

An Analysis of Water Indigent Policies in South African Municipalities through the Lenses of Fraser's Social Justice Theory- A Study of the Amathole District Municipality

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ABSTRACT The paper ascertains the extent to which the implementation of the water indigent policy within the Amathole District Municipality is meeting the preconditions of social justice as explained in Fraser's theory of social justice. The theory states that justice can be understood in three separate but interrelated ways. Such are, distributive justice (in terms of a more equitable distribution of resources), the justice of recognition (the equal recognition of different identities/groups within a society) and the justice of representation. The paper employed a qualitative research approach and a case study design. Data was collected using both primary and secondary methods. Thematic analysis was used and the paper revealed that in the context of water service delivery, the Amathole District Municipality's indigent policies need to be improved in order to effectively address social justice.

INTRODUCTION

This paper analysed the water indigent policy in South African municipalities through the lenses of Fraser's theory of Social Justice with a special focus on the Amathole District Municipality herein referred to as ADM. This is one of the 6 district municipalities in the Eastern Cape Province. The theory states that justice can be understood in three separate but interrelated ways: distributive justice (in terms of a more equitable distribution of resources), and the justice of recognition (the equal recognition of different identities/groups within a society) and the justice of representation (Morrison 2021).

Social inequality is a serious feature in the structure and precarious ordering of the South African society today. Lack of access to opportunities, services and individualised inequality are endemic (Govender 2016). The state has a constitutional obligation of ensuring that a minimum core of socio-economic entitlement is provided for the enjoyment of a dignified human existence.

In particular, the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) place municipalities at the center of ensuring the delivery of basic services within communities under their jurisdiction. The

government has made strides to reverse inequalities, unemployment and poverty through the introduction of various policy strategies. However, the South African government has failed to deal with such inequalities, as unemployment and poverty (Francis et al. 2021). It is imperative to note that failure of the government to deal with inequalities on the basis of lack of resources is not an objective and reasonable justification unless an effort has been made to utilise all the resources that are at the State's disposition (Fuo 2020).

Khan (2015) is of the view that the existing dispensation is fraught with a number of socio-economic structural and direct violence which they are struggling to address. As a result, there is growing debate on how South African municipal policies can increase social justice amidst rising service delivery protests (Qaqamba 2017; Leburu 2017). It is in this context that the relevance of the indigent policy in addressing service delivery disparities in post-apartheid South Africa has become topical. It is however important to note that the delivery of services and the demands through violent and destructive protests are unjustifiable in a democratic dispensation (Mpehle 2012).

Poor funding, lack of clear policy direction, poor water infrastructural maintenance culture, lack of

participation from the community, lack of coordination and cooperation among the stakeholders and weak institutional framework negatively affects the delivery of water services and proper implementation of the indigent policy in rural settlement (Akoteyon 2019). A study by Leburu (2017) concluded that the success of indigent policies is influenced by institutional arrangements. With regards to water and electricity service provision, SERI (2013) established that the effectiveness of the indigency policy is affected by poor setting of standards of the service as well as such issues as qualifying criteria. In another study, Qaqamba (2017) illustrates how municipalities are failing to develop mechanisms towards ensuring that overall goals on water services are met. As illustrated by the above studies, much of the research on the indigent policy on service delivery has focused on implementation challenges. In contrast, this article examines the extent to which the water indigent policy achieves social justice using the lenses of Fraser's theory of social justice. A case study of the ADM is used in order to produce a detailed analysis of the issues on water indigent policy and social justice.

Objective of the Study

This study is aimed at analysing the water indigent policies in South Africa with a specific focus on Amathole District Municipality. The aim of this analysis is to determine if the indigent policy is playing a significant role in the achievement of social justice through meeting the preconditions identified by Nancy Fraser of participatory parity, recognition and redistribution. This paper makes an important contribution to the analysis of the distribution of resources and the equal recognition of different identities/groups within a society, in a country such as South Africa, with a historical background of poverty, inequality and other social injustices based on race, gender and to some extent social status. Fraser's theory provides a solid framework for such analysis. In addition it also contributes towards generating knowledge on how municipalities can effectively implement the indigent policy in a manner that contributes to social justice and equitable provision of services especially in rural municipalities.

