

Challenges in the Implementation of Community Development Projects in the Eastern Cape Province, South Africa

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KEYWORDS Community Development. Department of Social Development. Implementation. Projects Sakhisizwe Municipality

ABSTRACT This paper sought to evaluate the challenges facing the community development projects in Sakhisizwe Local Municipality in the Eastern Cape province of South Africa. The poor climatic conditions and lack of employment and business opportunities in the province have drawn the attention of the government to implement development projects in the vulnerable communities. The study adopted a qualitative research design whereby various documentary sources, pieces of legislation, reports and government publications were used to collect data. The data was analysed qualitatively using thematic content analysis. Findings from the study revealed that Sakhisizwe local municipality encountered various challenges such as skills shortage, corruption, poor infrastructure, lack of monitoring and evaluation on development projects, a poor revenue base among others. The paper recommends the government of South Africa to increase funding towards community development projects and to engage in public private partnerships (PPPs) as a way of improving community service delivery.

INTRODUCTION

The birth of democracy in the year 1994 in South Africa witnessed an unprecedented transformation from the former apartheid system of governance into a more democratic dispensation. The Constitution of South Africa (1996) provides for a Bill of Rights in Chapter Two which mandates the government to provide a range of service to various communities through local municipalities. The government of South Africa adopted a developmental approach to enhance service delivery, promote rural economic development and integration, social interventions to uplift the living standards of the citizens through sustainable development. Kuye and Nhlapo (2011: 2) argue that prior to the end of apartheid, South Africa, inherited a social welfare system torn apart by many years of repressive rule which has a combination of unique historical features. The remnants of this system resuscitate itself on the ability of the current system to eradicate poverty issues and other economic issues such as high unemployment, cancer related diseases as well as HIV and AIDS. The government realised that the social development approach failed to address the challenges in the societies; resultant, the government sought to introduce developmental local government whereby local municipalities drive change and development in

communities they govern. Community development in South Africa is currently on the government's National Development Plan (NDP) agenda which commenced in 2011 and expected to be fully operational in 2030, a tool implemented to alleviate poverty in most vulnerable rural communities of the country (NPC 2011).

There have been various conflicting definitions among scholars on how to define community development. The main issue behind the argument is that, community development is both a process and a product. It is argued that community development does not entirely focus on the material resource development nor systems which are meant to address the community needs. Hatcher (2015) asserts that community development is about the betterment of social, political, and the economic institutions in our nation's communities. Meade (2011: 1) points out that community development is a unique form of practise, which has an intrinsic orientation towards democratic and participatory outcomes of collective change, inclusion and equality. Due to this uniqueness in the form of its practise Meade (2011) stresses further that, this has led to the existing debate concerning community development professionalism which in turn impacts on the process towards its professionalism.

Hart (2012: 56) realised that the on-going controversy on community development had

been as a result of a theoretical dichotomy, since professional standards are much needed although they should be linked with expert knowledge coupled with social closure whereas community development is mainly based on the two principles of equality and social integration/inclusion. The White Paper for Social Welfare (1997: 93) endorses community development as an intervention strategy to implement development programmes that lead to the betterment of the lives of community members. The social, economic and cultural dimensions of the community need to be considered since they play a pivotal role in the holistic development of communities and especially women within these communities. Gray (1998) ascertains that community development strategy within the developmental paradigm in South Africa post 1994 signifies the importance of economic growth, linked to income generating programmes and small business development in the local communities. These programmes should result in local produce that is affordable to communities, create jobs and address poverty. A significant aspect of the White Paper on Social Welfare (1997) lies in its shift to developmental welfare which emphasises that people should change their lives by being self-dependent rather than depending on charitable hand-outs. This is the main aim of the government of South Africa to spearhead developmental local government through municipal Local Economic Development (LED) strategies (White Paper for Social Welfare 1997).

