WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS: A CASE OF OKHAHLAMBA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

by

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DECLARATION

I declare that 'Women's participation in rural development projects: A case study of Okhahlamba Local Municipality' is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of correct references as per UNISA Department of Development Studies referencing guidelines.

(signature)   <u>**19.01.2021**</u>

Signature   **Date**

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my late brother

(Sakhile 'Kile' Shelembe)

I had to finalise this with a sorrowful heart, nonetheless, I appreciate the contribution you ever made towards my academic journey.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

My sincere gratitude and appreciation goes to my supervisor, Dr Rakolojane, for her continued guidance, patience and tireless work she put towards the completion of my studies.

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'He who began the good work in me will see it to completion'… I'm thankful to God my Almighty for wisdom and strength granted throughout.

To all the above, including those not mentioned here but have played a significant role in one way or the other towards this achievement, '*IZANDLA ZEDLUL'IKHANDA, NGIYABONGA.'*

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ABBREVIATIONS

ANC   African National Congress

CGE   Commission for Gender Equality

COGTA   Cooperative Government and Traditional Affairs

EPWP   Expanded Public Works Programme

GAD   Gender and Development

HRDS   Human Resource Development Strategy

ICRW   International Research on Women

IDP   Integrated Development Program

ISRDS   Integrated Sustainable Rural Development Strategy

NDP   National Development Plan

NPWP   National Public Works Programme

RDP   Rural Development Program

RSA   Republic of South Africa

SADC   Southern African Development Community

SAHRC   South African Human Rights Commission

WID   Women in Development theory

Abstract

Public participation has been at the heart of democratic South Africa with its ability to afford ordinary citizens a chance to map out their aspirations as far as development projects are concerned. Democratic principles in this context eliminate any form of dictatorship by the government, encourages transparency and accountability, while allowing community members to form part of decision-making process in matters which directly affect them. This is particularly relevant for communities in rural areas where the majority of the population consists of previously disadvantaged women whom are also burdened by other household duties. These duties, at times, hinder women from taking part in activities outside of their homes, such as participating in development interventions.

This study aimed to evaluate the participation or involvement of rural women in development projects, using Okhahlamba Local Municipality situated in Bergville, Kwa-Zulu Natal as the study area. Specifically, this study interrogated and assessed women's understanding of the concept 'public participation and development', the functioning and effectiveness of ward committees in ensuring and promoting meaningful participation of women in development interventions within their wards, as well as other factors affecting women's participation and the municipality's ability to address these factors. A qualitative research design approach was followed using semi-structured interviews, focus groups and participant observations as the data gathering procedures. The sample for the study was comprised of women from three wards within the municipality in which development projects (housing, road construction and community hall) have been implemented, municipal officials who are tasked with administering public participation process and ward committee members. In the administration of public participation, ward committees act as communicating agents between the community and the municipality.

The investigation revealed that women in the rural areas of Bergville did not fully understand what community participation entailed, the importance of participating in development projects, or the value of taking part in these activities. Consequently, this negatively affected how the concepts of public participation and rural development were put into practice. The study found that the rural women's participation in development projects is further compromised by their household duties, gender roles, low self-esteem, late notices for meeting, lack of support resources, in terms of transport to meeting venues, and nonexistent empowerment initiatives by the municipality. Even though the study was initially based on

the premise that there was dysfunctionality of ward committees which consequently compromised public participation, findings revealed that these structures were functioning effectively and were well informed based on the role they are meant to serve at the time of this study. However, the popularity of the ward committees amongst community members was poor. The study, therefore, recommends that the municipality conduct regular workshops and seminars aimed at empowering and educating women about the importance of public participation, avail resources aimed at enabling and supporting women to attend community meetings, without compromising time spent on their household duties, popularize ward committees and improve the public communication strategy.

The findings of this study provided different alternatives to enable the municipality to develop better strategies in facilitating community participation and ensuring that women are given a fair opportunity to make meaningful inputs in development interventions within the area. To say we have truly realised values of a democratic state would partly translate to South Africa and all its municipal subsidiaries affording women an equal right to meaningful participation in all spheres that affect their wellbeing, regardless of where they are located. True realised values of a democratic state would mean that all barriers prohibiting meaningful participation of women to take place are eliminated at all levels.

CHAPTER 1

Background and Problem statement

1.1 Background of the research problem

It is difficult to think of transformation in any democratic state, especially through rural development, without paying particular attention to how fairly benefits are distributed and enjoyed by different members of society. Rural areas have been characterised by high numbers of women as compared to men, with the history of women worldwide showing that they have remained a largely marginalised group in society for decades, whether based on their gender as women or in some instances based on both gender and race (Bhengu, 2010: 9). It is these inequalities, amongst others, that rural woman have suffered the brunt of patriarchal practices, food insecurity and poverty. Recognising these unacceptable and atrocious living conditions which rural women are subjected to on a daily basis, authorities around the world undertook to equally prioritise rural development in all policy propositions (Stevens & Ntlama, 2016: 9).

Amongst initiatives aimed at improving rural women's living conditions, there is a Southern African Development Community (SADC) Declaration on Gender and Development which advocates for free and accessible social services for the emancipation of women from all walks of life (Southern Africa Trust, 2018: 11). This and others are services and resources which are aimed at long term productivity and sustainability of African women in enhancing their rights, both in the public and private spheres (Stevens & Ntlama, 2016: 48). In return, this translates to women having access to credit, skills development, training, as well as the extension of such services to women in the rural areas, in order to ensure that all women have universal access to a quality life, with the elimination of poverty.

Consequently, local government in South Africa is partly responsible for ensuring that all appropriate measures are in place to eliminate any kind of injustice or discrimination in rural development. This is achieved through ensuring inclusivity of all community members in all development interventions implemented by the government in the relevant areas. In essence, these initiatives are predominantly aimed at empowering residents in these areas to take centre stage in the development agenda. These communities mostly comprise of women, as

men often move or migrate to big cities in search of better job opportunities (Kongolo & Bamgose, 2002: 84). Out of several development-oriented interventions which the country has initiated since the attainment of democracy, the most recent intervention of interest is the National Development Plan (NDP) which was adopted in 2012 (National Development Plan, 2012). The NDP is the country's long-term vision for development up to the year 2030, which has focused on transforming women, in a similar manner to other legislation. The development plan partly highlights the achievements made thus far in improving conditions of women in society, while emphasising the importance of building from these in further emancipating and empowering women, in order for the country to be truly transformed. It is the responsibility of local governments to ensure that such transformation does take place at local levels, including that of rural areas.