This paper is structured as follows: after the introduction, the methodology of the study is explained.

The third section examines the indigent policy followed by an explanation of the theory of social justice. Towards the end, the paper provides findings of the study linking them to the preconditions of the theory of social justice.

METHODOLOGY

The study employed a qualitative approach, and this was aimed at developing explanations of the phenomenon under review (Sahu 2013). The above statement is supported by Creswell (2014:4) who postulates that a qualitative research approach mainly focuses on understanding aspects of social life and its methods, which in general generates meaning that does not involve numbers as data for analysis. Kumar (2011) ascertained that a qualitative research approach tends to focus on how people or groups view a social reality differently. This approach was deemed as the most appropriate for this study as it enabled the investigator to study humans and their societies in a bid to understand and interpret customs, ideas and beliefs which in turn would explain the extent to which indigent services such as water are provided to deserving indigents.

A case study design was used as it gave the researchers an in-depth understanding of the extent to which the indigent policy on the provision of potable water for rural communities in the Amathole District Municipality addresses social justice. Zainal (2014) holds that a case study examines a current real-life phenomenon using a detailed contextual scrutiny of a restricted number of events and their relationships. The rationale behind the adoption of a case study research design is to gather detailed and rich qualitative data.

Data for this study was collected using both primary and secondary sources. In collecting primary data, the study made use of interviews and an interview guide was used. The rationale behind the use of interviews was to capture in-depth information and these interviews were conducted telephonically due to covid-19 pandemic. Secondary data was collected using documentation. The researchers reviewed municipal documentations such as annual reports, strategic plans, integrated development plans and indigent policies. The data was analysed using thematic analysis and different themes will be presented in the data presentation section.

Study Site

The study was conducted in Amathole District Municipality, in the Eastern Cape Province. The rurality and economic status of both the province and municipality makes it interesting for a study related to indigency and social justice. The population of the Eastern Cape is characterised by high levels of poverty and social inequality partially due to the apartheid legacy and the Bantustan system (Ngumbela et al. 2020). Close to 14 percent of the households have no income; 7 percent earn between R1 and R400; and 11 percent earn between R401 and R800. In addition, 27 percent of the households earn between R801 and R1600; and 24 percent earn between R1601 and R3200 (Amathole District Municipality Integrated Development Plan 2018). ADM Vision 2030, argues that people falling in these income brackets are considered to be ultra-poor, which may be owing to the unfair distribution of the country's resources (Amathole District Municipality 2014). According to the World Bank (2021), in South Africa close to 30 million people live below the national upper poverty line which is R992. In addition 580 000 people in ADM are living in poverty which translates to 67.27 percent of the population (Amathole District Municipality 2019).

Research Ethics

Before the commencement of the research study, the researchers were granted ethical clearance by the University of Pretoria. The researchers followed the ethical protocols to protect the participants from any form of harm. Study participants were issued with informed consent forms in order to obtain consent. In addition, the researchers ensured that where appropriate sources are cited, they are duly acknowledged.

The Indigent Policy in South Africa

South Africans, especially the majority black were heavily affected by the injustices of the Apartheid era which left them as second class citizens (Mathebula 2014). The democratic government which came into power in 1994 inherited a country which was characterised by high levels of poverty, unemployment and inequalities. Leburu (2017) argues that the marginalisation of the poor from

the core administrative or institutional systems and resources of the government is one of the main dimensions of the persistent and chronic poverty.

Shayamano (2020) is of the view that the persistent exclusion of the poor from the redistributive mechanism of the state can be traced back from the institutional exclusion of the black from system of the municipal government under the colonial government. In order to respond to these challenges, the government introduced a broad range of policy measures. These included the introduction of the Indigent Policy. It was aimed at improving access to basic services and goods, with a view to reducing levels of poverty and specifically the proportion of people who are indigent (Erasmus 2004).

The term indigent in this study is referred to people living below the poverty line and these people are sometimes not able to pay for the services that are provided by the municipalities (Shikwambane 2017). Fuo (2013) holds that the term indigent refers to anyone excluded from accessing municipal services. The indigents are some of the most vulnerable groups within societies that needs government intervention in order to participate as equals within the country. In 2017 it was estimated that South Africa had a total of 3.5 million households (Stats SA 2017). More than 30 percent of these households were unable to access free basic services such as water and electricity. This lack of access to basic services by many communities as a result of apartheid disparities, consequently led to the introduction of the indigent policy to increase access to basic services for low-income communities (Mathebula 2014; Leburu 2017).