For the purposes of this article, the definition by Combat Poverty as cited in Motherway (2006: 33) describes community development in South Africa as a process whereby those who are marginalised and excluded are enabled to gain in self-confidence to join with others in the economic affairs of the country. Motherway (2006: 11) remarks further, that community development in essence means to participate in actions to change the situation and tackle the problems that face the community. It is a dynamic, multi-sectoral and multidisciplinary concept which has various key sectors to consider such as facilitation of the community development process, development of people-driven and community-based programmes and facilitation of capacity-building and economic empowerment programmes (Motherway 2006).

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study were to evaluate the challenges facing the Eastern Cape Department of Social Development in implementing community development projects in Elliot community. The study also seeks to establish root causes of failure of the development projects and recommends the government to adopt a holistic approach in the form of (PPPs) Public Private Partnerships to deliver services to vulnerable communities.

Problem Statement

In his State of Nation Address (SONA) for 2015, President Zuma emphasised on the need to rejuvenate the economy through unlocking the potential of SMME's, cooperatives, township and rural enterprises. His clear focus on the subject stems from the higher rates of poverty in most provinces across the country which require community development projects as poverty alleviation tools. A study by Ndlovu (2012) revealed that poverty and food insecurity in the Eastern Cape resulted from a decline in agricultural production exacerbated by the lack of training and development among the project members. Another study conducted by the Eastern Cape Development Indicators (2012: 13) revealed that poverty levels are still high in rural areas of which eighty-two percent being estimated to be in rural areas and percent in urban areas. The study ascertains further that of the 22 million people residing in South Africa, nearly 3.9 million people live in abject poverty in the Eastern Cape. The *Jobs Fund* (2015) echoes the above sentiments when it suggests that despite being the second largest province, with great agricultural potential, the Eastern Cape is a net importer of food. This is because the majority of the rural villagers are 'price takers' with no locally based production and industries to create jobs and plug economic leakages, which explains the intervention of the government to create employment through development initiatives such as farming and women cooperatives to reduce the persistent poverty. Burgess (2011) remarks that emerging communal farmers in the Eastern Cape blamed the government for its failure to support agriculture through loans and subsidies, through the national development finance institutions (such as Land Bank) as well as the

absence of post-settlement support to land reform beneficiaries. Lesame et al. (2014) contend that the lack of knowledge in (ICT) Information Communication Technology and the unavailability of ICT access centres hampered the effective implementation of the community development projects. This paper therefore; sought to evaluate the projects that have been implemented by government in order to identify the challenges that have been met so that community development is achieved.

Literature Review

Many theories and assertions have been given by various scholars, but some dismissed in an attempt to explain the origins of community development. Midgley et al. (1986: 13) maintain that the practise of what the researchers loosely call community development dated back to the history of early civilisations when mankind initiated actions from which groups or parties benefited from within. Brokensha and Hodge (1969: 41) argue that the more recent origin of community development is credited to some American authors who wrote on the practise of agricultural extension instituted in 1870 in some Midwestern states of the United States. Phifer et al. (1980: 19) differed pertaining the origins of community development. The authors stated that community development originated in the US in 1908 with the Country Life Commission Report and the 1914 Smith Lever Act in terms of which Cooperative Extension Service came into existence. It was arguable that the main aim of the report was to establish community organisation in order to promote better living, better farming, more education, more happiness and better citizenship (Phifer et al. 1980: 19-20).

Community development in America underwent intense criticism from subsequent literature from Holdcroft (1978) and Ponsioen (1962: 53). The authors believed that community development originated in India in 1921 following attempts by the Institute for Rural Reconstruction. The main aim of this institution was to redress life situations, encourage self-reliance, self-respect and most significantly the exploitation of modern resources for economic gain. The debate concerning the real origins of community development went unsolved for decades up until its inception on the African continent. Just like in America, India and Asian countries the

unresolved mystery or myth on community development continued to haunt the African peninsula as writers continued to provide conflicting versions of how it came to Africa. Campfens (1997: 4) observes that in Africa community development was promoted by governments in the 1950s and 1960s through the United Nations (UN) affiliated institutions as a part of the independence and decolonization movements. Several African governments launched a war on poverty, though they perceive it as a Euro-centric idea of modernizing the underdeveloped and backward countries through agricultural societies. This global restructuring in Africa spread fast like veld fire across the continent as governments adopted and developed strategies to increase their economic well-being hence the birth of community development on African soil.

