The 'opportunity' element of freedom is mainly concerned with people's desire to accomplish what they desire rather than on the 'process' by which it is accomplished. In this light, Sen (2002, p. 12) claims "...whether a person has the opportunity of choosing one option rather than another from a given 'opportunity set' 'menu' according to her preference, but also the extent to which she has the opportunity of choosing – or 'developing' – the preferences that she may prefer to have". This means that the opportunity of a person entails the involvement of that person in developing various

options of opportunities and choose the best that suits him or her. This further means that the participation of people in making decisions on the things that affects them in their daily lives is very important.

To conceptualise the issue of ‘the opportunity’ in the study at hand, one can assess the aspect of freedom of individuals to publicly participate in LED. Here, the opportunity aspect can be explained by the freedom of the participants to contribute towards the making and implementation of policies that affect their lives. In assessing opportunities, attention must be paid to the actual ability of people to achieve those aspects that they have reasons to value and the opportunity component of democracy is concerned with their real capabilities to fulfil their goals and values. In addition, conceptualising the issue of ‘opportunities’ in public participation towards LED, one can speak about the opportunities that the grassroots communities are given to participate in this process. The opportunity element of freedom refers to the actual opportunities that people have to accomplish what they can value. Sen (2004) sees the opportunity component of freedom as a core theme for any social appraisal from which social assessment is interpreted as the ideals and desires of a free person.

In a nutshell, since the capabilities approach dwells more on the capacity and functionality of the people, including the different aspects of freedom discussed above, it is deemed necessary and appropriate for this study. Based on this background, the researcher has drawn the aspect of capacity and functioning as the core aspects in analysing the public participation process in LED initiatives in the Great Kei Local Municipality. This approach will be used to analyse capacities of citizens residing in the GKLM to effectively participate in LED. This has been based on the analysis of their functionalities and capabilities – something that the participatory development approaches such as White and Arnstein’s theories do not address.

3.3. Conclusion

The chapter conceptualised participatory development and defined it as active involvement of citizen in making decisions about implementation of programs and projects that affect their day to day lives. The chapter discussed participatory development approaches which are White’s Typology of interests, Arnstein’s Ladder of Citizen Participation and Amartya Sen (1992)’s

Capacity Approach. These participatory development approaches helped the researcher to have a thorough understanding of public participation in local governance as discussed in the literature, and a clear picture of public participation process in the Great Kei Local Municipality and the reason why it is in that current shape. The capability approach entails the ability of an individual, a group of people or an institution to perform certain functions and that ability is mostly influenced by socio- economic factors. This theory is relevant in this study as it helps to understand capacities and incapacities of people to actively participate in decision making processes in the LED initiatives. As a result, the lack of knowledge and skills of public participation, they find themselves excluded from decision making processes. Amartya Sen (1992)'s capability approach will help the researcher to understand whether public participation is meaningful or not in the study area. It will help to see whether LED projects are a reflection of the public participation or not.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

Research is a systematic quest for facts and knowledge acquired through data collection, analysis, review and evaluation in order to uncover new insights by the use of different tools and techniques (Leedy and Ormrod, 2015:6; Creswell, 2009). This chapter presents the adopted research design, research approach, and qualitative research methods used to sample, collect and analyse data for this study. The researcher adopted qualitative research to sample, collect and analyse data. The study utilized personal experiences of the participants obtained through semi-structured interviews to understand the issues being studied. Additionally, it also reflects on how ethical principles have been observed in this study.

4.2 Research Design

Creswell (2009:3) defines research design as approaches, strategies or ideas that reduce data collected from participants from a broad assumption to comprehensive methods of data collection and analysis. The research design further refers to the overarching approach you use to combine the multiple components of the research in a consistent and rational manner, meaning that the research problem is addressed effectively (Leedy and Ormrod, 2015). The design of a research is a blueprint or an outline for conducting a study so that maximum control can be exercised over factors that could interfere with the validity of the research results. According to Polit and Hungler (1999:155) “the research design is the researcher’s overall plan for obtaining answers to the research question guiding the study”. According to Burns and Grove (2001:223) designing a study helps researchers on how to plan and execute the study in a way that will help them obtain the intended results, thus increasing the possibility of gaining information that could be associated with real time situation. Based on this background, the research design adopted by this research enabled the researcher to obtain answers on the research question and subsequently helped in obtaining the intended results.

Creswell (2009:3) stipulates that there are three types of research designs, namely quantitative and qualitative and mixed-method design. This study adopted qualitative research which attempts to

study human action from the perspective of the social actors themselves. According to Creswell (2009:6), qualitative research is a method of investigating and interpreting phenomena in terms of the meaning that people bring to them. The researcher saw it rational to adopt the qualitative research as the most suitable for this study because the aim of the research was to understand the current state of public participation processes used in the Great Kei Local Municipality, hence there was need for the researcher to get the feelings, experiences and views of the participants. The primary objective of qualitative studies is to understand human behaviours (Babbie and Mouton, 2001:270). Leedy and Ormrod (2015, p. 100) define qualitative research as a method of investigating and interpreting phenomena in terms of the meaning that people bring to them.

4.2.2 Philosophical Tradition

Philosophical assumptions are basic set of beliefs that guide the actions and define the worldview of the researcher (Lincoln *et al.*, 2011). They are all essentially philosophical in nature and encompass the following common elements: axiology (beliefs about the role of values and morals in research); ontology (assumptions about the nature of reality); epistemology (assumptions about how we know the world, how we gain knowledge, the relationship between the knower and the known); methodology (shared understanding of best means for gaining knowledge about the world); and rhetoric (shared understanding of the language of research) (Creswell 2009; Lincoln *et al.*, 2011). The researcher adopted a constructivist philosophical tradition because it shapes the research from individual perspectives to broad patterns, and ultimately to broad understandings (Creswell and Clark, 2011). According to Creswell and Clark (2011), constructivism is mainly associated with qualitative methods and literary and informal rhetoric in which the researcher relies as much as possible on the participants' view and develops objective meanings of the phenomena. Based on this background, during data collection process, the researcher relied on the participants' views and experiences and how they constructed their reality.

4.3 Research Approach to Reasoning.

There are three types of research approaches to reasoning, namely deductive, inductive and retroductive approaches. This study adopted the inductive approach. Inductive approaches provide a comprehensive approach in analysing qualitative data (Liu, 2016; Stebbins 2001). The process

involves immersing oneself in the data reading and digesting in order to make sense of the whole set of data and to understand what is going on (Liu, 2016).

The inductive approach uses a systematic set of procedures for analysing qualitative data. These sets of procedure for analysing qualitative data help by giving validated and reliable findings (Thomas, 2003). The analysis of qualitative data with inductive approach is guided by specific evaluation objectives. Themes in text can be identified by analysing qualitative data with the general inductive approach (Bernard, 2011). The themes in text that are related to evaluation objectives link qualitative data with inductive approach (Thomas, 2006). The inductive approach permitted the researcher to obtain results that originated from the themes inherent in raw data during the data collection process, without the constraints imposed by formal methodologies. Furthermore, the inductive approach enabled the researcher to condense comprehensive and diverse raw text data into a concise, summary format, as well as create consistent ties between the study goals and the summary findings extracted from the raw data.

4.4 Case Study Approach

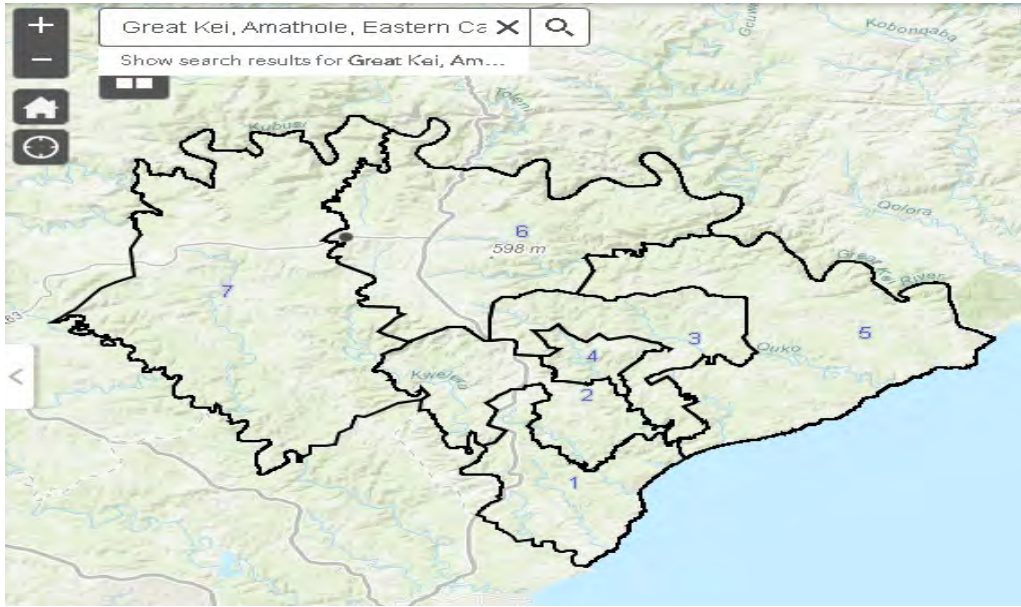
This study used a case study as a strategy of inquiry. Yin (2009:2) posited three types of case studies: exploratory, explanatory, and descriptive, with each type of case study being unique, used for different purposes, and to answer different questions. This study adopted an exploratory case study. The exploratory case study is used when there is no pre-determined outcome. Exploratory case studies are also appropriate to gain an extensive and in-depth description of a social phenomenon (Mills, Durepos, & Wiebe, 2010). The exploratory case study is used to explore presumed causal links that are too complex for a survey or experiment (Yin, 2014). In this research, exploratory study helped the researcher to gain a greater understanding of the level of participation of community members in decision making processes in LED initiatives.