According to the National Framework for Indigent Policy of 2003 (Department of Provincial and Local Government 2003) the introduction of the indigent policy is an initiative that is aimed at enhancing the lives of the indigents. This framework puts more emphasis on the role of local government in its implementation since it is the sphere of government closer to the people.

Local government is tasked with a responsibility of ensuring that the needs of the indigent's householders are addressed effectively. The indigent policy is built on two thrusts which involves the provision of the foundation upon which municipalities can build their own indigent policies in order to meet their own responsibilities in respect of providing basic municipal services for all. In addition, it provides a basis for actions which national government will

take in terms of the responsibilities municipalities are given by the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) in order to ensure that all have acceptable access to basic municipal services.

In the South African set-up the poorest people are those who are unable to access any assistance from the state which is designed to provide a social net due to institutional failure. Hence the indigent policy must address challenges of institutional exclusion through the facilitation of the system of local government in a manner that fosters inclusion of the poor in ways that will guarantee their access to affordable municipal services.

A sound indigent policy can be regarded as a bedrock for the achievement of social justice. The indigent policies have since become a feature in South African Municipalities (Mahamba 2020). Providing the indigents with subsidized services would minimize the gap between the rich and the poor thereby meeting the conditions of social justice (Shayamano 2020). The government's introduction of the indigent policy as a solution to deal with the existing inequalities ensure that the indigent benefits from basic service regardless of their gender, race and socio-economic status thereby meeting the second condition of cultural justice.

According to the National Framework for Indigent Policies, the term "indigent" describes individuals who lack the bare necessities of life, such as sanitation, electricity, refuse removal and potable water. People who are unable to access or pay for basic services because of their employment status or poverty are regarded as indigents (National Framework for Municipal Indigent Policies 2003). It is imperative for municipalities to adopt and develop an indigent policy that is suitable for their jurisdiction to ensure that indigents have access to the minimum basic services included in the free basic services programme (Nevhunama 2014). The National Framework for Indigent Policies of 2003 (Department of Provincial and Local Government, 2003) distinguishes different categories of municipalities according to their circumstances. The main aim of the framework was to ensure that all indigent households have access to the prescribed level of basic water and electricity (Fuo 2014). Municipalities are expected to provide essential services to indigent households, including water, sanitation, electricity and refuse collection.

The National Framework for Indigent Policies (2003) stipulates that a standard supply of basic

water should be 25 litres of potable water per individual on a daily basis. In addition water access should be within 200 meters, provision of a basic water supply facility, the sustainable operation of the facility (available for at least 350 days per year and not interrupted for more than 48 consecutive hours per incident) and the communication of good water use, hygiene and related practices are also a requirement.

For anyone to qualify for indigent support the total income of a household should be below R1600. In addition, indigents have to register on an annual basis for indigent support.

Fraser's Social Justice Theory

The researchers perceive Nancy Fraser's theory as being the bedrock of how a socially just community can be constructed in the context of municipal service delivery. Fraser's theory focuses on how competing demands of economic justice and cultural justice can be fused together to provide a comprehensive theory of justice. Fraser (2009) maintains that in order for social justice to be achieved, there is greater need of social arrangements that enable all to participate on an equal footing in social life terming it participatory parity.

In her writing Fraser viewed social justice from participatory parity perspective and this entails how people are able to participate as equals. Initially, Fraser viewed this from three perspectives namely; recognition, redistribution and representation. In this instance recognition entails the cultural domain, redistribution entails economic distribution and representation speaks to the political setting of the society. It is imperative to note that efforts to work towards achieving social justice must involve all these perspectives.

The first precondition as identified by Fraser is recognition. It is worth noting that rural dwellers are often misrecognized, and Fraser's theory of social justice regards misrecognition as a status injury whose locus is social relations, not individual psychology (Fraser 2013). In this context misrecognition is not only limited to looking down upon someone or devaluing of people but relates to denying the status of a full partner in social interaction. According to Fraser (2013), misrecognition is related to the manner in which various groups have become 'despised', for example, on the grounds of

sexuality, gender, race/ethnicity or social class. This calls for equal respect for all participants (citizens) and affording equal opportunities for the achievement of self-esteem.