In South Africa, community development was not popular largely due to the scepticism and mistrust in government circles about its capacity for political change and diversity. Community development penetrated its way during the evangelical missionary circles and in the (BCM) Black Consciousness Movement (De Beer and Swanepol 2005: 10). In the early 1990 the South African government embarked on the study of community development as the international community perceive it before it could be fully put into effect in the former homelands popularly known as "Bantustants". During that same era, the then Department of Cooperation and Development and Planning, the Department of Constitutional Development and Planning, the Chief Directorate of Population Development decided to apply community development (De Beer and Swanepol 2005: 11). With the abolition of administrative bodies in 1987 and transfer of their functions to the provinces in 1993 the Department of National Health and Population Development played a vital role in offering advice on community development nationwide (De Beer and Swanepol 2005).

Conceptual Clarity: Community Development

The Constitution of South Africa (1996b) provides for three spheres of government which are independent and distinct, but also interrelated, with clear powers and functions. These three tiers of government are mandated to spearhead development especially the local government

sector in the form of developmental local government. Raga et al. (2012) discovered that the local government emanates from a position of strength through organised local government as stipulated in the South African Local Government Association (popularly known as SALGA). The South African government is not new to the problems in the local sphere such as poor service delivery mainly in the rural communities. In almost all government gatherings such as Presidential “*Izimbizo*’s”, the service delivery backlog appears on the agenda. This explains why the government decided to take community development seriously through developmental local government and community development projects through the Department of Social Development. Notably, the government introduced the community development workers (CDWs) to help the three tiers of government to enhance an effective and efficient community development (IDASA 2006). Bamber et al. (2009) denotes that community development involves a broad approach to working in ways that are empowering and participative. The authors admit further that the focus is mainly on the most disadvantaged sections of the population, who may be defined by age, gender, ethnicity, disability, economic status or other such categories. Provision might be universal or targeted, potentially working with the whole community or a particular group such as young people. It may be open-ended or prioritised to deliver given policy outcomes relating (for example) to health, community safety, livelihoods, or environmental protection. As the term community development implies, Israr et al. (2013) observes that, it is fundamentally about involving a sense of common identity, capacity and purpose. It takes the form of unpaid active citizenship with community members organizing themselves and taking on leadership roles.

In contrast, Rubin and Rubin (2001) as cited in (Udensi et al. 2012: 2) maintain that community development occurs when people strengthen the bounds within their neighbourhoods, build social networks, and form their own organizations to provide a long-term capacity for problem solving. Lee (2009: 3) observes that community development has the capacity to develop a voice for the voiceless; that those who experience isolation from the political process can be brought right into it and enabled to participate effectively in the democratic process. It is this

idea that creates the impetus to achieve social change and to fight against poverty and social exclusion. The Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) as cited in Department of Social Development (2008: 19) contends that community development is an improvement of the quality of life of all South Africans, particularly the most poorest and the marginalised sections of society. In terms of the RDP, community development should be realised through a process of empowerment, which gives the poor control over their lives and also increases their ability to mobilise sufficient development resources, including from the government where necessary. It is a way of strengthening civil society by prioritising the actions of communities and their perspectives in the development of social, economic and environmental policy and action (Department of Social Development 2008).

Kuye (2001) observes that the Department of Social Development has the duty to address poverty and economic development by implementing government policies in conjunction with (CSOs) civil society organisations. However, in the Eastern Cape Province, CSOs seem to do little to aid the government which maybe one of the reasons why community development projects are failing. Frimpong (2009: 9) asserts that community development projects are essential in realising community growth through projects outputs hence people should mobilise their own development. According to Bruant and White (1982) and Brinkerhoff (1991), such community development projects focus on the outputs such as capacity building, empowerment of community members (public participation) as well as sustainability through an integrated social learning platform which enhances public participation in the management of projects.