Although the South African Constitution is being widely regarded as a "beacon of hope" in expressing all citizens rights, the right of women to development has not been translated in a meaningful manner which is equally beneficial to them (Stevens & Ntlama 2016: 49). This can be noted more so for women in rural areas, as studies show that there are still a number of impediments hindering meaningful participation of women in rural areas in the category of development (Kongolo 2009: 14; Moyo 2014: 5995). These impediments include; lack of government incentives and assistance, illiteracy, time constraints, cultural values and patriarchal practices within their communities.

Development, in its simplest term, is meant to encompass change or transformation in a variety of aspects of the human condition (Summer & Tribe, 2008: 10). The best way to ensure that this objective is achieved is to warrant the manner in which the target group is involved throughout the development process. This creates a way to identify the problem and propose viable solutions that will work in favour of everyone involved (Mautjana & Makombe 2014: 51; Shange 2014: 109; Moyo 2014: 5999). This illustrates why it is important to identify, address and eliminate any possible predicament, challenge or threat which may limit rural women's participation in development. It is only through the active participation of rural women that their needs can be properly identified and the policy makers or government can then respond accordingly by formulating policies and interventions that are properly aligned to address the identified needs. This makes it clear that participation emerges as a key feature in the success of any development intervention, hence this dissertation mainly aimed to uncover how women at Okhahlamba Local Municipality

understand this concept, the importance in ensuring that development responds to the needs of these women and the realities of the nature of their participation in such initiatives.

1.2. Problem statement

A report tabled for the International Centre for Research on Women (2005: 4) indicated that most existing developmental processes are still dominated by men and there are significant obstacles to women's participation in these processes. Women in rural areas are subject to this obstacle as they live in mostly remote areas, with limited access to services and the necessary information to unlock their potential. High levels of illiteracy among women in rural areas and patriarchal practices are often cited as major hindering factors to the participation of rural women in rural development, in such a way that they are made to believe that decision-making is masculine, while they are confined to domestic roles which include feeding the family, cleaning, looking after the elderly (Bari 2005: 8; Penzhorn 2006: 2; Akpotor 2009: 2507). Such perceptions that women have about themselves create a barrier, with a negative effect on their meaningful participation in development as they "view themselves as lesser beings who have nothing of value to contribute" (Hofisi 2014: 1131), especially within the public sphere.

Challenges to meaningful participation of women in development could differ from one context to the other. The Okhahlamba Local Municipality 2016/17 annual report stipulated that an indicator for effective public participation is 'functional ward committees'. This municipality is located in the rural areas of Kwa-Zulu Natal in a small town called Bergville. The annual report further explains that a single challenge currently facing the municipality with regard to public participation is 'dysfunctionality of ward committees' which are meant to be functioning as communicating agents between the community and the municipality (Okhahlamba Local Municipality Annual Report, 2016/17). Consequently, the municipality was not performing as expected in executing public participation. The main aim of this study was to provide deeper insight into the underlying contributory factors (over and above dysfunctionality of ward committees) towards the identified poor public participation within Okhahlamba local municipality and highlight the impact these factors have on effective women participation in development projects.

Even though the study did not find the functioning of ward committees to be a major factor affecting community participation at Okhahlamba Local Municipality, there was still a sizable portion of women not familiar with the structure's functioning and its responsibilities

in facilitating public participation. Over and above this, the study found other factors negatively affecting women participation in development projects. These factors included; lack of awareness and empowerment amongst women regarding the importance of public participation, cultural values, low self-esteem, gender roles and limited knowledge on the concept of public participation. Interestingly, the municipality was not aware of these hindering factors and therefore, recommendations were made on how they could be addressed in ensuring that women within the municipality are afforded a voice in public participation moving forward.

1.2.1. Primary research questions

Mouton (2001:53) describes a research question as a tool that further narrows down or provides clarity to the research problem. Bless, Higson-Smith & Sithole (2013: 71) add that when a research question is clear and narrowed down, it becomes easy to answer and respond to, than if it is not narrowed down or unpacked.

This research focused on answering the following primary questions:

    a. What are women's perceptions, understanding and experiences of participation in development projects in Okhahlamba Local Municipality?

    b. What are the challenges hindering participation of women in development at Okhahlamba Local Municipality?

    c. What is the state of ward committees' functionality within Okhahlamba Local Municipality and its relationship to women participation in development interventions in the area?

    d. What measures are put in place by the Municipality to ensure that women's participation in development interventions is maximised?

1.2.3. Research objectives

Research objectives were structured as follows:

    a) To interrogate and assess how the concept of public participation is understood by women, municipal authorities and ward committees;

    b) To determine the nature and extent of women participation in community development projects in the rural areas of Bergville;

c) To uncover challenges that hinder rural women's meaningful participation in development with an intention of assisting the municipality to address and improve its overall public participation strategy in the future; and

d) To use Gender and Development (GAD) theory in order to demonstrate how women in Bergville can be viewed as agents of change in their community who are capable of contributing meaningfully towards development.

1.3. Scope of the study

The sampling comprised of women from Bergville (different villages) where the following projects were implemented by the municipality:

- Housing and toilets development project (Dukuza Housing project, 2014/15 financial year);
- Road infrastructural development (Mnceleni Gravel road construction project, 2016/17 financial year); and
- Improvement of community facilities (Rookdale Community Hall, 2015/16 financial year).

Further to that, officials from Okhahlamba Local Municipality who are responsible for facilitating community participation processes and ward committee members also formed part of the study. Their participation was included for the purpose of ensuring that data is collected from all the key role players who are involved in the public participation chain in the area. This includes; women's views on their involvement in development, different techniques utilised by municipal officials in facilitating the process and challenges encountered along the way, and the role played by ward committees as per the Local Government Municipal Structures Act (1998) stipulations.

1.4. Historical context and research design

In order to adequately and directly respond to the key research questions and meet the set research objectives, researchers need to contextualise the topic and consider how they plan to go about responding or investigating them (Mouton, 1996: 107; Chilisa & Kawulich, 2012: 51). This follows logically from the research problem and below is a detailed explanation of how the study was executed.

1.4.1. Historical context

This section outlined the contextual background on the topic in the South African perspective, followed by the historical context of the study area in order to paint a clear picture on different dynamics of development within South Africa and the extent of rural women participation in development within the Kwa-Zulu Natal province. This section then highlights a brief history of Bergville, different socio-economic conditions affecting women in the area and details on three development projects the study focused on.

1.4.2. Research design and methods

Babbie and Mouton (2001: 74) describe the research design as a strategy or an outline of how the inquiry to the problem was conducted. The research design encompasses methods, techniques and procedures followed in solving the identified problem. This study employed the qualitative research design. The primary goal of the chosen methodology is to understand and describe social settings and human actions rather than giving mere explanations. This is one of the reasons it was chosen as it enabled the researcher to deeply understand and describe the nature of rural women participation in development interventions in their area from their own perspectives. Using this method, participants were able to clearly articulate and describe their understanding of community participation in development, its importance and the reality of their level of involvement in development interventions and further highlight impediments that potentially hinder their effective participation in these projects.