Fraser and Bourdieu (2007) postulates that in most instances people experiencing poverty are not treated with respect, either in general or by people they come in contact with, and this lack of respect is a barrier to participation in decision-making. In order to achieve social justice, there is need to respect people and allow them to participate in decision-making as the Constitution (1996) stipulates. Respect is a vital indicator of recognition for many people in poverty (Coole 1996). In order to deal with cultural injustices as identified by Fraser 'intersubjective condition' have to be met to 'institutionalized patterns of cultural value which express equal respect and ensure equal opportunity for achieving social esteem.

Recognition of the people living in rural areas has implications on how they are represented and treated at all levels of the society entailing the need for social justice. This entails that every citizen has equal right to pursue social esteem under fair conditions of equal opportunity (Mills et al. 2016). Fraser (2013) concluded that misrecognition has a possibility of inflicting a grievous wound, saddling people with self-hatred and this calls for recognition not as a courtesy but an important human need.

The second precondition for the achievement of social justice is redistribution which seeks to deal with existing economic injustices. Marian et al. (2014) hold that in line with Fraser's framework, economic injustices can be used to refer to inequitable distribution of resources within the society and the negative effect of maldistribution. In line with this it, is imperative for municipalities to ensure that all forms of economic injustices are dealt with. In line with the study, rural people can be prevented from participatory parity by economic structures which are a hindering block in terms of denying them the resources they need to do so. The distribution of all material resources is supposed to enable people to interact as equals (Fraser 2008).

Fraser is of the view that participatory parity will be constrained by economic structures where there is maldistribution of resources and where there is the marginalization of the indigents (Fraser 2009). Fraser (1998) postulates that poverty stands at the extreme redistribution end of the recognition-

redistribution 'conceptual spectrum'. In line with that it can be noted that economic marginalization and deprivation of people living in rural areas are examples of socioeconomic injustices. From the above it can be noted that the principle of participatory parity for the achievement of social justice is applicable to both distribution and recognition.

Fraser's theory of social justice brings both recognition and distribution under a single normative measure but does not reduce either one to the other. Therefore, the view of social justice as a participatory parity allows the researchers to integrate both redistribution and recognition within a single comprehensive framework at the same time paying attention to their mutual irreducibility.

The third precondition for social justice as identified by Fraser was the representation though this one was identified at a later stage in Fraser's theory to be important on the achievement of social justice. Under representation domain Fraser speaks of political injustices which she referred to as misrepresentation. This is prevalent where citizens are denied the opportunity to make justice claims when they are experiencing economic or cultural injustices thus maldistribution and misrepresentation when they are unable to contribute to the decisions that impact upon their lives.

According to Fraser (2013), for social justice to be achieved there is need for social arrangements that allow adult citizens or members of the community to interact with one another at the same level. The above concept is defined by Fraser (2009) as parity of participation and in order for it to be achieved there are two main conditions that must be satisfied. Fraser, poses a question regarding this political dimension of justice: do the community's decision rules accord equal voice in public deliberations and fair representations in public decision-making to all members?

Fraser identified only the two dimensions – the economic and the cultural – in her earlier views of social justice then later the political dimension making them three preconditions for the achievement of social justice (see Fraser 1997, 2000, 2003).

In her theory of social theory, Fraser emphasized on the need for participatory parity and in order for it to be achieved, issues related to recognition and redistribution required citizens to determine the conditions necessary to their satisfaction through robust engagements with government authorities

(Fao 2014). Fraser's theory of social justice gave emphasis on the importance of democratic approach in addressing issues related to redistribution and recognition which requires genuine public deliberations to allow for parity of participation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study was aimed at analyzing the contribution of the water indigent policies in South African Municipalities through the lenses of Fraser's social justice theory. The study employed a qualitative research approach and a case study design where Amathole Municipality was used as a case. Non-probability sampling techniques were employed in this study and data was collected using both primary and secondary data collection techniques. The results of this study were analyzed using thematic analysis where different themes were identified.