4.4.1. Case Study Area

The study focused on the Great Kei Local Municipality. Great Kei Local Municipality is an administrative area situated in the Amathole District of the Eastern Cape in South Africa. According to Englin (2020), the Great Kei Local Municipality currently has an estimated population of just 44 469 that makes an approximate total of 11 363 households. The following

towns and villages of Chintsa, Cwili, Haga Haga, Kei Mouth, Komga, Kwelera Point, Kwelera, Mooiplaas, Morgans Bay, Ocean View, Qumrha are found in the area of study (MSA, 2020).

Figure 4.1



Great Kei Municipality (Map data ©2021 AfriGIS (Pty) Ltd)

Great Kei Local Municipality consists of seven (7) wards and 13 councillors. In this research, data was collected from towns and villages of Chintsa, Cwili, Morgans Bay and Qumrha. The areas were selected because they represent both urban and rural communities. This ensures that the

participants were coming from both urban and rural settlements and might have different ways of participating in municipal development events.

The Great Kei Local Municipality is a category B municipality that is located within the Amathole District in the Eastern Cape Province. The area was selected because of its economic development projects as a tourist destination, the film industry projects occurring in the area, its agricultural sector and cultural heritage (ECSECC, 2017). The municipality is conducting LED programmes in agriculture, tourism, infrastructure development, skills development, small business economic development and business retention and expansion in different towns and villages in the area (Mbeba, 2014).

The study aim was to get a deeper understanding of how public participation programmes are being implemented for every project in towns and villages of Chintsa, Cwili, Komga, Morgans Bay and Qumrha and to investigate the implementation of each project and the contribution of the public. The researcher collected data to understand how LED fosters economic development and alleviates poverty in the study area.

4.5. Purposive Sampling Technique

The researcher adopted purposive sampling method to select the study participants. Purposive sampling is the intentional selection of informants based on their ability to elucidate a specific theme, concept, or phenomenon (Creswell, 2014). Purposive sampling is widely used in qualitative research for the identification and selection of information-rich cases related to the phenomenon of interest (Campbell, Greenwood, Prior, Shearer, Walkem, Young, Bywaters, and Walker, 2020). Considering the nature, context, time and cost factors of this study, purposive sampling technique was employed because it is very useful for situations where the need is to reach a targeted sample quickly, and where sampling for proportionality is not the primary concern² (Neuman, 2000: 217). Using the purposive sampling technique, a sample was selected of LED practitioners, public-participation practitioners, ward councillors, local chiefs and community members from towns and villages of Chintsa, Cwili, Komga, Morgans Bay and Qumrha that participated in local economic development projects. The participants of various ages were included because LED affects every member of the community. The researcher chose purposive sampling because it allows researchers

to save time and money while collecting data (Creswell, 2014). Also, this technique was adopted because it offered the researcher a process that is adaptive as circumstances change, especially in an unanticipated way (Neuman, 2010). The researcher conducted in-depth interviews with 30 local community members. The 30 community member participants were selected based on their extensive involvement on local economic development initiatives in Great Kei Local Municipality. These community members represent a number of people that are actively involved on local economic development projects. The last participants included two ward councillors, one chief, one public participation practitioner and one local development practitioner. In total, there were 35 participants for this study.

4.6 Qualitative Data Collection and Process

The researcher conducted 35 in-depth interviews with 30 local community members, two ward councillors, one chief, one public participation practitioner and one local development practitioner.

Research Participants	Sample size	
	Target	Actual
Local community members	30	30
Ward councillor	2	2
Chief(s)	1	1
Public participation practitioner	1	1
Local development practitioner	1	1
Total	35	35

Table 4.1: Sample Size (the breakdown for each town/village is given in chapter 4)

According to Anderson and Killenberg (2009), in-depth interviewing is a qualitative research technique that involves conducting intensive individual interviews with a small number of participants to explore their perspectives on a particular idea, program or situation. This study adopted a semi-structured interview method to collect data. Semi-structured interviews entailed the researcher developing a set of questions to guide the interview (Robinson, 2014). According

to Creswell (2014), a semi-structured interview is a meeting in which the interviewer does not strictly follow a formalized list of questions. Instead, they will ask more open-ended questions, allowing for a discussion with the interviewee rather than a straightforward question and answer format (Evans and Lewis, 2018). The researcher adopted semi-structured interviews because of the ability to prepare questions beforehand to help guide the conversation and keep respondents on topic (Evans and Lewis, 2018). Additionally, semi-structured interviews allow for open-ended responses from participants for more in-depth information (Evan and Lewis, 2018). More importantly, semi-structured interviews encourage two-way communication (Creswell, 2014). In this regard, semi-structured interview enabled the researcher to get in-depth important information from the participants which was used in the research.

The researcher conducted interviews with each participant with each session taking between 30 to 45 minutes. The interview protocol was designed in such a way to align with the research questions. The research questions were the tools for achieving the specific study objectives. Data was gathered through face to face and telephone interviews. In this regard, the researcher conducted face to face interviews with 30 participants who were local community members. Telephonic interviews were conducted with 5 key informant participants. The researcher noted that the face to face interviews were more informative than the telephonic interviews. This was because, participants were able to express themselves both verbally and non-verbally. However, the face to face interviews consumed the researcher's time. This was because, the researcher spent a lot of time travelling from one area to another to conduct interviews. The researcher constructed four different interview guides to cater for the different categories of participants namely LED practitioner, public-participation practitioner, ward councillor, local chief and community members. All the interview guides had one section with a list of five to seven open-ended questions.

The interview schedule was also accompanied by cover letters (that explains how answers will remain confidential) which introduced the participants to the researcher as well as the research at hand. The use of an interview guide allowed the researcher to obtain detailed information about perceptions and opinions. Additionally, this allowed the researcher to probe or ask follow-up questions from the answers obtained. The researcher commenced the process of data collection after he was granted permission by the Rhodes University Standard Ethic Committee (RUESC)

through the ethical clearance certificate. Additionally, the researcher sought permission from Great Kei Local Municipality and relevant local authority figures in the local communities. The process of data collection started soon after the researcher received a letter of approval from the relevant authorities at Great Kei Local Municipality as well as local authority figures. The researcher then communicated with all the key targeted potential participants. After the final selection of the targeted participants, the researcher sent messages via email, cell phone messages and hard copy letters. Afterwards, the researcher made follow up phone calls seeking consent to take part in the study. After receiving details of the study and their rights for choosing or not choosing to participate in the research, some accepted, and others declined for distinct reasons.

4.7 Qualitative Data Analysis

Data analysis is defined as a process of cleaning, transforming, and modelling data to discover useful information decision-making (Evans and Lewis, 2018). In qualitative research, data analysis is characterised as the method of systematically collecting and organizing interview transcripts, observation notes, or other non-textual materials accumulated by the researcher to gain a better understanding of the phenomena (Robinson, 2014). The purpose of data analysis is to extract useful information from data and taking the decision based upon the data analysis (Creswell, 2010). Thematic Analysis was followed when analysing the obtained data. It is used to analyse classifications and to present themes (patterns) that relate to the data. It illustrates the data in detail and deals with various subjects through interpretation (Boyatis, 1998). Thematic research is known to be the most suitable for any study that aims to explore by way of interpretations (Creswell, 2014). The researcher transcribed the interview responses from the recorded audios into text form. The researcher coded and classified the different themes that were emerging in line with the study main research question, aim and objectives.

4.8 Ethical Consideration

As part of conducting research that complies with the University's set of standards on Human Ethics, the researcher submitted a formal application to Human Ethics Committee on the 24 August 2020 for consideration. The initial formal response with minor modifications was received from the committee on the 01 of October 2020. The modifications entailed a need to elaborate on some

of the key processes to be followed in conducting the data collection process and in engaging prospective research participants. The final approval was granted on 23rd November 2020. There were no challenges encountered in the ethics application process. The following sections below explain the ethical considerations observed by the researcher:

Ethics focus on guidelines, values and strategies; an unceasing evaluation of movements being right or wrong (Kristofferson, Tufte and Johannessen, 2010). No ethical concerns associated with this project were considered. Researchers have an ethical obligation to protect participants from harm, to shield participants' discretion, gain participants' trust, in the research reliability, and attainment of participants' intended consent prior to their participation in the study (Knepp, 2014; Leedy and Ormrod, 2014; Rowley, 2012). The matter of discretion is one of the basic ethical principles. Discretion was maintained by treating the informant's responses as private and confidential. The researcher further pursued consent for the study by formally applying for approval to conduct a study at Great Kei Local Municipality through a formal ethics form that was approved by the Municipal Manager of Great Kei Local Municipality. There were no incentives or rewards for participating in the study. Participants were free to withdraw from the study at any time without any costs or penalties. Participants only needed to inform the researcher of their intention to withdraw from the study and the researcher would accept without any explanations.