Three-fold Approach to Community Development

De Beer and Swanepoel (1998) explain that community development encompasses three things which are: capacity building, asset building and ownership. The authors discovered that the most important thing about community development is capacity building which is the ability of a community to effectively and confidently self-sustain itself using contributions from its members. They endorsed further that community capacity calls for shared responsibilities of

residents and others for the benefit of the society. Swanepol and De Beer (2012) argue that for an activity to be regarded as community development it should have all the three elements. They laid bare the fact that community development engages in asset building as a way of increasing the number and usefulness of community assets that are available for members to use to improve their own lives, build a sense of community identity. It seems from the above attempts, community development should be citizen participative and economically empowering the local people. In South Africa the main goal of community development is to eradicate poverty in communities hence the government is promoting developmental local government.

Vulnerability Context of Poverty in Sakhisizwe Municipality

The historical legacy of the former apartheid government explains the impoverishment of the people of Elliot community. The geographical dispersion of the people in the Eastern Cape into Bantustans (Ciskei and Transkei) or former homelands indicates the economic and the social inequalities. The attainment of democratic rule in 1994 saw the Mandela government embarking on a progressive economic empowerment of its black people in the form of Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) Reconstruction Development Programme (RDP), Growth Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) (Pillay et al. 2006: 141). May (1999: 10) understands that the extent and nature of poverty in the former homelands' rural communities, have led to the implementation of a range of development programmes and projects aimed at reducing poverty. He explains further that in order to secure future social, environmental and economic development in the rural communities it is crucial to improve the rural economy, which is marked by income inequality and high levels of unemployment. Fisher and DRA (2006) report that the Ciskei and Transkei in democratic South Africa were deeply affected by pervasive chronic poverty coupled with a dearth in the employment and market opportunities which resulted in a high dependency syndrome. Birch et al. (2005) contend that not all community development projects create the desired contributions to the rural economy and the success of the projects varies from one project to another. From the

study of the development theory it has been pointed out that development should be achieved through a community-based approach, as the former centrally-driven top-down approach has proved insufficient.

Obstacles in Community Development

Khosa (2000: 49) admits that community development in South Africa is failing due to improper implementation of public policies due to corruption and largely poor managerial expertise. This has been the major challenge affecting the country apart from good policies that were developed during the first five years of democracy. Brynard (2007: 359) consented with the above verdict when he claims that the *White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery developed in 1994* to mitigate effects of the service delivery backlogs failed to fulfil its objectives hence the service delivery problems continue. Notably, however, a series of policies to eradicate poverty in communities were formulated prior to attaining democracy such as GEAR, RDP despite their failure the Department of Social Development as an implementing machine tries to render development projects as a way of fulfilling the national development plan. The Sakhisizwe Municipality IDP (2013- 2014) suggests that lack of proper infrastructure (roads, railways) have been a major setback in the transportation of people and goods across the district. Thioune (2003: 182) affirms that lack of technical expertise among women was a critical challenge to the failure of women cooperatives in Sakhisizwe Municipality. The lack of women's access to information and technology, low levels of income, limited education and non-involvement in Information Communication Technology (ICT) are barriers to community development. The SA Local Government Research Centre (2014b: 21) observes that poor community service delivery has been experienced in municipalities because service providers are appointed based on political influence thereby manipulating the accurate supply chain process. Following this line of argument, community development projects have been ripped apart due to nepotism and corruption in the procurement systems which is backstab to achieving effective community development.