Overview of the ADM Indigent Policy

The Eastern Cape Province was heavily affected by the "homelands" system and currently comprises mostly rural areas. The subsistence economy in South African rural areas has been in decline which has increased the level of exclusion of this, most vulnerable, group. Municipalities as a developmental institution are committed to supporting measures that assist and empower communities. According to the ADM Indigent Policy (2013), the municipalities have an obligation of ensuring that all the citizens are able to access their constitutional rights to have access to a basic level of service. In 2005, the municipal indigent framework was introduced and adopted by municipalities and this policy embodies an indigent support to increase the quality of life of the beneficiaries by assisting them to exit from their indigence (ADM Annual Report 2018).

The main objectives of the policy are aimed at the provision of basic services to the community in a sustainable manner within the financial and administrative capacity of the municipality as well as establishing a framework for the identification and management of indigent households inclusive of a socio-economic analysis (ADM Annual Report 2017). In addition, the policy seeks to enhance cooperative governance with other spheres of the government as well as the provision of procedure and guidelines for the subsidization

of basic charges and the provision of free basic services to indigent households (ADM Indigent Policy 2014).

The discussion of the extent to which the indigent policy in the ADM addresses social justice as discussed by Fraser is seen in Table 1 using three main themes

Table 1: Themes

<i>Theme number</i>	<i>Identified themes</i>
Theme 1	Participatory parity
Theme 2	Recognition
Theme 3	Redistribution

Source: Researcher Own Construction, 2021

Theme 1: Participatory Parity

The first theme identified in this study is participatory parity. According to Fraser (2003) in order for social justice to be achieved, there is greater need of social arrangements that enable all to participate on an equal footing in social life terming it participatory parity. This has not been met within the ADM as decisions made that are related to the indigents in most cases they are not involved. Kuhlengisa (2021) postulates that lack of stakeholder involvement has been noted as one of the challenges currently faced by the municipality affecting the achievement of social justice in ADM. The above is supported by comments made by community members, politicians and members of civil societies during data collection. The study identified a number of relevant stakeholders whose efforts are fundamental, such as community members, the municipality, civil societies, political leaders, local government, national government, private sector organisations and traditional leaders. A community member indicated the following:

"We are also stakeholders, but we are not consulted at all" (Participant 12)

A civil society member argued as follows:

"Our voices are not heard at all ... we are often excluded from decision making" (Participant 22)

A politician corroborated this argument:

"I cannot say that we are happy because the municipality is not involving us in the implementation. We are part of the stakeholders, so we have to be involved" (Participant 21)

These statements are indicative that participatory parity within the municipality is not being achieved as most relevant stakeholders are playing

a low-key role in championing potable water service delivery in the ADM, whereas others are sidelined during the implementation phase. This condition has not been met in most South African Municipalities as existing literature posits that the major reason behind service delivery protests is dysfunctional public participation systems where citizens can participate as equals (Mofolo 2016; Masiya et al. 2019). Fuo (2015) maintains that there has been a consistent decline in the interface between municipal officials and community members. This entails that more often than not community members, especially those from poor backgrounds are sidelined in decisions that concern them within the municipalities.

The above accession is supported by literature (Tshoose 2015; Qwabe and Mdaka 2011; Kanyane 2014) which showed that officials within the municipalities are reluctant to share the decision making powers with community members as they perceive themselves as having the unfettered ability to “invent best solution”. The above is a major blow as it means that it may take time for municipalities to achieve the other condition of political justices which entails participation in decision making (Kuhlengisa 2021).

Failure of the municipality to enable an environment suitable for community participation is against the tenants of democracy as the municipality is not adhering to different legislations that include the Constitution (RSA 1996), the White Paper on Local Government (RSA 1998a), the Municipal Structures Act (RSA 1998b), the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act No. 32 of 2000 (RSA 2000) as well as the MFMA (RSA 2003). Masiya et al. (2021) postulate that not only are these legislations instruments for good governance play a vital role connecting but community members and in the municipalities thereby ensuring participatory parity.