The chosen methodology for the study further incorporated participant observation where the researcher formed part of some community meetings for participant observation purposes. Lapan, Quartaroli & Riemer (2012: 25) believes that this is an important part of the research process as the researcher closely studies participants day-to-day interactions and the individual meanings they attach to the events around them. This method enriched the findings as the researcher was able to collect additional data by closely observing the behaviour and pattern of participation amongst women in these meetings and further note the effectiveness of meeting facilitation in encouraging active involvement of women in this setting.

1.4.3. Population

The nature of qualitative research is that only a smaller sample of the population can be studied. Even though one would like to study the entire population in order to be more concise and provide a detailed picture regarding a specific phenomenon, qualitative research only uses smaller samples (Bless *et al.* 2013: 179). From a larger pool of women (population)

in Okhahlamba Municipality, the target population was women at Dukuza area, Mnceleni and Rookdale who have been or are still part of the identified development projects that took place in these areas.

Moreover, another pool of cases that was studied is from government, the Okhahlamba Municipal employees who are responsible for facilitating the process of community participation or involvement in development matters. Additionally, ward committee members also formed part of an important component of the target population as the literature clearly stated the role they are meant to play in ensuring that community members have a meaningful view in development initiatives taking place in their areas of residence.

1.4.4. Sampling technique

As part of the requirements for the qualitative study, the sampling technique used must be the one that allows for a relatively smaller sample. For this reason, qualitative researchers use non-probability sampling (Neuman, 2014: 167). Based on the fact that the study falls within these described parameters, non-probability sampling (purposive) was used. According to Lewis (2009: 29), qualitative research uses this sampling method because it allows the researcher to select participants for a particular purpose that will help the researcher understand the problem.

The specific type of non-probability sampling used is purposive sampling, in order to allow the researcher an opportunity to intentionally select participants whom will be able to provide rich and valuable information. The literature demonstrated that some women in rural areas are still not open to voicing out their views anywhere outside their homes, this type of sampling then ensured that the researcher eliminates the type of participants who were not keen to give out the information, for any particular reason, to enrich the findings of the study. However, this was noted under the limitations section as an impediment encountered during data collection. The sample for the study was carefully selected to include women from Okhahlamba Municipality who have participated in the identified projects or who reside in areas where the projects were implemented, as well as municipal officials who are tasked with public participation and ward committee members.

1.4.5. Data gathering procedures

Following the use of the qualitative research method, the in-depth semi-structured interview was found suitable as the method of data collection for this study. This was done in order for the researcher to use probes and other techniques to obtain additional information for richer findings. According to Ritchie (2009: 31), one positive feature of using interviews as a method of data collection is that "the researcher can use a range of probes and other techniques to obtain deeper answers in terms of penetration, exploration and explanation". Additionally, the researcher used focus group discussions to enable those participants who struggled to create meanings to their participation individually. Participant observation was also used to allow the researcher to gain an insider perspective during community meetings.

1.4.6. Data gathering instruments

Three separate sets of standard questionnaire guides were used to collect data from all three categories of participants that were identified under the sampling technique above.

1.4.7. Data analyses strategies

Data collected for this research was analysed using coding as the main tool when analysing qualitative data. This allowed for the classification of ideas, themes and topics into categories that were relevant to the study and further enabled the researcher to examine how responses from different participants complemented each other in order to deepen understanding of the problem.

1.5. Limitations and challenges of the study

The following limitations and challenges were encountered in the process of executing this study:

- Women were reluctant to participate as they initially did not understand the importance of the research and the potential of the findings in enriching their meaningful participation in the future. Their main concern was whether this was going to bear any financial gain or give them employment. Aims of the study were clearly communicated to them to eliminate any possible monetary expectations from participants;

- It was not easy to get hold of the municipal employees who are specifically tasked with public participation, as they are mostly out of the office due to the nature of their work which involves working directly with communities;

- Moreover, there was an identified sceptic or reluctance to participate on the side of municipal employees as they feared that the findings of the study might be used to assess their performance. These participants were assured of their anonymity for participating in the study and further signed the confidentiality clause;

- The very same nature of qualitative research which allows that the researcher becomes a crucial instrument in the research process through observations made during data collection became a potential threat. During this process the researcher's views and personal bias could have interfered with the findings. However, measures to ensure validity and reliability of the findings were in place to guard against any potential bias.

The above mentioned challenges and limitations encountered during this study can be taken forward as lessons for future studies of a similar nature.

1.6. Importance of the study

Community participation in development is an important aspect that cannot be easily ignored as it involves the utilisation of much needed state resources. The authorities involved must always ensure that such utilisation is cost effective at all times and every amount spent directly responds to the needs of the target population so as to avoid wasteful expenditure. Findings from this study will enable the authorities of the Okhahlamba Municipality to address the root cause of the problems/challenges encountered in public participation, especially that of women who encompass the majority in the community. It also assessed the effectiveness of the municipality's community participation techniques in ensuring that every member of the community is afforded an equal opportunity to participate in development initiatives. Findings offered different alternatives to enable the municipality to overcome these challenges and develop better strategies in facilitating community participation and ensuring that women are given a fair opportunity to make meaningful inputs in development interventions in the area.

1.7. Ethical considerations

Given that some of the participants were illiterate and others merely sceptical about sharing information with an outsider, fearing that the researcher might use it against them in one way or the other, it was necessary to communicate to the participants about the confidentiality of any information that they provided for this research. Participants were well aware that their participation was voluntary and were given an option to discontinue their participation at any stage if they felt that the confidentiality clause they signed was compromised.

1.8. Chapter layout

The study is structured in five chapters as follows:

Chapter 1

This chapter serves as an introductory part of the research and covers the background on the topic, a detailed problem statement, in terms of what probed for a study of this nature to be conducted, and the main objectives behind the research project. As an introductory chapter, a brief overview of the research design and methodology is covered in this section, in terms of how the study was conducted.

Chapter 2

Chapter two gives a detailed discussion of the literature review from a broader sense to local studies and the theoretical framework that informs the study, in terms of GAD. This chapter discusses meaningful women participation in rural development projects in the South African context, unpacking its importance in rural development and the difference that it could potentially bring to the development arena in rural areas. This is followed by analyses of different legislative frameworks and policies that promote women participation in rural development. The chapter also considers factors that hinder rural women to have meaningful participation and contribution in development projects taking place in their respective areas. Moreover, the focus shifts to women participation in development in the context of the theoretical framework for the study.

Chapter 3

Chapter three outlines a detailed research methodology for the study. This chapter covers detailed descriptions of the historical context of the study area, research design, population, sampling, data gathering procedures and instruments, data analyses, pilot study and ethical considerations.