METHODOLOGY

The central theme of this research was to evaluate the challenges faced by Eastern Cape Department of Social Development in implementing community development projects in Elliot peri-urban town under Sakhisizwe municipality in Chris Hani District Municipality in the Eastern Cape Province. The questions covered by the research methods were: What causes community development projects to fail? What remedies can be provided to government to stimulate community development projects. Is citizen participation present in development projects? To what extent has poverty been alleviated in the Eastern Cape Province? These questions were answered by adopting a qualitative research design to collect the relevant data. The researcher used documentary sources to collect data such as government documents, previous research works; (published and unpublished) books, journals, policy statements, internet and reports were used to provide secondary data. The abundance of literature on the paper topic motivated the use of documentary review of data. Information obtained from secondary sources was analysed in a qualitative manner using thematic content analysis. Themes and subthemes were used to present the data according to the flow of the paper objectives.

OBSERVATIONS AND DISCUSSION

Social-economic Challenges (Prevalence of Diseases)

In an attempt to achieve sound community development through various development projects, the paper recognised that, the Department of Social Development in Sakhisizwe Local Municipality was constrained by the prevalence of TB, HIV and AIDS which wield immense pressure and strain on the current health facilities. Instead of rendering community development projects (CDPs) to communities the Department of Social Development (DoSD) had to cope first with giving other form of support to the affected people. The high prevalence of HIV and AIDS exert more pressure and demand on health and most importantly social services.

Published findings from the National Antenaral HIV Survey 4 indicated that in 1999; 450,000 people in the Eastern Cape Province were in-

fectured with HIV (Sakhisizwe Local Municipality IDP Review 2014/15). The report went on to project that about 16,000 people would have died of AIDS in the province by the year 2009. Given these statistics, conclusions can be drawn that the Department of Social Development as the main implementer of community development projects in Sakhisizwe Local Municipality was crippled financially as the municipality failed to provide adequate funding towards community development. The Department of Social Development was forced to divert funds meant for community development projects towards increasing access to medical facilities which was obviously an unprecedented blow to community development.

The Need to Improve on Revenue Collection Strategies (Revenue Collections Strategies)

The paper established that Sakhisizwe Local Municipality was hit by a poor revenue base which resulted from poor revenue collection strategies relating to the under-pricing on services rendered for the public. This had a negative bearing on the Department of Social Development because the municipality was not able to adequately fund social services in the communities, which was a hindrance in achieving effective community development. A study by Theron (2008) revealed that cooperatives which lie at the cornerstone of community development projects have been experiencing cash flow challenges as a result of their inability to access equity capital from the members. Banks are reluctant to fund cooperatives because they lack collateral security hence it's a risk they cannot afford. The lack of loan facilities and effective funding have seen various cooperatives crumbling in Sakhisizwe which calls for the municipality to increase on its revenue collection and devise other strategies of financing community development projects as a way of improving service delivery. The lack of financial sustainability is being created by the institutional constraints whereby municipalities are failing to institute effective revenue collection mechanism to improve their revenue base (SA Local Government Research Centre 2014a: 27). Scharam (2007) concludes that community development projects (cooperatives) have the potential of turning around the third world economies in the event they flourish in a conducive environment.

Through adequate financing community development projects can help the poor in the most vulnerable and marginalised communities in South Africa with the much needed opportunity for self-determination and economic empowerment.

The Need to Improve on Skills Development (Skills Development and Training)

The paper established that the shortage of skills and the incompetence of the technical staff in both Sakhisizwe Local Municipality and the Department of Social Development was another blow in achieving sound community development. Gardner Business Solutions (2011) reasons that, the failure by local government to train staff members in projects management, market awareness and business knowledge has seen the life span of several community development projects being shortened. Kanyane (2009) admits that, leaders of the community development projects suffer from managerial skills, uncompetitive pricing, poor knowledge of business and poor team work and coordination. This dearth in the administrative systems is due to the lack of skills development that has contributed to the demise of many development projects in the Eastern Cape Province. Thwala (2007) affirms that, the lack of largely defined and executed training programmes that link medium to long term development plan, poor budget implementation and high politicisation led to the poor sustainability of envelopment projects. Based on these scenarios, community development is facing critical challenges both in terms of skills shortage and cadre deployment where development projects are politicised for the benefit of the minority cadres of a political party. Such a complexity calls for a paradigm shift in the political circles where the development should be universal and leaders of the community development initiatives should be selected based on the merit rather than on political grounds which is a prerequisite in realising an effective developmental local government.