Given the current state of affairs within the municipality, the ADM is still far from achieving participation parity which entails the achievement of justice (Kuhlengisa 2021). It is worth noting that for people living in rural areas, respect entails their concerns being listened to. For municipalities to be able to achieve social justice in relation to the provision of water for people living in rural areas, they must be afforded an opportunity to participate as partners in their own future. In order for the achievement of participatory parity within the municipality to be realised there is greater need for

a framework that is focused on potable water delivery which is centered on rural people.

Theme 2: Redistribution

In order to achieve social justice, Fraser (2003) identified redistribution as a precondition and this seeks to deal with existing economic injustices. Marian et al. (2014) postulate that in line with Fraser’s framework, economic injustices can be used to refer to inequitable distribution of resources within the society and the negative effect of maldistribution. In line with this it is important for municipalities to make sure that all forms of economic injustices are dealt with. Rural people can be prevented from participatory parity by economic structures which are a hindering block in terms of denying them the resources they need to participate. The distribution of all material resources is supposed to enable people to interact as equals (Fraser 2008).

The study noted that the ADM indigent policy is heavily affected by the provision of insufficient water services for rural communities. Participants were asked if they received adequate water from the ADM. All 12 participants (community members) indicated that they did not have access to sufficient potable water. The following responses indicated the inadequate water supply,

“No, it is not sufficient because we have big families so the 20 litre buckets, we fetch won’t sustain us for long. We depend on a few communal taps” (Participant 12).

Another community member noted that:

“The water is not adequate” (Participant 8)

The provision of inadequate potable water was also confirmed by a municipal representative who ascertain that:

“The policy entails a certain standard to be provided for free after that indigents have to pay on their own.” (Participant 16).

A representative of the civic society said that:

“The minimum standards stipulated also within the policy promotes inadequate provision of water services for rural communities.”

The argument made by the civil society representative, can be observed in the ADM Indigent Policy (2014) which stipulates that indigent households should have access to a minimum of 6kl of water per month that is fully subsidised, and that the account holder will be liable for all payments

relating to monthly water consumption if it exceeds that amount. This means that every person can access up to a minimum of 25 litres of water per day, which respondents argued is insufficient.

The above supports the finding of Qaqamba (2017) who maintains that the minimum standard stipulated in the National Water Act and the indigent policies is insufficient for human survival. This argument is in line with WHO (2010) which postulate that in order for people to benefit from the right to water, potable water provision must be sufficient, translating to between 50 litres and 100 litres per individual per day. Thus, the policy is not in line with the Constitution, as section 27(1)(b) emphasises the right to sufficient water.

Therefore, considering the social justice theory, the ADM is deviating from the tenets of social justice since it fails to provide rural communities with access to sufficient potable water. One of the conditions as identified by the theory of Social justice was the redistribution which entails the distribution of sufficient resources (Fuo 2013). The precondition for establishing a society based on social justice is the redistribution of material resources to satisfy the basic needs of those living in poverty (Fuo 2014).

The theory argues that in order to establish and maintain a society that is based on social justice, indigents and other marginalised social groups must have sufficient resources and substantive protection to partake in the decision-making process as equals (Fraser 1996). The other assumption of the social justice theory is that social justice cannot be pursued by only one sphere of the government in isolation and therefore needs a collaborative approach (Fuo 2014).

Currently in ADM, indigents still suffer from lack of access to basic services as well as lack of sufficient resources (Kuhlengisa 2021). This is against the tenets of social justice that specify that in order for social justice to be achieved, there must be sufficient resources (Fraser and Bourdieu 2007). Failure to redistribute resources to disadvantaged people limits their freedom and stifles their ability to engage in socio-political debate. This may result in them being seen as inferior or "lesser" citizens, and thus the precondition for the establishment of a society based on social justice is not met (Fuo 2014). This means that the government has a responsibility of ensuring that all the three conditions as propounded by Fraser are met.