Chapter 4

In chapter four, the researcher provides a detailed presentation of findings and discussion thereof. This chapter outlines how the research questions were answered and to what extent the objectives of the study were met.

Chapter 5

Chapter five is the final chapter of the report and summarizes the key findings of the study while drawing the relevant conclusions. Finally, recommendations are made based on the findings.

CHAPTER 2

Literature review

2.1. Introduction

The purpose of this chapter was to assist the researcher to "establish the theoretical framework for the study, to locate the topic into broader debates, build and broaden the reader's knowledge in the field of rural women participation in development", (Bak, 2004:18). It has been established under the problem statement that the Okhahlamba Municipality experiences challenges, as far as community participation in development is concerned, with dysfunctionality of ward committees as an identified cause. What remains though is the question; what other factors contribute towards this and to what extent does this affect women in the area? It is important that rural women are included in the development agenda for proposed interventions to bear meaningful results in successfully alleviating poverty.

This chapter provides the clarification of important concepts for this study and literature from different scholars on rural women participation in the development agenda and further elaborates on different factors affecting effective and meaningful participation of rural women in development interventions. Moyo (2014: 5997) emphasises that it is only through effective participation that rural women, as the mostly affected parties, are better positioned to provide solutions through sustainable projects to alleviate poverty.

2.2. Clarification of terms

Clarification of terms or conceptualisation is done to define key concepts in the problem statement (Mouton, 1996: 114). This exercise is done to define key concepts within the context of the study as many concepts tend to carry multiple meanings. Key concepts identified for the proposed study are; *public participation, development and rural development.*

2.2.1. Public Participation

In the development perspective, the term 'participation' is defined as a process in which beneficiaries, or those whom development is meant to benefit, take an active part in the

project cycle; from planning and implementation up to its completion (Wiebe, 2000: 579). Within the community development context, this is an open process through which community members exchange ideas for the purpose of influencing decision-making within the community. Such an exchange of ideas or views take place in the most democratic manner, where community members as beneficiaries get to freely make inputs, influence development processes and provision of services within their society (South Africa 2005a: 1; Maphunye & Mafunisa 2008: 464; Govender & Reddy 2011: 62; Moyo 2014: 5998). Fox & Meyer (1995: 20) define citizen/community participation as; the involvement of citizens in a wide range of administrative policymaking activities, including the determination of levels of service, budget priorities, and the acceptability of physical construction projects in order to orient government programmes toward community needs, builds public support, and encourage a sense of cohesiveness within society.

For this study, meaningful and active participation goes beyond perceiving women as flaccid development objects and development recipients to ensuring that they become owners of their own development planning process (Hofisi 2014: 1129). Rural women participation in development must result in a meaningful shift of practice; this solely lies in conducive municipal designs which enable women to participate in development processes. Such participation will enable women in Bergville rural community to identify needs, priorities and decide on development goals while they have control and ownership on the development process in their area. This participation would only be achieved if, after taking part, women feel a sense of belonging and ownership over a development project.

Participation is also viewed as a tool that increases ordinary, or poor, people's sense of control over development issues that affect their livelihoods and further empowers them to learn how to plan and implement (Oakley 1991: 117; Oakley & Kahssay 1999: 6; Kukumba & Nsingo 2008: 107). Kukumba & Nsingo (2008: 109) further advance the debate and state that such participation is by the ordinary and non-elites members of the community who do not possess any power or whatsoever. From this view, it can be deduced that the main objective of participation in development work is to ensure that communities take charge and become champions of change rather than conforming to what has been decided previously, by an individual who might not necessarily have a full understanding of the problems at hand. Similarly, through women's direct involvement in development initiatives in their communities, participation becomes meaningful to them as well, as it is evident that active

participation of the intended beneficiaries, in this particular case rural women, is critical if sustainable change is to be realized in their lives.

According to Tau (2013: 155) public participation seeks to facilitate the involvement of potential beneficiaries from the development initiatives and can be noted as important for the rural people in the quest to address socio-economic challenges facing these communities. This, however, remains the responsibility of the local government to ensure that it takes place. Tau (2013: 153) and Roodt & Stuurman (2011: 66) extend this argument by stating that community members are generally more enthusiastic participate in matters that directly affect them. Nevertheless, for the government to ensure that it gives real content or meaning to participation, the community itself must be conversant with the concept of public participation (Heydenrych, 2008: 715; Roodt & Stuurman, 2011: 65; Sebola, 2017: 26).

From the definitions provided, it can be deduced that effective community involvement leads to strengthened trust between the government and its citizens. According to Fourie (2001: 228), participation can be twofold when building trust with citizens; 'top-down' or 'bottom-up' approach. The two approaches differ in a sense that the first is a one way process, while the second is two way, in terms of exchanging ideas. Fourie (2001: 228) explains that the top-down approach is more dominated by public administration, whereas the bottom-up is a two way process which develops a genuine dialogue between the government authorities and the citizens with the primary aim of establishing the best possible solutions to problems confronting the community. The effective and meaningful forms of public participation this study refers to is the bottom-up approach, where rural women are able to actively engage with the municipal authorities and play an important role in determining the direction which development interventions should take in their communities. However, in some instances the top-down approach could be used to stimulate or evoke effective public participation where there is demonstrated reluctance or lack of interest to participate from the public.

2.2.2. Development
Various authors define development in various manners, depending on the context. Summer & Tribe (2008: 10) identified the most universal theme which proves that in totality, development encompasses "change or transformation" in people's living conditions. The same authors further extend the definition for development to refer to the long-term process of structural societal transformation. Both definitions allude to development being the process

of change or improvement for the betterment of human beings or the society at large. Hugo (1995:143) concurs with this statement, while stating that development is essentially about change, not just any change but a definite improvement and a change for the better. This implies that benefits from such change must be distributed and shared equally amongst the targeted beneficiaries.

2.2.3. Rural development

As an extension to concept of development, rural development is used to refer to initiatives which are primarily aimed at improving or bringing change to the lives or living conditions in the countryside or rural areas. This is achieved through deploying or availing resources to these areas, in order to empower and enable rural dwellers to enjoy better living conditions (Kukumba & Nsingo 2008: 110). In this study, development was used to refer to projects or interventions implemented by the local government in the area for the purpose of bringing positive change or transformation to the lives of people within the community.

In the South African context, with the democratic change of government in 1994, there was a large task at hand to correct all past injustices and ensure that the voiceless were then given a voice within their communities, this included people in the rural areas (Commission for Gender Equality, 2014: 24). An important starting point was one particular piece of legislation, the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, where Chapter Two of this legislation clearly outlines human rights to be observed and enjoyed by all citizens (Stevens & Ntlami, 2016: 51). Particularly, sub-section (2) and (3) of Section 9 states everyone is equal before the law; equality which is inclusive of enjoyment of all rights and freedoms, including the right to participate in development for rural dwellers (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996).