4.9 Conclusion

This chapter presented the research methodology employed in this study. The chapter defined and explained the research design and methodology used. The chapter further discussed how the chosen research approach, research design, research strategy, sampling, data collection and analysis techniques were employed. Philosophical assumptions that are basic set of beliefs were looked into. Constructivism helped to guide the actions and define the worldview of the researcher. The chapter looked at both the case study approach and case study area. The chapter looked at purposive sampling as an intentional selection of informants based on its ability to elucidate a specific theme, concept, or phenomenon. The researcher further explained how semi-structured interviews and thematic analysis were useful as data collection and analysis method for the study. The research finally discussed how issues surrounding ethical consideration were handled. The research design and methodology adopted for the research enabled the researcher to get a deeper

insight on the current state of public participation processes in the Great Kei Municipality. This was achieved through eliciting views, feelings and experiences of the participants involved in the study. This helped the researcher to achieve the aim and objectives of the study. The next chapter presents and analyses the research findings obtained through the research design and methodology discussed above.

CHAPTER FIVE: DATA ANALYSIS (PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION OF THE FINDINGS)

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented the research design and methodology employed by the study. This chapter presents an analysis and interpretation of the findings of the study. According to Marshall and Rossman (1999:150), data interpretation is the process of reviewing data through some predefined processes which will help assign some meaning to the data and arrive at a relevant conclusion. In the research goal, the researcher had posed three objectives that the study sought to attain 1): To understand the current public participation processes on LED initiatives in Great Kei Local Municipality (GKLM) 2): To ascertain the implications of the current public participation processes affecting the success of LED initiatives 3): To understand how people's capacities affect their ability to participate in LED projects 4): To explain how to enhance the public participation processes on LED. The findings will be presented in line with the research objectives. The theoretical framework and literature review discussed in chapter two will be used to triangulate the findings. The chapter is divided into three parts. The first part (5.2. to 5.3) presents the case study area and demographic outline of the participants. From 5.4 to 5.5 is the discussion of the findings in relation to the reviewed literature, participatory development theory and capability approach.

5.2 Socio-economic analysis of the Great Kei Local Municipality

This section presents the case study area and the demographics of local community members in the five selected wards. The section presents information on local community members age group, gender, employment status, their local economic development initiatives. This thesis uses the traditional understanding of gender as male and female. A review of the literature indicates that there are various social and psychological variables that determine the development goals of participants from different age groups (Geldenhuys and Henn, 2017).

5.2.1. Case study area

Great Kei Local Municipality forms part of Amathole District Municipality in the Eastern Cape Province. It is the smallest of the six municipalities in the district. The municipality covers an area of 1421 square kilometres and has a population of about 38, 991(Great Kei, 2021). The Great Kei is categorized as B4 (One or two small towns with the majority of the municipal area being rural in its nature) (Municipalities of South Africa, 2021). This research focused on the rural side thus data was collected from participants who are rural residents that are serviced by Great Kei Municipality. Focusing on the rural area enabled the researcher to provide a comprehensive analysis since the bigger part of the Great Kei is rural.

5.2.2 Gender of participants

Out of the thirty (30) local community members that participated in this study, eighteen (18) of them (sixty percent) were male while the remaining twelve (12) (forty percent) were female.

5.2.3 Age groups of participants

Out of thirty (30) local community members who participated in this study, twelve (12) forty percent, were aged between thirty-one to forty years. Followed by those which represented thirty percent, were in the age group forty-one to fifty years. The local community members between the age of twenty-one to thirty years were six which represented twenty percent of the total participants and remaining three which account to ten percent of the participants were in the age-group fifty-one to sixty years.

Table 5.1. Demographic Information

Age groups	Number	Percentages
51-60	3	10
41-50	9	30
31-40	12	40
21-40	6	20

5.2.4 Social group identity of the participants

This section discusses the findings from the interviews pertaining to the social groups of the participants using the official race category. The social groups of the participants were obtained from the primary data collected. The participants were asked to indicate their social groups from the ones indicated in the research instrument. Upon completion of primary data collection, the study revealed that most of the participants were Blacks. This group represented eighty percent of the total participants. In addition to this group, ten percent were Coloured while the other ten percent were Indians. None of the local community members were Whites or any other population group. Whether the membership to particular social groups has any influence on the current of public participation processes applied on LED initiatives of Great Kei Local Municipality will be revealed in the discussions below this chapter.

5.2.5 Educational qualifications of the participants

In addition to the demographic details presented above, local community members were also asked to indicate their level of academic qualifications. The majority of the participants, forty percent, had Matric as their highest level of academic qualification. This group was followed by thirty percent who indicated that they had qualifications below Matric level. Twenty-percent of the participants indicated that they had obtained certificates after matric while ten percent had diplomas. Considering the number of the participants who had at least Matric certificate and above as their highest level of qualification, the findings obtained in this study imply that the participants in this study had basic education. Considering other variables constant, the educational qualifications of these local community members implies that to a greater extent they understand local economic development, its impact and other implications thereof.

5.2.6 Employment status

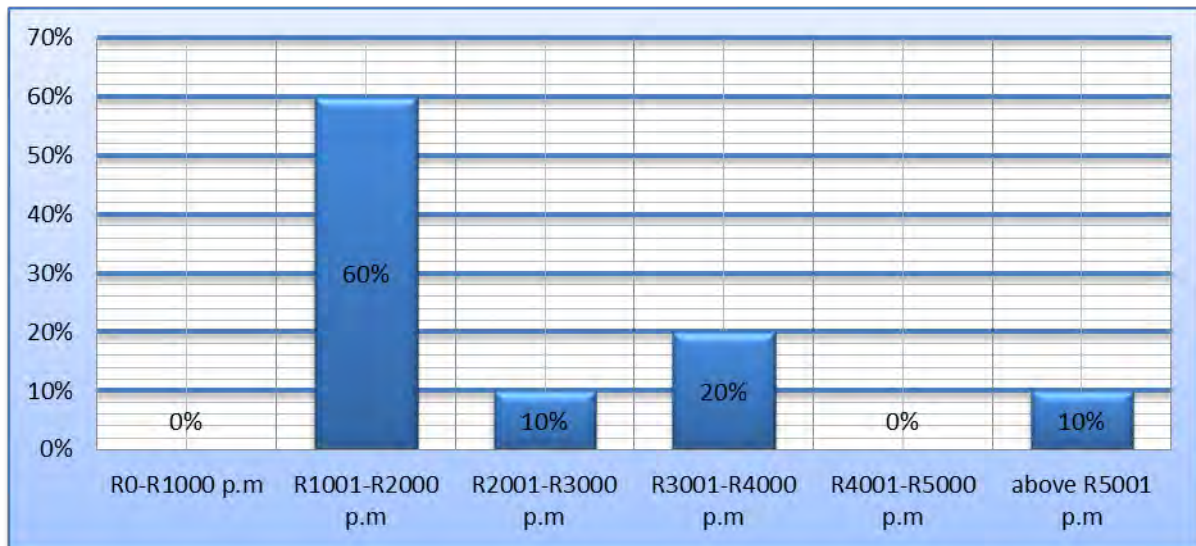
The local community members were also asked to indicate their employment status. Most of the participants (twenty-one) which constitutes seventy percent were unemployed with six participants

which constitute twenty percent who were seasonally unemployed. The remaining three participants were self-employed which is ten percent of the participants. Those who were unemployed further explained that they are in the process of applying for jobs and any form of occupation that enables them to earn a living. The seasonally unemployed indicated that they normally work under the department of public works under the community works programme when the contracts are available. The self-employed ones specified that they work in the informal markets under subsistence levels where they only earn enough to sustain their families. When the employment status of the participants was compared against their educational qualifications, the study found out that the majority of those who were unemployed had Matric level and below as their highest level of qualifications. The self-employed participants were mainly those who had certificate or diplomas while the seasonally unemployed respondents were a combination of both. Important to note is that all these participants highlighted that they have different reasons for participating in local economic development initiatives in Great Kei Local Municipality.

5.2.7 Level of income of the participants

Following the determination of the employment status of the participants, the researcher further inquired into their monthly income levels. The findings are presented in the figure that follows.

Figure 5.6: Income levels of local community members



5.3 Demographic details of the key informants

This section provides information on the demographics of the key informants. The section specifically presents information on their position as well as their tenure in the organisation they represent.

5.3.1 Position of the key informants

The key informants were asked to indicate their positions within their organisation and the responses obtained are presented in the table below.

Table 5.2: Position of key informants

Organisation	Position	Tenure
Great Kei Local Municipality	Economic Development Practitioner	15 years
Great Kei Local Municipality	Public Participation Officer	10 years
Traditional Leadership Great Kei	Chief	10 years
Political Leadership	Ward Councillor (Komga, Mooiplaas and Kwelerha)	2 years
Political Leadership	Ward Councillor (Kei Mouth and Chintsa)	2 years

The above table shows the position and tenure of key informants in their respective organisations. These findings present high levels of experience of key informants of the above-mentioned organisations. The socio-economic analysis and the demography of the Great Kei Local Municipality highlight its current socio-economic state. The next section presents and interprets the findings in line with the literature and their theoretical framework. The researcher used pseudonyms of the participants. Community members are identified as CM, Councillors as Cllr, Chief identified as CH, Public Participation Practitioner identified as PPP and lastly Local Economic Development Practitioner as LEDP.

5.4 Current public participation processes on local economic development initiatives

The study found that the current public participation processes in local economic development initiatives can be explained by the constitutional mandate of ensuring public participation in local development initiatives (LED) programmes. This can be broken down into two sub-themes mainly commitment, and legislation and policy.

5.4.1 Commitment to executing public participation processes

Section 152 of the Republic of South African Constitution of 1996 clearly mandate the local government to encourage the involvement of communities in the matters in the local government matters. While section 195(e) encourages the public to participate in policymaking and that their needs must be responded to. The study found there is a lack of commitment from the municipal officials in enabling public participation processes. Therefore, the GKLM need authentic public participation which requires three-way commitment namely public, political, and administrative commitments. From the interviews conducted, one of the participants said “*the current state of public participation process need commitment because it helps in executing constitutional imperatives*” [CM18]. Vivier et al, (2015) argue that municipal public officials lack commitment to public participation processes due to the heavy workload they carry which makes them incapable of performing.