The Need for Monitoring and Evaluation of Community Development Projects

In poverty alleviation, the success of community development projects rests on the effective implementation of monitoring and evaluation strategies. Evidence from the study revealed that the Department of Social Development rarely

monitors and evaluates development projects. This corresponds with the findings from the assessment conducted by *The Eastern Cape Today of 6 February* (2015) which pointed out that cooperative development was stopped following vandalism of hydrophonic tunnels transporting water to Sakhisizwe municipality. The Department of Social Development took no action after the matter was reported to them. This proves that the department lacks commitment and enough manpower to execute such an exercise hence this has negatively affected the growth of development projects. For instance, women cooperatives and youth projects collapsed due to the lack of skilled people to manage the development projects. Khumalo (2014) maintains that, poor leadership management and poor formulation of public policies are the contributing factors towards poor monitoring and evaluation of community development projects. This requires the government with regards to policy to create an enabling environment where community development programmes can flourish rather than interference, which compromises their autonomy, organic growth, and proper functionality.

Unfavourable Climatic Conditions

The geographical location and the poor climatic conditions of Sakhisizwe Local Municipality pose a serious threat to the community development projects in the surrounding communities such as Elliot and Cala. The prevalence of terrestrial summer rains often accompanied by storms and thunder, coupled with the weakened soil cover, flooding and erosion is common sight in Sakhisizwe District. Ndlovu (2012) in her study found out that, the failure by the Eastern Cape government to respond to the effects of bad climatic conditions and prioritise agriculture posed a serious threat to the local residents thereby subjecting them to high food insecurity. Sakhisizwe Local Municipality IDP Review (2014/15) cautions about the environmental degradation and the poor waste management that threaten public health and the sustainability of community development projects. The paper maintains that in spite of the unfavourable climatic conditions that often disrupt agricultural activities, the deteriorating infrastructure in the urban town of Elliot and Cala also discourage stakeholders or investors to usher in more funding for community develop-

ment projects. Such scenarios place a challenge on the local authority to improve on its disaster management programmes as a way of compensating agricultural activities thereby promoting community development and household food security.

The Need to Improve on Infrastructural

The success of community development as a part of government' initiatives to alleviate poverty and generate employment rely on adequate infrastructure that supports various developmental programmes. The paper depicted that, the poor infrastructures such as proper recreational and vocational schools to promote skills development among the youth and inadequate equipment (laboratories) in local schools hampered the advancement of science and research. The department of Education and Eskom failed to adequately provide favourable infrastructure to support education which is one of the obligations of community development. The lack of transport services hampered the ability of CDPs to flourish in the Eastern Cape. Goods and services could not be moved in time owing to the poor roads networks. The main transport systems were largely focused and on the movement of goods and people across the Eastern Cape landscape particularly in the community of Elliot. These challenges had a negative bearing on the success of the community development projects. The Sakhisizwe Local Municipality IDP (2013- 2014) concurs that poor infrastructure (roads, railways) have been a major impediment in the transportation of people and goods across the district. Mensah et al. (2013) argues that such challenges facing community development projects should be mitigated through the community grassroots and integrated approaches where people are consulted on the way forward on how to boost their own infrastructure.

The Need for Proper Information Dissemination

The Bathopele Handbook (2010) in South Africa speaks to information dissemination as a requirement, in informing citizens on the value for money for the services they receive from the municipalities. The Sakhisizwe Municipality IDP Review (2014/15) ascertains that, poor and serviced telecommunication networks have been a

barrier to effective community development for so many years. The available landline telephone services are not able to adequately meet the communication demands of the entire Sakhisizwe municipality. The cellular network coverage is patchy due to the mountainous terrain which also affects the television and radio broadcasting networks. The Department of Social Development which is the driving machine behind CDPs is inhibited to disseminate information and move around the municipality in vulnerable communities to provide social aid. This obstacle has seen the residents of communities around the Elliot town failing to participate in CDPs which is a setback to the government's aim of reducing poverty in communities as embedded in the (National Development Plan 2011- 2030). Community participation has illuminated in the literature as a contributing factor to ineffective implementation of the community development projects. This stems from poor information dissemination which crippled the citizens to take part in the development that can improve their living standards. A study by Thwala (2007) augments well with the verdicts, when the scholar argues that lack of community participation and ineffective local government coupled with poor information delivery, lack of appreciation and institutional capacities has led to poor achievements in the often 'over-ambitious' poverty alleviation programmes.