2.3. Main purpose of development in the 21st century

For any initiative, especially implemented by government, there should always be a rationale behind its implementation. Development initiatives have been in existence even before the attainment of a democratic government in South Africa but the core aim of these initiatives has not evolved over time, even with claims from Olufemi (2006: 36) that the concept of development itself has undergone a great deal of change over the years. The main purpose of a development initiative is to effect change in lives of communities while affording

community members an opportunity to participate and have a voice on how such change is to be affected, ultimately giving the community a sense of ownership over their livelihoods. As compared to the apartheid era, development in the democratic South African context refers to change for all, not the selected minority. However, Musi, Stilwell, Nhlapho-Hlophe & Makhura (2004: 7) do not share similar sentiments, as they contend that rural people are often overlooked when development is taking place, such that the community members are seldom asked to provide inputs, and even when their input is provided, it will often never form part of decision-making process in reality.

It remains the responsibility of the local government to ensure that all targeted recipients of development are not overlooked when development is taking place (Gunter 2005: 32; Makofane & Gray 2007: 201). This is inclusive of the most marginalised members of the community, more specifically women in rural areas. Deliberate interaction with these groups empowers the members of the community in understanding their livelihood strategies and making inputs towards possible solutions to their problems (Musi *et al*. 2004: 7).

Generally, development initiatives in the 21st century are aimed towards bringing change and accelerating service delivery (Gunter 2005: 36). This change can occur in two different forms, in such a way that it can either bring about negative or positive impact, as such it becomes important to specify that the kind of development that this study advocates for is change that brings positive impact. This impact is reflected in improved quality of life amongst community members. Olufemi (2006: 37) and Agnes & Princewill (2015: 258) explain that development should aim for change or progress which may enhance and provide a better quality of life for the generality of the people within the society. Such change manifests itself in poverty eradication, decreasing inequality, creation of employment opportunities, increased facilitation of access to basic services, such as water, healthcare facilities, education, and shelter. Olufemi (2006: 38) and Olivier, van Zyl & Williams (2010: 121) distinguishes between the aim of development in urban and rural dwellings and states that in rural areas such initiatives are mostly focused on poverty alleviation.

Moreover, through creation of employment opportunities for the local community, development also aims to foster economic growth (Gunter 2005: 33; Olivier *et al*. 2010: 103). However, to successfully realise all the purposes of development intervention, scholars warn that people should be a central focus of development and that any development which is anti-human is not development at all; development starts with the people and progresses with

them (Olufemi 2006: 37; Makofane: 2007: 203; Kongolo 2009: 14; Agnes & Princewill 2015: 259). As development aims to bring about change, growth and improvement in the recipient's quality of life, their active involvement is of utmost importance as it determines the level of success or failure for any intervention planned for their benefit in the 21st century.

2.4. Modern rural development strategies in the 21st century

In an attempt to eradicate poverty, create employment opportunities and bridge the inequality gap amongst people in rural areas, the South African government have implemented certain programs aimed at addressing these issues since the dawn of democracy, some of these programs are unpacked below.

2.4.1. Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) - 1994

In response to inequalities and disparities created by the apartheid system, the ANC-led government, with its alliance partners, developed the Reconstruction and Development Programme. The programme was aimed at alleviating poverty and addressing limited access to basic services in South Africa. The programme and its initiatives emphasised a "people-centred, integrated and sustainable development" approach, which is democratic and participatory through stating that development was not merely about delivering services but also citizenry, active involvement and empowerment (Gwanya, 2010: 6). It can be noted that even though this strategy experienced its shortcomings, it did succeed in introducing and encouraging citizen participation in development for the 'newly conceived' South Africa at the time.

2.4.2. Rural Development and Land Reform - 1994

The Rural Development and Land Reform programme was introduced in 1994 and was based on both equity and economic grounds, which originated from Section 25 of the Constitution (Dawood, 2017: 77). This programme aimed to address the racial imbalances in land ownership and rights to land created by the apartheid system, as this system disadvantaged Black people, especially those in rural areas and farms. The programme consists of three main pillars; land restitution, land redistribution and land-tenure reform. Since its implementation, the Land Reform Programme has been criticised for its slow pace in

transferring the land to its rightful owners and lacking proper aids to assist the beneficiaries to use the land productively after reclaim, specifically those in the rural areas.

2.4.3. Rural Development Strategy of the Government of National Unity - 1995

This strategy was developed in 1995 as an initiative to create support systems for rural development in democratic dispensation to promote good planning at all levels of government, more diverse agricultural systems that adapts to the changing times, as well as access to basic services and accessibility of democratic local government structures (Phuhlisani Solutions, 2009: 24). The Rural Development Strategy further proposed relevant apparatuses in which rural people and their elected government representatives, at either district or local level, were to be able to identity local development priorities. These strategies and initiatives formed part of the initial steps taken by government to involve and encourage citizen participation in development initiatives in their respective areas, including the most marginalised communities located in rural areas.

2.4.4. National Public Works Programme (NPWP) - 1995

The National Public Works Programme was conceived and introduced in 1995 by the government, in an attempt to provide poverty and income relief for the unemployed through temporary employment (South African Government, 2016). The programme had two pillars; the Community Based Public Works Programme (CBPWP) as the first pillar, with the second pillar being an attempt to reorient mainstream public infrastructure projects towards labour intensive techniques. Considering the number of jobs created through the first strategy (CBPWP), it appears that some strides were made in addressing unemployment between 1998 and 2004, although it is indicative that the second pillar could not make considerable strides. Biyase & Bromberger (2015: 255) state that NPWP's goal of achieving a major reorientation of public expenditure was not realised. Even though NPWP was more concerned with job creation, it did instil a sense of being part of community development interventions amongst ordinary South African citizens.

2.4.5. Integrated Sustainable Rural Development Strategy (ISRDS) - 2000

The Integrated Sustainable Rural Development Strategy was a strategy specifically introduced by the government targeted at attaining social cohesion and stability for rural communities with capable institutions which were able to attract and retain skilled labour, contributing towards overall growth and development of these areas (South African

Government, 2001). Similarly, with the 1995 Rural Development Strategy of the Government of National Unity, this strategy realised the importance of participation in rural development and further identified the need to assist rural people in realising their potential in contributing towards development of their areas.

2.4.6. Human Resource Development Strategy (HRDS) - 2001

This strategy was introduced by the government in 2001, with the purpose of providing a plan to ensure that people are equipped with necessary skills, knowledge and education to make a meaningful contribution towards the economy, while fairly sharing the benefits generated in the process (South African Government, 2001). However, it is not clear as to what extent such a strategy benefited marginalised women from the most remote rural areas, as most are illiterate, similar to the women of Bergville. HRDS was one of the first initiatives by the government to capacitate and empower communities to take charge in effecting change in their lives, while fairly sharing the benefits generated thereof. It is unfortunate that the programme assessment does not indicate its effectiveness in assisting those in remote areas through ensuring that they were equally empowered.