The current state of public participation processes in this municipality lacks constitutional mandate that ensures commitment to local economic development initiatives. There is lack of commitment from the majority of local community members and I think it is because many of our political figures are not committed as well to these programs. Said one of the community member [CM 1].

In MacLavery’s (2017) study, it was found that the process of public participation leads to the making of better decisions and judgements since local people always give best attention to the projects they own. Therefore, the lack of commitment of community members indicates that the projects initiated by the Great Kei Municipality are not primarily reflecting the needs of the majority locals. The researcher asked a Councillor if the municipality was executing its constitutional duties in enabling public participation and the Cllr said:

There is an effort made by the municipality to improve public participation process by engaging members of the community through platforms such as newsletters. However, there is minimum commitment from the local people [Cllr 1].

The Councillor is of the view that public participation awareness should be carried out to educate people and had this to say:

I believe that local people should be encouraged to be part of public participation processes so that their views are heard and represented. As resident of this municipality, we need to be highly committed to public participation processes to improve various economic development initiatives [Cllr 1].

This is in line with Chamber's (1997) argument that public participation is essential for sustainable development and to realise effective public participation, awareness campaigns should be embraced by the legislative institutions.

According to Dibra and Strica (2019), public commitment is essential in various activities because it enhances the public contribution and influence on the South African democracy. A Chief shared the same sentiment with Dibra and Stricta (2019) when he said during the interview;

Commitment is the key in improving public participation processes in this municipality. There is a need to have commitment from all the parties involved such local people, municipal people as well as politicians.

Cornwall (2002) also argues that there is need for the engagement of both local population and public officials in public participation process to ensure the success of community programmes. This means that the lack of commitment of any relevant party in public participation process negatively affects local economic development initiatives.

The findings clearly point out the necessity for the public, political and administrative commitment in local economic development initiatives. According to Tong (2019) public participation requires political, administrative, and public commitment; without one of these elements, public participation is doomed for failure. This clearly shows that public participation is an inclusive process as it requires active participation of all stakeholders. The lack of commitment by local

people in public participation implies that the LED projects implemented by the Great Kei Municipality might not address the needs of the community members. The local economic development programmes should be people-centred. Ramanadham (2019) argues that public participation has significant impact on LED and other projects because people organise best around problems, they consider most important.

5.4.2 Ward Committees to enable public participation

The Municipal Structures Act of 1998 spells out the responsibility of the municipality in ensuring public participation. Section 19 stipulates that it remains the mandate of the local municipality to encourage community members to actively participate in decision making. According to one of the participants little effort has been shown by their municipality in encouraging community participation. *“Our municipality hardly encourage public participation, and this make it difficult for us to actively participate in decision making process”* [CM19]. This means that the inability of the Great Kei Municipality to encourage public participation hampers community involvement in decision making processes in LED initiatives. This is because the community developmental programmes are not a representation of the needs of the community members. Camay and Gordon (2004) note that public participation in local governance is accepted internationally as an essential component of sustainable development. According to Involve (2005), active public participation improves service delivery to the community.

The findings presented here indicate that there is less public consultation and encouragement in public participation at Great Kei Local Municipality. The Municipal Systems Act section 4 sets out the duties of the municipality which are to encourage community involvement and consult them about the quality, level, range and impact of the municipal services. One of the participants, a community member said;

As community members, we hardly participate in decision making processes. I think the reason why we are not eager to actively participate is because the local municipality does not encourage the community to participate. As a result, we end up getting so reluctant to participate [CM 2].

The Municipal Systems Act of 1998 requires a municipality to establish ward committees to encourage community participation in municipal matters. The researcher had to find out from participants if they were aware of the existence of the ward committees and their effectiveness in enabling public participation. A community member professed ignorance of the existence of ward committees, *“this is my first time to hear about ward committees and I think as the members of the community we need to be educated about the importance of the ward committees”* [CM20]. Another community member weighed in and said:

I heard about the ward committees, but they don't engage us on community issues every time. Sometimes as community we experience some problems such as poor service delivery, but we don't see them engaging us [CM3].

The responses from the participants who are community members also indicates that citizens are reluctant to take responsibility for participation in LED programmes. Cornwall (2002) argues that public involvement in decision making processes become sites for ‘citizenship participation’ on condition that citizens are given meaningful opportunities to freely voice out and hold accountable those who invite them to participate.

The findings from the participants indicate that the ward committees are in existence but dysfunctional in enabling public participation. The Municipal Systems Act of 1998 stipulates that it is the responsibility of the ward committee to consult their sectors and then advise the ward councillor on the needs and priorities, including the budget, and make recommendations to the sub-council or other committees of council. One of the ward councillors said, *“The ward committees play an important role in promoting a social cohesion between the government and its people particularly in the provision of quality and sustainable services”* [Cllr 2]. Although the Councillor acknowledges the importance of ward committees in enabling public participation, the ward committees existent but seem dysfunctional in enabling public participation processes. Tshabalala (2007) argues that ward committees bring democracy to the communities as these are the platforms that ensures the socio-economic challenges such as unemployment, poverty and underdevelopment amongst others are addressed. Tshabalala (2007) further argues that the ward committees are representative structure of the community which allows citizens to inform the municipality about their aspirations, problems, and their potential.

The establishment of ward committees is a reflection of placation in participation which Arnstein (1969) refers to as the condition when local members will begin to exert a degree of control in the participation. The ward committees are a representation of disadvantaged groups which is merely a means to ensure that they clearly do not represent the interest of their populations. In the true sense, whatever decision they make can be easily outvoted by the elites who hold power in the municipality (Arnstein, 1969). In this regard, this indicates that the ward committees in the Great Kei Municipality are merely façades which are not living according to the expectations of the community. A community member echoed the same sentiment as of the Arnstein (1969) by saying that the ward committees are ineffective and are hardly visible when the community is desperately in need of them, *“the ward committees are toothless bull dogs and it’s better to disband them because nothing tangible has been achieved through them”* [CM21]. According to the LED Practitioner, the ward committees should be proactive in executing their duties, *“The ward committees are the lifeblood of public participation hence they should be visible in the community and help the local people to actively participate in community issues”* [LEDP]. The Public Participation Practitioner said that the ward committees should continuously engage members of the community to realise meaningful community participation, *“the members of the community cannot actively participate in local government issues without the influence of the ward committees. Ward committees are actually the engine of community participation”* [PPP].

As shown in the literature by Benit- Gbaffou, (2008), while public participation is highly recommended at the top structures of governments, the participatory mechanisms put in place do not function properly. These institutional mechanisms include ward committees, development forums, and integrated development processes. This means that the lack of public participation negatively affects local economic development initiatives because the projects implemented by the Great Kei Local Municipality do not reflect the needs of the locals.

Ward Councillor said that the ward committees are in existence as stipulated by the Municipal Systems Act of 1998 but more work needs to be done, *“ as a leader of the ward committee, I admit that we need to activate our ward committee so that it can be responsive to the needs of the community especially during this pandemic period”* [Cllr 2]. A Councillor weighed in and admitted that the ward committees should be vibrant towards enabling participation and should be more representative, *“As leaders of ward committees, we need to revamp our committees to suit*

the needs of communities. At the present moment, we are not able to physically engage the members of the community due to COVID-19 and this has affected our efforts” [Cllr 1]. The findings from the Councillors above indicate that the municipal public officials are failing to create awareness to the members of the community on the existence and importance of the ward committees. The ignorance of the community on the existence of the ward committees is a point of concern to local economic development. This is because, the community members seem to be unaware of the public participation platforms which are key in enabling community participation in local economic development.

The findings reveal that ward committees exist but are not functional in the Great Kei Local Municipality. According to the Municipal Systems Act of 1998, ward committees are supposed to ensure cooperation between municipality and the community which enable public participation. As the findings reveal ward committees are non-functional further indicating that there is no cooperation between the members of the community and municipality public officials in decision making processes. In this regard, it further means that public participation is ineffective in local economic development since community members are not actively participating in decision making processes. This is a reflection of passive participation which entails that the project primary stakeholders are informed about developments without involving them in decision making processes from the onset of the projects (Tufté & Mefalopulos, 2009).

Empirical evidence from a study participant revealed that capacity building programmes are not taking place in the Great Kei Municipality. In her words: *“Our municipality hasn’t yet introduced capacity building programmes in our community”* [CM4]. Garipey (1991) argues that capacity building programmes should be done by municipalities through holding meetings, workshops, and advisory committees to empower citizens to be able to participate in decision making processes. As Moschidis and Ismyrlis (2018) note that public participation for LED can be effective if the members of the community including the vulnerable are included in decision making processes through capacity building.

5.4.3 Methods for public participation

Section 16(1) of the Municipal Structures Act of 2000 stipulates that for the municipalities to enable public participation, the municipality should encourage and create conditions for the community members to participate in the affairs of the municipality. One of the participants clearly indicated that current public participation process in local economic development initiatives requires good mechanisms to enhance active participation of communities. “*The municipality should embark on outreach programmes, public hearings, workshops amongst other mechanisms*” [CM 5]. Based on the views of one of the participants above, it clearly shows that Great Kei Local Municipality does not have multiple methods for public participation processes which ensure active public participation in local economic development. Chikerema (2013) is of the view that public participation in governance is an on-going process which should include community stakeholders in the preparation, execution and evaluation of programmes that enhance the well-being of their local areas. Chikerema further argues that public participation should be done through holding meeting, workshops, and advisory committees amongst other methods for public participation. Another study participant, highlighted that the communication platform for public participation activities needs to be improved;

We need an improvement in communication platforms from the municipal people. I think more personal visits to communities will improve the current state of public participation on development initiatives. The municipality has embarked on the utilisation of social media platforms such as Facebook for communication which has made lives difficult for those who cannot afford to buy data [PPP].