The Need to Eradicate High Level Bureaucracy in Community Development Projects

The paper established that, various community development projects such as cooperatives, youth projects, and agricultural projects, have been affected by the scourge of the high level bureaucracy in the local sphere. Bale (2011) as quoted by Twalo (2012) concurs that, although cooperatives lay in close proximity to the citizens, they are often subjected to stringent bureaucratic processes that have a tendency to derail service delivery. Mtshizana (2011) laments over the increased rate at which development projects are failing as he attributed the causes to high level bureaucracy that does not promote entrepreneurship and skills development to citizens to actively participate in the local development that affect them. Mayende (2011) reiterates that, the current challenge in the community development programmes in South Africa, is

the over bureaucratic domination and control of all the processes which deny the public autonomy and institutional voice, to voice their own interests (Cock et al. 2001). Although government interference seems to be a stumbling block towards realising sound community development, Kanyane (2009) warns that, there is a danger that the government led cooperatives ultimately collapse when state protection and support are withdrawn. These arguments can be aligned to the reasons why community development projects are not functioning to the optimal level which requires local government to escape the 'bondage' of highly bureaucratic and centralised systems of governance and enter into a revocracy era where accountability in development projects in highly emphasised.

CONCLUSION

The main findings of this paper have shown that community development in the Eastern Cape is still to be achieved. Community development projects such as women cooperatives have the potential to regenerate employment and alleviate poverty in the rural communities; however they are being hampered by internal and external factors in terms of management, funding and coordination. The paper deduced that, the government needs to improve on its infrastructure to improve the movement of goods and services. The paper depicted that employing incompetent staff compromised community service delivery hence the government needs to adopt a holistic approach towards improving recruitment strategies. The lack of public participation in community development has been a challenge which needs to be redressed. Inadequate knowledge in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency through educating the local people on the use of modern technology. High level bureaucracy and cadre deployment that derail service delivery need to be eradicated to enhance efficiency in community development and poverty alleviation projects.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Sakhisizwe municipality should address environmental challenges such as flooding and soil erosion by regularly engaging in the early warning systems for monitoring the food supply and

household supply and demand and household access to food, weather insurance schemes for farmers and agriculture related disaster management programs. Skills development should be promoted through vocational training schools which cater for the economically active people to be trained and earn skills to self-sustain themselves. Monitoring and evaluation of the community development projects should be conducted regularly to identify areas of weakness, corruption and mismanagement. Public-private partnership (PPPs) with private companies, community based organisations (CBOs), non-governmental organisations (NGOs), businessmen and other relevant stakeholders should be conducted by the local authority to merge both financial and human resources towards poverty alleviation. Good financial management and proper revenue collection strategies should be implemented by the municipality to adequately fund community development projects. Citizen participation and skills development should be promoted by the government among the citizens to improve self-sustainability and employment regeneration. The government needs to increase on its funding through proposing good funding models that enable poverty alleviation projects to sustain.

LIMITATIONS

The research focused on the community development projects funded by the Eastern Cape Department of Social Development in Sakhisizwe Municipality particularly in the peri-urban town of Elliot. The study draws its major findings from the review of secondary data, so the results obtained may not be the same with regards to the challenges being faced by the other municipalities in the Eastern Cape Province in terms of community development. The paper could have used interview and questionnaires however limited financial resources were a major constraint hence a documentary review was used to complete the paper.

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Paper received for publication on July 2015
Paper accepted for publication on November 2016