2.4.7. Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) - 2003

In 2003, the President of South Africa at the time indicated government's commitment to EPWP which was planned to create over one million short term employment opportunities in its first five years. "The EPWP is a broad framework designed in order to allow for the diversity of existing programmes and provide flexibility for future expansion", (Biyase & Bromberger 2015: 257). It further aimed to equip the participants with skills and necessary training which would enable them to be employable in the future or be able start their own businesses. This programme is a key government initiative, which contributes to Governments Policy Priorities, in terms of decent work and sustainable livelihoods, education, health, rural development, food security and land reform, as well as the fight against crime and corruption (Department of Public Works, 2004).

Discussed in the above sub-sections are some of the key rural development initiatives by the government which were introduced shortly after the attainment of democracy. A common factor amongst these programmes is the manner in which they are all aimed at promoting rural citizen participation in development. It is to be expected that as democracy was a relatively recent addition to the country, citizens were not certain as to what was expected of

them if they are to participate, initiatives such as the ISDR and HRDS aimed to provide capacity in such instances. Holistically, the change which was aimed for the change which would eradicate poverty in the rural areas.

All the programmes above and others were conceptualised and championed by the national government. Even though other programmes somehow introduced the concept of public participation, it was only in the year 2000 when South Africa established another sphere of government. This sphere was the local government, which is partly tasked with the responsibility of deepening the ethos of democratic government by entrenching public participation in matters of governance. To carry this vision to reality, different legislative frameworks were put in place.

2.5. Legislative framework on community participation

South African history clearly states that a dawn of democracy dictated and necessitated transformation in all structures that existed in the previous regime. As stated in the background of this study, the interim Constitution in 1994 became the supreme law of the country and therefore dictated the shape which transformation had to take. With regards to governance, Section 151(1) of the Constitution made provision for the establishment of local spheres of government to consist of municipalities in all the nine provinces of the Republic of South Africa.

Section 152(1) of the Constitution further stipulates the objectives for the existence of the local sphere of governance. In this section, the Constitution places public participation at the centre of local government. This implies that municipalities must ensure that structures and systems are in place to enable such public participation to take place successfully and effectively. The responsibility lies entirely with the municipality in terms of how it utilises its allocated resources, human and financial, to ensure that this takes place. Guiding legislative frameworks for the establishment of such structures and systems for meaningful public involvement to be realised are described as follows.

2.5.1. White Paper on Local Governance (1998)

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa confirms equality of citizens before the law, freedom and safety. This equality is irrespective of the residential area, religion, culture, level

of education or any form of characteristic that is perceived to divide or separate human beings in general. The White Paper emphasises on the 'developmental local government' and democratising development through the involvement of all parties in the society. This is embedded in the respective municipality's role in championing development process, working together with the communities in implementing sustainable development initiatives that meet or address their needs and subsequently improve their standard of living (White Paper on Local Governance, 1998: 23). The White Paper tasks local municipalities to be agents of development on the ground and ensure that members of those communities get to have a say and participate meaningfully in what needs to take place within their areas to transform their quality of life, as far as development is concerned.

2.5.2. Local Government Municipality Structures Act 1998

Following on from the White Paper, the Municipality Structures Act then guides the municipalities in establishing support structures and bodies to enable them in delivering to their respective mandates of being development orientated and democratising development as stipulated by the White Paper. This includes formation of executive committees, metropolitan sub-councils and ward committees. For the purposes of this study, the focus will only be placed on the synopsis on establishment of ward committees and their functions.

From Sections 71 to 78, this Act makes provision for the establishment, composition and function of ward committees in metropolitan and local municipalities for primarily the enhancement of participatory democracy within communities. This explains their major role in facilitating community participation and involvement with any form of development that could occur within their ward or residential area. The ward committee should be comprised of ten members representing the community and the ward councillor, whom also serves as the chairperson of the committee. It is worth noting in these sections of the Act, and for the interest of this study, that the importance of equal representation is highlighted through all members of the community in the committee to ensure that everyone's wider interests gets a fair chance to be addressed in all development matters. The Act makes specific reference to the representation of women in ward committees. Moreover, Section 77 of the Act clearly stipulates that no remuneration is payable to the additional ten members of the committee from the community. This means that their membership is completely on a voluntary basis in order to selflessly serve their communities.

2.5.3. Local Government Municipality Systems Act 2000

There could be any number of barriers preventing effective participation of communities from taking place, especially those situated in the rural areas or vulnerable groups within these communities. For such participation to take place, the Municipal Systems Act mandates the municipalities to ensure that systems are in place for all members of the community to participate by creating favourable conditions for community involvement in matters of governance where they do not exist, moreover the municipality must establish channels of accountability to and communication within communities. This includes capacity building and empowerment of the illiterate in the rural areas to take part in the affairs of the municipality.

2.6. Realities of rural women

According to the Poverty Trends Report for 2006 to 2015, 30.4 million people (55.5% of the population) are living in poverty (Statistics South Africa, 2017: 64). This is an increase from the 53.2% or 27.3 million people reported in 2011. The number of people living below the 2015 poverty line of R441 per person per month, or in extreme poverty as it is termed increased to 13.8 million people in 2015, compared to the 11 million people reported in 2011 (Statistics South Africa, 2017: 71). This is still lower than the number of people living in extreme poverty reported in 2009, which was at 16.7 million. A report from Statistics South Africa (2017: 81) further reveals that the Gini coefficient, which measures income inequality; with 0 representing perfect equality and 1 representing perfect inequality, improved from 0.72 reported in 2006 to 0.68 in 2015. However, the Black South African population group still experiences the highest income inequality, with a Gini coefficient of 0.65 reported in 2015, an increase from the 0.64 reported in 2006 (Statistics South Africa, 2017: 84).

These are partly challenges which largely affect South Africa and further impede its economic growth, despite the strides that have been made in eradicating poverty, overcoming inequality and creating employment since the attainment of democracy, these challenges erode the gains made as a result of a number of equality enabling policies that have been implemented by the government. When comparing rural women and those based in urban areas, women based in rural areas emerge as having fewer choices and facing more challenges. According to an ANC's Women and Poverty Discussion Document (2016: 1) "women face hunger more often than men due to disparities in income, limited access to the means of production and cultural practices that put them in a disadvantaged position".