Apeckchya (2009) argues that difference in access to internet is one of the major challenges in using technology to enhance public participation in the communities. In this regard, some members of the community do not have money to afford buying internet data. The Great Kei community is also faced with this problem as alluded to by the participants.

The findings from the above participant indicate that the methods for public participation used by the Great Kei Municipality are costly to the general population since majority of community members are from rural areas without any source of income. This sentiment has been echoed by Councillor who had to say;

Communication is important in public participation hence the need for more stakeholder briefings and road shows. This will definitely improve the public participation process. We have later realised that communication via social media is ineffective since majority of our people are rural. [Cllr 2].

Cornwall (2002) further argues that local authorities should use communication platforms that are easily accessible to the citizens which enable active participation. The dominant use of social media platforms for public participation by the Great Kei Local Municipality has disfranchised the community members' right to participate in decision making processes. This is because social media platforms are not cost effective and are out of reach to the majority community members.

The Public Participation Practitioner highlighted that the municipality has mechanisms and processes for public participation, *“we do have a standard management process in place with regards to planning and execution of local economic development initiatives”*[PPP]. According to Chaney (2016), improvement in communication platforms in local government facilitates a strong civil society by giving society ample opportunity and appropriate platform to freely approach and access government institutions and officials to discuss social issues that affect them. Chaney (2016) further argues that good communication mechanisms offer an incentive for community members and other civic citizens to participate in civil society and community building programs. Chikerema (2013) argues that elected authorities must not only approach the community when it suits their goals, but rather foster a tradition of community interaction using efficient and effective communication channels in all facets of local government, since participation goes beyond a one-time meeting between local officials and community representatives.

The LED Practitioner admitted that there are some challenges in enabling public participation, *“our methods for public participation are okay but there is a lot that needs to be done, for example improve the way public hearings are conducted as well as outreach programs”* [LEDP]. One of the community members suggested that the municipality should open more discussion platforms for developmental purposes, *“as community members we want public hearing on local economic development programs to be more frequent so that people will participate more often”*. [CM5]. Cornwall (2002) argues that the creation of a favourable environment for participatory development by guaranteeing the people's right to dissent or lodge objections, by making universal

education available to more people is a long-term goal for public participation process. This means that without efficient and effective methods for public participation processes, no meaningful citizen participation will take place at Great Kei Local Municipality. The Great Kei Local Municipality's inability to provide effective and efficient platforms for public participation is an indication of manipulation in participation which forms part of Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation theory. The lack of effective platforms for public participation shows that the ward committees only exist to endorse the decision that have already been made by the municipal council officials without public consultation.

According to one of the participants who is a community member said the public participation process is considered little more than an avowal of advocacy to participation. "*We are invited to the public participation process to discuss what has been already been finalised*" [CM6]. This simply means that the public is invited to participate in local economic development planning processes only once plans and budgets have already been finalised. This practice contributes to public protest, as it means having had no part in developmental planning. The predicament facing the Great Kei community has been propounded by Gaventa and Cornwall (2001) who are of the view that there is an increase on the invitation for participation of the citizens to rubber stamp and provide legitimacy for predetermined decisions.

It is therefore difficult for the public to identify with the local economic development projects and they find it difficult to understand the concept. Furthermore, one of the participants felt that the Great Kei Local Municipality officials' reluctance to share information on planning and their Councillors' apathetic unresponsiveness causes the public not to participate, "*Our local municipality should improve communication channels to enable community participation*" [CM 6]. This was also echoed by another community member who said, "*If a councillor is not physically present in the community the public may disengage the formal system*" [CM7]. According to Islam *et al.*, (2002) public participation is an accountability enhancing process by giving people the right to get access to all kinds of government information that were previously hidden from the public and to protect people against corruption and unfair action by government and should make government more transparent. Therefore, public participation can ensure that public authorities are held accountable for implementation. Public participation is important because it improves public resource management and reduces corruption, by making public servants and political leaders

accountable to the people (Muriu, 2013; Whitton, 2001). Rogerson (2019) concurs with Islam *et al.*, (2002) and argues that to enhance transparency and accuracy on public administration, the media can be used as an effective communication tool. Thus, capacitating community members to have diversified media which subsequently enables them to choose the most suitable one which suits their needs, and this is what Sen (1992)'s Capacity Approach advocates for.

Residents have shown that the Great Kei Municipality does not have effective communication mechanism that enables public participation as some argued that the municipality should rather embark on outreach programmes which they view to be more effective. It also shows that there is disengagement between the municipality and the community in terms of decision making and participation. This further means that public participation is ineffective in local economic development of Great Kei Municipality since community members are not actively participating in decision making processes.

5.4.4 Resources to foster public participation

According to the Municipal Structures Act of 2000, section 16(1) (b) clearly stipulates that in order for the municipality to foster public participation, resources should be channelled towards public participation processes. This is a reflection of White (1996)'s instrumental participation which believes that the availability of resources is used as a means to achieve the desired goals hence in this case, the sufficient resources foster public participation. This means that without sufficient resources, public participation will not be effective. A community member said, "*The lack of staff members of the municipality to deal with the various aspects of public participation is a point of concern and this hampers effective public participation*" [CM 8]. Participants further indicated that the budget has grown substantially yet remains insufficient from local development initiatives. According to the Public Participation Practitioner, shortage of manpower in implementing public participation processes is a problem, "*Our staff members are trained in public participation or related areas, but staff members are not enough for various economic development projects that we are currently running*".[PPP]. One of the community members echoed the same sentiments with that of the Public Participation Practitioner and said, "*We need more people in this community to be trained for public participation to encourage locals to participate in various economic development programs*" [CM9]. The LED Practitioner admitted that resources allocated towards

public participation process by the municipality are insufficient, *“the municipality has funds dedicated for public participation, but the budget always runs out every year without accomplishing some activities”* [LEDP]. The findings from the above participants indicate that the Great Kei Local Municipality is experiencing insufficient funding to enable public participation processes. The capability approach by Amartya Sen (1992) refers to the ability of an individual, a group of people or institution to perform certain functions and duties and this ability is highly influenced by the socio-economic variables. This theory reflects the inability of the Great Kei Municipality to effectively enable meaningful public participation process due to insufficient funding. The findings presented above further highlight insufficient resources such as human resources and financial resources which are incapacitating the municipality from enabling active public participation. The predicament facing the Great Kei Local Municipality is a reflection of Amartya Sen (1992)’s Capability Approach theory which states that for the organisation or individual to effectively and efficiently execute certain duties, sufficient resources should be made available. In this case, it seems the municipality is failing to perform its duties due to limited resources at its disposal. Shortage of resources incapacitates community members from exercising their democratic right to participate in important decision making on economic development initiatives in their respective communities. This is what Sen (1992) call functioning which is the success of individuals that can be achieved through getting involved in an activity. In this regard, the inadequate of resources to enable public participation hinders the Great Kei community from realizing their full potential. The inadequate of resources according to Sen (1992) is detrimental to individual success. This further means that the life of the Great Kei community can only be meaningful in the event of having the conducive environment that has all the much-needed factors such as adequate resources that promote public participation.

Vivier *et al.*, (2015) are of the view that major internal challenges in public participation are inadequate financial resources and human resources. They added that the arrangement of forums, workshops or public meetings require adequate funds, long preparation time, and enough staff. According to a Councillor more resources should be allocated towards public participation processes, *“There should be an increase of budget for public participation so that all processes can function well for the fulfilment of local economic development initiatives”*. [Cllr 1]. This was also echoed by another Councillor who admitted that no meaningful public participation has been

witnessed despite budget allocation of funds towards that and cited that more resources needs to put channelled towards public participation processes to ensure its full realisation. This is what Councillor said, “*Each year budget is set for public participation but clearly with everything that is going on the budget is insufficient to make any real impact on local economic development programs*”[Cllr 2].The responses of the ward councillors prove that Great Kei Local Municipality is incapacitated in carrying out its duties of enabling public participation.

The findings have shown that current public participation processes at Great Kei Local Municipality lack human and financial resources to make real impact on local economic development programmes. Therefore, it means that the municipality is incapacitated to fulfil its duties. The capability approach by Amartya Sen (1992) believes that for the institution to effectively perform its mandate, sufficient resources should be provided. Although every year budget allocation towards public participation processes is done, it proves to be inadequate and remains a challenge that stifles development in the communities. Hudaefi and Heryani (2019) argues that public participation requires adequate human resource if participation is to be effective. Rogerson (2020) also adds that there is need for capacity building for both public officials and members of the public for effective participation. This can only be realised if enough resources are allocated towards public participation and economic development at Great Kei Municipality. In addition, Wijijayanti, Agustina, Winarno, Istanti, and Dharma (2020) recommend the introduction of training that includes workshops and programmes designed to equip everyone involved in public participation with participatory skills. However, training workshops can be done if sufficient resources are allocated. This kind of training is essential as it could contribute towards boosting public participation in local economic development programs. Therefore, the GKLM need to adopt similar initiatives to improve the human resource responsible for public participation for the success of local economic development programs.