Theme 3: Recognition

Fraser (2003) identified recognition as a condition for achieving of social justice and it is worth noting that rural dwellers are often misrecognized. In line with the above it is worth noting that Fraser's theory of social justice regards misrecognition as a status injury whose locus is social relations, not individual psychology (Fraser 2013). In this context misrecognition is not only limited to looking down up on someone or devaluing of people but relates to denying the status of a full partner in social interaction. In its current form, the ADM's indigent policy leads to the stigmatisation of people living in rural areas, rather than alleviating their poverty. Stigmatisation can be defined as attributes that deeply discredit and diminishes someone from being perceived as a normal person to a more reduced person (Ahmedani 2011). In the context of this study stigmatisation relates to the negative stereotypes that are aligned to indigent beneficiaries living in the rural areas being viewed as inferior to the socially acceptable norm. To substantiate this view, one participant noted that:

"It is stigmatised, at times you feel ashamed to say you are a beneficiary of indigent support from Elalini (Rural areas) because of the stigma." (Participant, 5)

Another participant also reported that although the policy aims to alleviate poverty and to ensure adequate access to potable water to the people living in the rural areas, there is stigma that emanates when other villagers know that you are benefiting from the ADM indigent policy programme. Participant 6 also adds that;

"we are stigmatised because we are poor, and we also excluded in some community projects and fail to be included in other community administrative responsibilities"

The statement implies that the failure of the policy to protect the beneficiaries from stigma further reinforces social as well as economic inequalities within the communities in ADM. This therefore contradicts with the theory that underpinned this study. The findings are also supported by Fuo (2014) who emphasised that some government programmes that aim to improve the lives of citizens through resource redistribution fail to eliminate stigma that is characterised with the wellbeing and welfare of the beneficiaries.

This further widens the gap between the rich and the poor. This therefore implies that the implementation of the indigent policy is leading to the stigmatisation of the beneficiaries of the policy in the rural communities within the ADM. This implies that the implementation of the Indigent policy within the ADM is failing to meet the third precondition of recognition as identified by Fraser, to enable participatory parity. This kind of misrecognition as identified in this theme has a possibility of dehumanizing some other people.

Fraser (2013) postulates that when looking into misrecognition, focus must not only be put on the devaluing of people, rather emphasis must also be given on how people are denied the opportunity of interacting as full partners. In this study it is evident that the people living in rural areas who are also beneficiaries of the indigent services are despised on the basis of their social class which is related to misrecognition.

This finding is related to Fraser and Bourdieu's (2007) view that in most instances people experiencing poverty are not treated with respect, either in general or by people they come in contact with most, and this lack of respect is a barrier to participation in decision making. In line with the above accession, this might be a major contributor to the findings of theme one of lack of stakeholder involvement. Respect is a vital indicator of recognition for many people in poverty (Coole 1996). In order to deal with cultural injustices as identified by Fraser 'intersubjective condition' has to be met to 'institutionalize patterns of cultural value [which] express equal respect and ensure equal opportunity for achieving social esteem.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to analysis the water indigent policy in South African municipalities through the lenses of Nancy Fraser's theory of Social Justice with a special focus on the Amathole District Municipality. The study concludes that the ADM indigent policy is failing to meet the three condition for social justice which are recognition, distribution and representation. The implementation of the ADM water indigent policy without any adjustment to deal with the actual needs of rural communities reinforces existing socio-economic inequalities, which is against the pursuit of social justice and a denial of social recognition. The current

ADM indigent policy's contribution to the pursuit of social justice is impeded because it is incapable of properly responding to the basic water needs of rural communities. This indigent policy tends to reinforce rather than alleviate social hardships occasioned by poverty. This paper concludes that this policy fails to meet Fraser's precondition (representation, distribution and recognition) for achieving social justice. The gross disparities in access to social services should be eliminated, as they deny indigents the means to interact as peers with others. The ADM indigent policy does not provide a strategy on how to address the stigma usually associated with the beneficiaries. Failure to deal with the stigma experienced by beneficiaries amounts to a denial of social recognition, which reinforces socio-economic inequalities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to deal with the identified challenges there is greater need for policy reorientation to ensure that effective structures are put in place to allow for public participation. More so the standards for basic water level as stipulated by the policy needs to be revised to be in line with the stipulations of the World Health Organisation (WHO) which recommends 50L of water per day per individual. In the future, an intervention-based research can be conducted on the implementation of the indigent policy in the context of an urban set-up or a comparison analysis between the rural and urban set-up. This approach will contribute to strategies aimed at ensuring the achievement of social justice and that the intended policy outcomes are achieved. This will further assist policy makers and municipalities to strategically plan as well as implement responsive policies most especially integrating the new normal ushered in with the novelty of the Covid-19 pandemic.

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