Mostly, initiatives by the government are implemented to ensure that communities in the periphery also get access to opportunities that enable them to make a living for themselves and escape the cycle of poverty, these initiatives are often within the agricultural realm, while unlocking the existing barriers that prevent these communities access to land. Despite this, ANC's Women and Poverty Discussion Document (2016: 2) revealed that even though women in rural areas assume a primary role in food production, they still do not have full access to the means and basic services which would further equip themselves in taking part in other activities taking place outside their homes due to unequal rights that exist in family structures. These include lack of access to land, which is mostly allocated to male members of the family. In spite of government interventions to empower rural women to take ownership of their lives, cultural hindrances and other factors discussed below still prevent them from benefitting entirely from these initiatives.

2.6.1. Gender roles

Gender role socialization which is mostly taught at a younger age, often within rural societies, continues to dictate how roles are allocated to men and women even at later stages in life, either at home or outside the home. Studies show that women in rural areas are mostly affected by this, as they tend to be confined to household chores and taking care of their families, while men are at liberty to participate in external public activities or even migrate for employment opportunities (Moletsane, Chikolo, Ntombela, Kruger & Pithouse-Morgan, 2010: 22; Anugwom & Anugwom, 2011: 17; Kerasi, Shambare & Nkondlo, 2017: 193). These are various roles, beliefs and norms that limit rural women to certain spaces in society, a limitation which may then impede their participation in any activity that could be taking place outside the home and be beneficial for their personal or intellectual growth. In linking this notion to development, Moletsane *et al.* (2010: 22) contend that this contributes to rural women's stagnation and lack of development in various aspects of their lives as they are not 'afforded an ample opportunity' to network and broaden their way of thinking which could potentially contribute to their development.

In rural areas, women are often left at home to take care of the elders, the sick and the children, while husbands migrate to bigger cities for employment. Under the main aim of development, it was contended that for any development initiative to directly address the needs of any community, there must be effective participation by the community in question

in trying to understand the problem at hand and providing possible solutions. Being confined at home by their 'designated' gender roles means that rural women hardly have a voice in any development initiatives taking place within their communities, due to their 'full-time roles' that were pre-assigned to them on the basis of their gender. Yet, rural women are the ones who are mostly affected when services, such as the provision of water or healthcare system, are not adequate, even though they should have had an opportunity to provide inputs in the planning stage, prior to the provision of such services (Kehler, 2001: 46). Women in rural areas then carry the brunt of having to find alternatives to provision for the lack of services, which may be costly for them.

One particular role which limits a women's role to the household is childbearing and family caring. According to Kerasi *et al.* (2017: 196), the challenge is that even if women attempt to escape from this role, they often struggle to balance work or activities outside their homes and family life which creates conflict between the two and results in work overload for the women. This is solely due to the fact that, in comparison to men, even if women take part in such activities outside their homes, women are still expected to perform their household chores. For married rural women, their husbands, or even the elders in the family, often complain that their involvement in such activities affect their reproductive and family caring roles (Pade, Mallinson & Lannon, 2005: 10; Kehler, 2010: 48; Anugwom and Anugwom, 2011: 18). Such connotations are an indication of how much rural women have no control over lives and little freedom of choice due to roles that are 'assigned' to them from birth, based on their gender, and as a result they continue to be marginalized within societies and have a limited voice in the development agenda.

2.6.2. Limitation to agricultural or farming activities versus access to land

Despite the existence of gender roles that limit rural women to chores inside the home, studies show that when they are able to be involved in activities outside their home, it is often in agricultural or farming activities (Pade *et al.* 2005: 4; Anugwom & Anugwom, 2010: 16; Kehler, 2010: 41). Women often get involved in these activities to either generate income or feed their families. Moreover, Arends (2009: 3) adds that survival on such agricultural activities is more prevalent amongst female headed households who are very poor and marginalized members of society. However, notwithstanding the fact that rural women play a crucial role in agriculture and farming activities, they still experience challenges in relation to

access and use of land. Kehler (2001: 45) is in agreement with Arends (2009: 4), that the majority of African rural women have limited access to key resources that have a potential to unlock their productive opportunities in the public sphere. Often this is due to unequal rights in family structures which ultimately limit women access to resources, such as land or livestock. Such unequal access to land is mostly felt by widows who assume the role of heading a household after their husbands pass away, where extended family members or elders in the family claim the land or livestock that have previously belonged to the late husband. This is also felt by rural women in general, irrespective of whether their husbands are still alive or have passed on, because in an instance where the husband is still alive, he is in charge of how resources, including the land, within the household are to be utilized.

South African history is largely characterized by injustices which emanated from the apartheid system. Such a characteristic is inequality and the allocation and ownership of land which often favored the White community. Land allocation was determined by discriminatory laws which favored White people while putting Black people at the disadvantage. However, as indicated under rural development strategies, the government has introduced land reform programmes to try and address the imbalances of the past, as far as land ownership is concerned. Unfortunately, according to Arends (2009: 4) the government policies that are aimed at addressing land inequality in rural areas mainly focuses on 'race' as the main vector of inequality. Though this does not suggest that women in rural areas do not benefit from the Land Reform programme, the main concern is that it does not benefit them as much as it could, as race has always been the major factor that resulted to land inequality. This is unfortunate as women have also been disadvantaged under customary law, as land is generally allocated to men and women cannot inherit this after their husbands have passed on or after divorce (Arends, 2009: 5). In the event of the husband's death, family elders decide who inherits the land as it is believed that the wife might go back to her family or remarry and in that sense the land would have been lost. Limited access to land remains a challenge for rural women which then negatively affect their effective involvement in agricultural activities outside the home.

2.6.3. Lack of education

There are instances in which rural women manage to escape their household gender roles for employment in order to be able to support their families due to alarming poverty levels. Due to their lack of education and skills required for formal employment, rural women's ultimate choice of employment is in farms where they are exploited and face extreme discrimination,

unequal treatment and unfair labour practices (Pade *et al.* 2005: 12; Kehler, 2010: 48). This is more prevalent amongst Black rural women whom, due to illiteracy, further lack knowledge about systems and avenues available for them as workers in order to defend themselves in such situations.

Rural women's lack of knowledge is also prevalent in their agricultural activities which they are involved in, in an attempt to provide for and support their families. In these instances, rural women often struggle to advance their 'businesses' due to limited access to funds to purchase equipment which could enable them to remain competitive in business (Pade *et al.* 2005: 4; Kerasi *et al.* 2017: 197). Such challenges emanate from rural women's lack of knowledge regarding how to acquire funding, networking and lack of growth skills. Regrettably, even development initiatives targeted at women get appropriated by men due to these peculiar social situations (Anugwom & Anugwom, 2010: 27). Moreover, another reason which hinders rural women from prospering in their activities outside home is negative self-image and little confidence due to a lack of education and gender socialization, as they often require the support and opinion of their husbands or a man (Kerasi *et al.* 2017: 197). This becomes a challenge and delays growth when important decisions have to be taken and there is no such support available at the time.