Andrews *et al.*, (2017) argue that insufficient state capacity is still a hindrance to public participation. This will have an overall impact on the inclusion of all the participants in LED processes. In this regard, insufficient resources such as human resources and financial resources incapacitate the state to achieve the desired goal of public participation and local economic development (Nurudin et al., 2016). Based on the findings presented above, it is clear that inadequate resource hinders public participation in Great Kei Local Municipality. In this regard

community members are not actively participating in decision making on developmental projects within their community due to insufficient resources. The literature further reveals that resources play an important role in enabling public participation and local economic development. Masango (2002) noted that the availability of financial, human, and physical resources enables effective participation for both the local communities and development practitioners.

5.4.5 Public participation practice

The Municipal Act of 2000 stipulates that it is the responsibility of the municipality to involve the community in decision making prior to the implementation of projects within the community. Section 17(2) (c) empowers the local authority to establish public hearings and meetings to enable community participation. In addition, the Municipal Systems Act gives rights and obligations to all stakeholders to participate in decision making processes in local economic development. LED Practitioner said, “*We have been doing public meetings through the ward committees, but they had been affected by COVID-19.*” [LEDP]. The findings from the above participant indicate that COVID-19 has negatively affected public participation in local economic development. This is because, the pandemic has reduced physical interaction of people which was one of the features of public participation. Councillor concurred by saying;

Community members are continuously engaged through public hearings and they have been successful in allowing community participation although more interactive platforms need to be introduced. We have noted the decrease of community engagement for the past 12 months due to the pandemic”. We have been trying to continue with our community engagements via zoom and other online platforms during this current pandemic environment, however, we have been facing some challenges since some of community members does not have electronic gadgets [Cllr 2].

The use of technologically driven medium of communication by the Great Kei Municipality seems to be unsuccessful. This is because the majority of the population that the Great Kei Municipality serves is rural; hence the community members cannot afford expensive data bundles as well as do not own smartphones. Warnok (2007) argues that poor people are often unable to access communication channels and receive policy relevant information through the media. This seems

to be a problem that is faced by the Great Kei Municipality locals. The predicament facing the Great Kei community is a reflection of Amartya Sen (1992)'s Capability Approach theory which believes that the ability of an individual to perform certain functions is primarily determined by socio-economic factors. In this regard, the Great Kei community is unable to effectively participate in local economic development as a result of their lack of access to technologically driven mediums of communication. Thus, renders them unable to realise a meaningful life Sen (1987) refers to.

Public Participation Practitioner admitted that the municipality is failing to educate the community members on the importance of public participation and had this to say:

We are lacking education regarding public participation, and it is one of the primary goals of the municipality to ensure maximum participation from various stakeholders in local economic development [PPP].

A community member suggested the local authority to speedy up public awareness of public participation. Another participant said: *“the municipality should have a proper way of executing public education so that everyone is reached, and this can be done by having banners and posters written in our own language across all communities.”* [CM 10]. This indicate that language used by the Great Kei Municipality in communicating with the locals seems to be a barrier to public participation. Haase (2008) argues that government programmes such as legislative proceedings are often done using English as a medium of communication without local interpreters. The language barrier to public participation in the Great Kei community incapacitates locals from exercising their constitutional right to freely participate in decision making processes in developmental projects in their areas. This according to Sen (1987) renders the local people unable to realise a meaningful life.

Campbell (1992) argues that despite people's willingness to participate in LED, several municipalities in South Africa are plagued by challenges such as lack of fairness. People face many constraints that hamper their ability to participate in public meetings such as language. Language barriers hinder public participation practice in LED. Cornwall (2002) and Gaventa (2001) argues that public participation should be people centred as this increases the potential of a population's ability to be self-determining by seeing local communities making decisions rather than just only contributing to important decisions. This means that the Great Kei Municipality should practice

people-centred approach in enabling public participation. A community member said, “*Members of the community should also take it upon themselves and develop interest in participating in decision making processes*” [CM11]. The views of this community member indicate that lack of interest of community members to participate in decision making processes seems to be one of the stumbling blocks to public participation practice.

The finding above on the public participation practice at Great Kei Local Municipality clearly indicates the need for improvement in public participation practice. The findings further reveal that there is disengagement between municipality and community members. According to Chikerema (2013), public participation process must be a constant exercise of municipal government. As such, elected authorities must not only approach the community when it suits their goals, but rather foster a tradition of community interaction in all facets of local government, since participation goes beyond a one-time meeting between local officials and community representatives. Public participation in governance is thus an on-going process which should include community stakeholders in the preparation, execution and evaluation of programmes that enhance the well-being of their local areas (Mubangizi, 2010).

Based on the shared views of participants highlighted above, they collectively indicated the need for improvement in public participation practices such as public outreach and public education. Participants were of the view that there are specific public participation outreach initiatives taking place in their municipality with the aim of encouraging participation however such programs are not reaching everyone. With regards to public education, the researcher is of the view that that there should be more public education programmes in place especially in schools, communities, and through civil society organisation.

5.5 Implementation of Public Participation on LED initiatives

The Municipal Systems Act of 2000 clearly gives both public officer bearers in the municipality and the community the mandate to participate meaningfully in the public participation processes. The study found that the participants are not satisfied with the implementation of public participation on local economic development. A participant said: “*we only see the projects taking place in our community without having an idea about them. We are not consulted on those projects*”

and we feel our voices are not heard’ [CM 12]. The findings from the above participant shows that Great Kei community members are not satisfied with the participation in local economic development. They feel that the projects implemented by the local municipality are not a reflection of their needs. This is a form of passive participation where the primary stakeholders (community members) are only informed about community development projects without inclusion of their views and opinions at every stage (Tuftes& Mefalopulos, 2009). The exclusion of community members in decision making processes in the local economic development initiatives is also a reflection of Arnstein’s concept of manipulation in her participation theory which believes that some classes of citizens in society are put in some form of rubber stamp advisory boards or councils with the purpose to ‘educate’ and ‘advise’ local populations on such participatory schemes. To a certain degree, the participation committees in Great Kei Local Municipality seems to carry out outreach programs to support the planned development and participative projects (Arnstein, 1969). In this regard, the ward committees in Great Kei Municipality are not meaningfully engaging the community. The current ward committees are an act of deceit through which participatory processes are channelled into the power holders’ public relations vehicle to disseminate knowledge on LED initiatives.

The researcher asked a Councillor if their ward committees are effective in enabling public participation in LED initiatives and she said;

We are trying to consult community members on community projects through ward committees although sometimes we face challenges in public consultation such as shortage of enough time and financial resources to enable active public participation involvement [Cllr 1].

The sentiment of the Councillor is an admission of the failure of the Great Kei Municipality to include community members to actively participate in developmental projects spearheaded by the Great Kei Municipal Council. Chaney (2016) argues that public participation in local governance facilitates a strong civil society by giving society ample opportunity and appropriate platform to freely approach and access government institutions and officials to discuss social issues that affect them. This means that allowing participation of community members of Great Kei Municipality in local economic development will help them to decide on the projects that suits their community

needs. This is a people centred approach to development because it believes that community participation and involvement in developmental projects ensures that the community projects reflect the needs of the locals. In MacLaverly's (2017) study, it was found that the process of public participation leads to the making of better decisions and judgements since local people always give best attention to the projects they own. By publicly participating in decisions that benefit them, the public tend to be skilled in initiatives that lead to local community development.

Public Participation Practitioner said the municipality is making progress towards successful local development;

We reach out to the communities in different ways such as community forums and outreach programmes and we assure them that we represent them. I can tell you, as we speak now; we are in the road to successful local development because we are involved in all the processes of development [PPP].

Although the Public Participation Practitioner gave a different view from other participants on the involvement of community members in local economic development, most participants have highlighted the exclusion of community members in participating in developmental projects. Based on the views of most participants, the Great Kei Local Municipality has adopted a passive participatory approach to development and manipulation in development where the municipality informs its community members on developmental projects without allowing their active participation (Tufté & Mefalopulos, 2009). This is in conflict with Sen (1992)'s functioning approach which believes that the success of an individual is achieved through getting involved in an activity which subsequently renders life meaningful. The Great Kei community's passive participation renders them incapable of determining development in their area. This is reflected in one of the community members' response who said that although community engagement is done by the municipality, no meaningful development which reflects their contributions is evident in the municipal jurisdiction. This is what Councillor 13 had to say:

I feel like our decisions are not taken into consideration. The municipality comes up with the mandates of developing our local areas which we all contribute to but at the end you see little development taking place. [CM 13].

This relates to Arnstein's non-participation of community members in local economic developmental projects (Arnstein, 1969). The non-participation excludes the views and needs of community members in local economic developmental projects. In this regard, the community projects only reflect the views of those in power. A community member shares the same sentiments of other community members when he said that the municipality fails to implement the projects that address the community needs, "*There is high unemployment in our community and no meaningful community projects have been implemented to create jobs for our youths*"[CM 14]. These views of the local community members were also supported by the local Chief who was of the view that they do not really see significant impact in as much as local development is concerned. This is despite the public mandate that is set before the public and the Municipal Act of 2000. The Chief said:

It is always the case in many villages that the people are always concerned about whether/not there is any development. What people do not understand is that they participate in all the meetings that they are expected but at the end what they ask for is not really done. I can say our participation in development matters is not having a huge impact in our villages. [CH].

The above participants were not impressed with the implementation of local economic development. They expressed concern on their exclusion by the municipality in decision making processes in the implementation of community projects. They are of the view that the majority of projects are not reflective of their needs. The findings presented above shows that the community members are not happy with the execution of developmental projects within their municipality due to the fact the projects executed are not reflective of their needs despite being included in the decision making processes. Botes & Rensburg (2000) argues that in some instances, community participation is not a genuine attempt to empower communities to choose development options freely but is rather an attempt to sell preconceived proposals.

The situation being faced by Great Kei community is a testament of Arnstein's (1969) manipulation in participation theory which believes that some classes of citizens in community are put in some form of rubber stamp advisory boards with the primary purpose to educate and advice local populations on such participatory schemes. Arnstein's (1969) manipulation approach is

also echoed by White (1996) nominal participation which entails that less powerful members of the community only become involved in participation process at a later stage due to their desire for inclusion whereas powerful people use that involvement as a justification for legitimising the development plans. To a certain degree, the participation arrangement committees carry public participation awareness initiatives to support the planned development and participative projects. It seems that the ward committees are used by the Great Kei Municipality as vehicles to deceitfully engage on public participation processes to support the already planned LED programmes. Participation processes often begin only after projects have already been designed. The process is not an attempt to ascertain the outcome and priorities, but rather to gain acceptance for an already assembled package. Consultation with the community may simply be to legitimate existing decisions that is to tell people what is going to happen by asking them what they think about it. This is a reflection of White (1969)'s typology theory on nominal participation. Community participation is nothing more than attempts to convince beneficiaries what is best for them (Botes & Rensburg, 2000).

5.6. Capacity to participate on LED initiatives

One of the objectives of this research is to understand the capacity of citizens to participate on LED initiatives in the Great Kei Municipality thus I had to ask residents on the role that they have been playing in local economic development projects in their communities. A community member noted that she had been never participating in LED initiatives due to lack of knowledge on what to contribute to the local economic development projects, *“I haven't been educated on decision making process on LED projects hence I feel like I do not have necessary skills”*[CM 14]. Another concurred with her sentiment and said that she is unfamiliar with how to contribute her own views on local economic development initiatives;

Truly speaking I don't know what ideas to contribute towards LED initiatives, I just see those who are graduates and skilled contributing especially the public officials who happen to have knowledge on the local economic development projects. [CM 15].

Asnarulkhadi, (2010) noted that to enhance capacity to participate of community members, there is need to maximize resource utilisation through conducting workshops training and other

educational programmes. In this case, Asnarulkhadi (2010) is of the view that locals need to be capacitated through training workshops, road show programmes and other educative platforms in order to equip them with public participation skills as this will help them to actively participate in LED initiatives. This seems to be the predicament that the Great Kei Municipality community is facing. Moschidis and Ismyrlis (2018) note that public participation in LED can only be effective if the public have the right expertise and skills in order to improve the outcomes of their participatory efforts in local development. This will enable community members to have a voice in decision making processes and implementation of LED initiatives. This is in line with White's typology (1996) on representative participation which believes in community involvement in decision making and implementation of projects which subsequently may offer the community members a chance for leverage. Therefore, this means that the Great Kei LED initiatives might be ineffective due to the lack of community member's expertise and skills that help them to improve the outcome of their participatory efforts in local development. The educational profile of the participants indicates that the majority of them only have basic education which further highlights the lack of professional skills and expertise to contribute meaningfully to decision making processes in local economic development. This brings the need to ensure capacity building of community members.

Another community member was asked if she has ever participated in decision making processes on LED initiatives in the Great Kei Municipality and she said, "*I only attended a public meeting on local economic development but did not give any view. I didn't understand some of the things discussed because they were said in English*" [CM17]. Her response has been noted by Campbell (1992) who argues that despite people's willingness to participate in LED several municipalities in South Africa are plagued by challenges such as lack of fairness. Campbell (1992) further argues that people face many constraints that hamper their ability to participate in public meetings and these constraints are time, language, and access to information. In this regard, her response indicates that Great Kei residents might be facing language barrier to participation in LED initiatives. The predicament of the local community members of Great Kei Municipality is underpinned by Sen's capability approach. In his theory, Sen (1993) argues that the capacity of an individual to perform certain functions is determined by socio-economic variables. This means that financial resources, infrastructure and skills amongst others can enable an individual to

effectively perform certain duties, in this case, the Great Kei residents are incapacitated to effectively participate in decision making processes in the LED due the lack of skills and knowledge on local economic development projects. The English Language barrier to participation in the LED is also evidence of the incapacitation of Great Kei Local community. The Great Kei community's lack of communication skills remains a barrier to LED programmes as they find it difficult to understand what has been communicated with them in English language.

The above predicament of the Great Kei community members has been alluded by the Public Participation Practitioner who said that community members show little interest in participating in LED initiatives. This shows that incapacitation to participate is a major stumbling block to public participation in LED initiatives. This is because most of community members saw it unreasonable to attend the public participation as they are not able to contribute meaningfully in decision making processes.

The findings from the above participants indicate that Great Kei community members lack skills and knowledge to participate in LED initiatives. Sen (1993) argues that the active participation of individuals in certain initiatives is highly influenced by their capacitation. In this case, the predicament of Great Kei community members is underpinned by the Capability Approach advocated for the capacitation of locals in order for them to realise meaningful community development (Sen, 1993). Therefore, to realise meaningful participation, Great Kei Municipality should adopt the idea of transformative participation put forward by White (1996), which believes that there is need to empower those who are involved in participation process particularly the previously disadvantaged. To achieve empowerment, there is need to alter institutions and structures that lead to exclusion and marginalisation.

5.6 CONCLUSION

The study concluded that the essence of public participation in the Great Kei Municipality is governed by mandate, governance, resources and public participation practices. The mandate for public participation in this respect applies to the fundamental right for any citizen to participate in local development processes. The mechanism of public participation of the Great Kei Municipality is often controlled by various organizational structures, systems and procedures. The effectiveness of these public engagement mechanisms such as ward committees and community outreach

programmes amongst others is underpinned by financial, human and physical resources. Great Kei community is also accessed via public outreach and education programmes. Overall, the study found a mixed bag of results linked to public participation in the Great Kei Municipality. The study showed that, to a large degree, the public participation process primarily favours institutional personnel, who are mainly in the upper echelons of participatory arrangements. The potential of local people appears to be underutilised and, in some instances, their contributions are not considered at all despite their embedded knowledge in the Great Kei Municipality. The findings answered the research aim which was to analyse public participation processes applied on local economic development initiatives of Great Kei Local Municipality. In this regard, the findings revealed that the Great Kei has ward committees, road shows, community forums amongst others which are not effective in enabling public participation processes. In relation to study objective two (to ascertaining the implications of the current public participation processes on the success of the LED initiatives in GKLM), the findings highlighted the ineffectiveness of the forms of public participation which implies dissatisfaction and disengagement of citizens in the implementation of LED programmes. The findings in relation to objective three indicate that the lack of skills and knowledge of Great Kei community is one of the most pressing challenges that affects the ability to participate in LED projects. In this case, the community members appear to have no clue on what should be discussed and how to discuss.

In relation to study objective four, (to explain how to enhance the public participation processes on LED within the GKLM).The findings also revealed that public participation processes should be well-resourced to enhance public participation; decision making should be people centred, public participation platforms should use vernacular languages to avoid language barrier, municipalities should use cost effective media platforms to enhance public participation processes In conclusion, the researcher recommends that the public participation processes be revised to ensure that all the participatory activities and needs of local populations are primarily addressed.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION

The aim of the study was to analyse public participation processes applied on local economic development initiatives of Great Kei Local Municipality in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa. The objectives of the study were to understand the existing public participation processes on LED initiatives, to understand how these public participation processes affect the success of LED initiatives, and to understand how people's capacities affect their ability to participate in LED projects. The research question was, *“how can Great Kei Local Municipality capacitate its residents to participate in decision making processes in LED initiatives?”* In order to clearly answer the questions and address the objectives, the researcher employed a qualitative case study research methodology supplemented by purposive sampling method, semi-structured interviews, and thematic analysis method. In doing so, this helped the researcher to have a deeper understanding of the life experiences of the Great Kei community and to describe the existing phenomena. Furthermore, a qualitative case study research methodology was then adopted by the researcher as it allowed him to comprehensively study a single unit for the purposes of understanding a larger class. The exploratory case study enabled the researcher to get insights on why Great Kei community is dissatisfied with the implementation of LED programmes and how the municipality has been enabling public participation in the LED programmes. The researcher qualitatively sampled participants with the adoption of the suitable sampling method that allowed him to select participants that were readily available. Thirty-five people were sampled from Great Kei community and officials to provide an insight on how to enhance the current public participation processes on LED within the Great Kei Local Municipality. The data collection method used by the researcher was the in-depth interviews which enabled the researcher to get a deeper understanding of the existing phenomena. Thematic analysis enabled the researcher to systematically code and classify different themes that were related to the main research question, aim and objectives. This enabled the researcher to easily answer the research question and address the objectives of the research.

6.1 Literature and theoretical underpinnings

Chapter two reviewed literature on public participation on local government and local economic development. Public participation in local government is important factor for local planning as it

allows planners and decision-makers to recognise community needs and allow local authority leaders to assign local development projects in their order of urgency. The study also showed that public participation improves quality of service delivery by ensuring public service investment is people-centred and expresses people's needs. The literature review also showed that public participation can ensure that they contribute in the decision-making process. The existing participation process can ensure that citizens have limited power in decision making where in some instances, citizens become partners with authorities in decision making. The literature further revealed that there are also bad forms of public participation which are passive and manipulation in which citizens are informed of predetermined decisions so as to rubber stamp them. This then undermines the democratic aspect of governance which believes in the inclusion of citizens in decision making. The literature further revealed that there are different forms of public participation that can be utilized by local municipalities to facilitate citizen active participation in decision making on LED programmes. These forms include community outreach programmes, road shows, community forums, ward committees amongst others. Ward committees play an important role in fostering public participation in LED programmes. They have a mandate to ensure the inclusion of community voices in decision making on LED programmes and further enable accountability and transparency of public officials in decision making. Ward committees have been accused of their inability to represent the community needs. They are also accused of presiding over issues that have been already deliberated on by the municipality without the consent of the citizens. By employing literature, the thesis argues that ward committees which came into being as a result of the Municipal Systems Act of 1998 are dysfunctional, ineffective and inefficiency in enabling public participation as they preside predetermined issues, thus the need to involve citizens on the centre of decision-making process to ensure the active public participation on LED programmes.

Literature further reviewed that citizens face barrier to communication in different forms of participation which are adopted by the municipalities, thus rendering public participation unsuccessful in LED programmes. By using this literature, the thesis further argues that language is a barrier to public participation, and it disenfranchise the citizen's right to participate in decision making in LED programmes. From the literature, it was evident that there has been citizen dissatisfaction in the implementation of LED programmes by their local municipality. This has

been blamed solely on the local authority's failure to provide effective public participation mechanisms that enhance active citizen participation in decision making in LED programmes. The legislative provisions and institutional structures that have been put in place by the South African government to enable public participation in the local government have been discussed in the literature review. It has however showed that participation structures have been put in place to promote public participation in local government. However, the participation structures are not fully used due to several reasons such as lack of sufficient resources (human and financial) and ignorance. Chapter 2 has also highlighted the need for capacitating citizens through education on public participation issues in decision making in LED programmes.

The thesis used participatory development theory supplemented by the capability approach as theoretical lenses for this study. Participatory development was described as active involvement of citizen in making decisions about implementation of programs and projects that affect their day to day lives.

Chapter three discussed participatory development approaches which are White's Typology (1996) of interests, Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation and Amartya Sen (1992)'s Capacity Approach. These participatory development approaches helped the researcher to have a thorough understanding of public participation in local governance as discussed in the literature, and a clear picture of public participation process in the Great Kei Local Municipality and the reason why it is in that current shape. The capability approach entails the ability of an individual, a group of people or an institution to perform certain functions and that ability is mostly influenced by socio-economic factors. This theory was relevant to understand capacities and incapacities of people to actively participate in decision making processes in the LED initiatives as a result the lack of knowledge and skills of public participation, hence they find themselves excluded from decision making processes. Amartya Sen (1992)'s capability approach helped the researcher to understand whether public participation is meaningful or not in the study area. It will help to see whether LED projects are a reflection of the public participation or not.

6.2 Summary of the Empirical findings

The findings below presented in line the study objectives. The findings show how they achieve each objective.

6.2.1. Study objective one: To understand the existing public participation processes on LED initiatives

The findings of this research revealed that there is a lack of public participation in decision making processes in local economic development programmes. The majority of participants noted that public participation mechanisms in the Great Kei Municipality are ineffective and inefficient in enabling public participation processes in local economic development. They highlighted that ward committees give a false representation of the community stakeholders as they preside over predetermined outcomes and only rubber stamp the decisions which make them not to live according to the community expectations. This is a reflection of public participatory approaches of Arnstein's manipulation participation and White's Typology (1996) nominal participation which both believes that citizens only get involved in predetermined projects which highlight participatory mechanisms as merely facades. The study also found out that there is lack of commitment to public participation from both officials and the public. This means that there is need to restructure public participation mechanisms such as ward committees and continuously assessing their effectiveness in representing the needs and views of the citizens. Additionally, there is need to embark on massive educational programmes to educate the citizens on the importance of public participation in decision making processes in LED initiatives.

6.2.2. Study objective two: To understand how these public participation processes affect the success of LED initiatives

In understanding how the public participation processes affect the success of LED initiatives, the research found out that lack of resources such as sufficient budget for public participation has hampered public participation processes in local development programmes at Great Kei Municipality. Forms of public participation such as community outreach, roadshows, workshops and community forums amongst others need proper funding to ensure their effectiveness. The research has established that English language which is predominantly used in public participation

platforms is one of the stumbling blocks for effective public participation processes in LED programmes. This is because the majority of the population are rural and more comfortable to articulate issues in their vernacular languages and some find it difficult to understand English since it is their second language. The findings have shown that there is a need to use vernacular language as a medium of communication in public participation platforms to ensure that no one is left out in the decision-making processes. Residents of Great Kei Municipality have also noted that technologically driven media of communication used by the Great Kei Municipality such as social media are costly for the general populace. The citizens are not able to always afford expensive data in order to have access to information from the municipality.

6.2.3. Study objective three: To understand how people's capacities affect their ability to participate in LED projects

The findings of the research revealed that there is a lack of capacity building programmes in Great Kei Local Municipality. Participants indicated that they lack knowledge and articulating skills of public participation processes in LED initiatives. In this regard, if the Great Kei community was capacitated, the participation process would be more transformative. This would have been in line with White's typology (1996) theory on transformative participation that believes in the empowerment of the citizens who are involved in decision making processes which subsequently results in the altering of the structures and institutions that leads to exclusion and marginalization of less powerful people in the communities. They further revealed that they Great Kei community is not educated enough to participate meaningfully in decision making processes in LED initiatives. In this regard, education can help Great Kei community to understand planning, budgeting, implementation, and oversight. The inadequate outreach programmes highlighted in the findings of the research are affecting the people's ability to participate in decision making in the LED initiatives. In addition, new forms of media used for public participation processes which include the social media which require data for easy access hampers participation due to their cost and are out of reach of the poor.

6.3 Study Contribution

Sufficient literature dwells more on the failures of local government authorities in enabling public participation in LED initiatives. This study provides additional insights on the challenges facing the success of public participation processes in LED initiatives. The findings of the study indicate that the current public participation process is marred by a lot of challenges. The inadequate outreach programmes highlighted in the findings of the research are affecting the people's ability to participate in decision making in the LED initiatives. In addition, new forms of media used for public participation processes which include the social media which requires data for easy access hampers participation due to their cost and are out of reach of the poor. The study found insufficient resources for participation as one of the most challenging factors in the public participation in LED initiatives. These challenges are negatively affecting the success of public participation process in LED initiatives. Therefore, the study provide insight on how local government institutions (i.e. municipalities) can capacitate citizens to participate in decision making process in local economic development initiatives using Great Kei Municipality in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa as a case study.

6.4 Study Recommendations

- Recommendation 1 - That more research be carried out on the impact of LED strategies in alleviating poverty and employment creation. It is clear from the findings that most citizens think that their lack of participation in decision making processes results in their dissatisfaction on LED initiatives.
- Recommendation 2 - That adequate funds from the GKLM budget should be channelled towards public participation process to ensure its effectiveness.
- Recommendation - 3 the GKLM to provide more human resources in the ward committees to empower them to effectively execute their duties.
- Recommendation 4 - Municipalities to partner with CSOs and also embark of massive skills training programmes for both council officials and the communities to ensure capacitation of every stakeholder in the decision-making process and the implementation of the developmental projects.

- Recommendation 5 - There is need to demystify expert knowledge in the developmental process, more importantly to ensure that government officials make developmental projects more accessible to local communities.
- Recommendation 6 - The municipalities should use technology for communication that is cost effective and easily accessible to the communities.

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INTERVIEW SCHEDULE - LED PRACTITIONER

1. In your view is it necessary for the public and stakeholders to be involved in the public participation process for local economic development projects?
2. Do you think the public participation process is useful in decision-making in your local economic development projects or not? If so, how?
3. In your opinion what are the barriers to effective public participation?
4. What other factors do you think that can contribute to achieve effective public participation in LED projects?
5. Do you think it is important for LED officials to have knowledge and skills on the public participation processes?



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INTERVIEW SCHEDULE – PUBLIC - PARTICIPATION PRACTITIONER

1. In your view is it necessary for the public and stakeholders to be involved in the public participation process for local economic development projects?
2. Is there any recent public participation process in local economic development you have been involved in?
3. Were all stakeholders in the process clearly identified? If yes, please explain how?
4. Do you think the public participation process is always useful in decision-making in your project or not? If so, how?
5. What public participation techniques were used during the project? Why this technique was used?
6. What other factors do you think that can contribute to achieve effective public participation?



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INTERVIEW SCHEDULE - WARD COUNCILLORS

1. What is your understanding of an inclusive public participation on community local economic development initiatives?
2. Have you recently been involved in any public participation process for any community development project?
3. Do you think the methods used for public participation are effective?
4. In your opinion, were the participation processes well organised and managed?
5. Is the public participation process implemented in the interest of all LED stakeholders?



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INTERVIEW SCHEDULE - LOCAL CHIEF

1. What is your understanding of public participation processes?
2. Have you ever participated in the public participation process for any local economic development project?
3. What language was used to conduct the meeting?
4. Were the discussions happening in the meeting clear for you?
5. What was your role in that participation process?
6. What were your particular reasons for getting involved in the process?
7. Were your expectations met? Please explain



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INTERVIEW SCHEDULE (Focus Group Discussions) - COMMUNITY MEMBERS

1. Have you ever participated in any public participation process on local economic development projects?
2. What was your role or responsibility at that time
3. Did you all participate in the planning process?
4. Were the purpose and intentions of the participation process made clear at the beginning of the process?
5. Please explain how the information was presented and provided in the participation process?
6. Was information made available to the public?
7. Were the participation processes open enough to see how the decisions were made?