2.7. Importance of women participation in rural development

As stipulated by different legislative frameworks, the importance of community participation in any development initiative has been overemphasised. Moreover, participation of rural women in development becomes even more important as they remain the majority in those areas and are largely affected by different socio-economic challenges that development primarily aims to address. According to Kongolo & Bamgose (2002: 81) and Rathod, Nikam, Langdge, Vajreshwari & Hatey (2011: 31), "the prosperity and economic growth of a nation depends on the status and development of its women as they not only constitute nearly half of the population, but also positively influence the growth of the remaining half of the population". Before it benefits women solely, their involvement in development benefits the country or society as a whole, as this contributes to holistic growth. Kongolo & Bamgose (2002: 84) further warn that neglecting the plight of rural women is likely to have a negative impact in realising desired progress in rural areas and development of the nation, as a whole.

It has been highlighted that excluding members of the community from the participation process bears severe effects towards that society and also in achieving the objectives of development. According to de Waal (2006: 209) and Moyo, Francis & Ndlovu (2012: 4419) if women are afforded ample opportunity to participate in development, they are able to paint a complete picture of challenges affecting that society, while also affording them an opportunity to decide on the actions to be taken to solve their problems. This gives women a voice as the disadvantaged group within society, especially in some rural areas where they are still oppressed by different cultural norms. Making them part of the participation process in coming up with solutions to their daily challenges is also important as the majority in their respective communities, rural women have to live with the implications of whatever decision is made (Kongolo & Bamgose, 2002: 82). In comparison to only involving a minority within society, the involvement of women ensures total societal transformation and maximises the impact of development objectives to the beneficiaries.

Statistics have shown that poverty is one of the triple challenges confronting South African communities at varying degrees. A report released by Statistics South Africa in 2017 revealed that Black African women and children in rural areas are the most vulnerable to poverty and have little access to education. Moreover, several other studies have shown that women are mostly affected by poverty, as such their involvement in development implies that they are able to clearly highlight the plight of their poverty (Moyo, 2014: 5994). An omission of rural women from participation in development initiatives then aggravates the level of depth in poverty as it implies that such initiatives will fail to address societal needs as those who experience these challenges on a daily basis are absent from the process (Deji & Jibowo, 2003; 91). To effectively fight the plight of poverty, it remains of crucial value to ensure that rural women participate in development initiatives as catalysts for sustainable development and agents against poverty so as to fully understand their plight and provide viable solutions utilising their inputs as well.

In addition to providing viable solutions to address their immediate challenges, if rural women actively participate in development, their continued deliberations on issues could also contribute to conceptualisation and implementation of policies which will benefit them on a long-term basis. Kongolo & Bamgose (2002: 83) are adamant that ensuring participation of women at all levels in the development process plays a much-needed role in policy dialogue in emancipating women. This puts rural women at a favourable position to lobby and advocate for policies which would be beneficial and meet their needs in the long term.

2.8. Theoretical framework

This study is anchored in Gender and Development (GAD) theory which came into effect in the 1980's as an alternative to the Women in Development (WID) theory. WID came into effect in the 1970's with the main aim to include women in development and assumed that the inclusion of women in development would enhance economic development (Ravazi & Miller, 1995: 2). Even though WID was an initial and notable step towards getting women involved in development, GAD advocates identified loopholes within this theoretical framework and highlighted that solutions proposed were only short term. Below is the demonstration of the two theoretical frameworks and a clear articulation of why GAD was suitable for this study.

2.8.1. Main focus

As mentioned above, the two theoretical frameworks (WID and GAD) emerged in the 1970's and 1980's respectively and were used to guide women development discourse. According to Sarker (2006: 8), before the 1970's or the introduction of WID approach, there was a welfare approach which focused mostly on the reproductive role of women, in terms of food aid and family planning programmes which were meant to relieve women from their roles as mothers or caregivers. However, during this period, societies were predominantly traditional with no access to modern technology, a system or factor which WID then identified as an impediment towards development. Modernisation theory views development as a process of change from traditional society to more modern societies, with the assumption that integrating women to development processes will enhance economic development (Neha, 1996: 5; Danielson and Jakobson, 2008: 28). Such industrialisation of societies and the introduction of technology included expanding the labour market to contain women, with access to property ownership, credit, education and training (Ravazi & Miller, 1995: 3; Neha, 1996: 5). These were important milestones made in ensuring that women were afforded a space in the development agenda within societies and it was indeed going to contribute towards economic development as more people could then participate in the economy. Furthermore, these milestones were important in contributing towards meaningful debates and research around the role of women in development.

Nonetheless, as societies evolved with more debates erupting on the role of women in development, a number of critics emerged and identified gaps within the WID framework. Modernisation theory did not benefit women in any meaningful manner since technology

could not liberate women from domestic drudgery (Sarker, 2006: 10). A mere introduction of technology, education and training to women and access to credit did not necessarily free women from their traditional gender roles; instead it strived to exist alongside them. It was based on this notion that WID critiques pointed out that one challenge with this theoretical framework was that it rejected or neglected women's roles as mothers, caregivers and wives (Ravazi & Miller, 1995: 9). In doing so and with its modernisation paradigm, WID advocates did not challenge or aim to transform the existing societal structures, such as patriarchy and socialisation of gender roles, which were the main contributory factors towards women's exclusion from development and social divisions that limited women's activity outside the home. The integration of women into the development sphere placed them in a better position to be able to improve their status in society but the existing patriarchal practices and gender roles still hindered women from taking a full advantage of these newly emerged opportunities at their disposal (Ravazi & Miller, 1995: 10; Neha, 1996: 13; Reeves & Baden, 2000:3).

Even though the WID approach contributed towards improving women's income, level of education and health in the short term, its effects could not be sustained in the long term since it ignored unequal relations between men and women which were mostly perpetuated by men in determining the position of women in society (Danielsson & Jakobson, 2008: 29). Leaving these unchallenged posed a serious threat on the status of women in society in the long term, as the framework was less concerned with their empowerment and focused on addressing immediate practical needs. Therefore, Gender and Development came into effect in order to challenge these existing power relations between men and women and craft solutions which were aimed to pave a way for long term solutions.

In the 1980's, GAD emerged as a critique to WID and its advocates began debates around what they coined the root cause of the exclusion of women in development and tackled the question of inequalities in power relations by looking at the empowerment of all fields (Sarker, 2006: 16). These power relations range from patriarchal practices and gender roles and were the foundation of and maintained gender inequalities. In this regard, GAD interventions advocated for equal gender relations and removal of any obstructive practices that prevented women from fully participating in development (Danielsson & Jakobson, 2008: 30; Jaquette, 2017: 251). Instead of focusing on women specific interventions, GAD aims to address root causes of inequalities in society and focus on gender activities that include men and women which ultimately lead to equality in decision-making. GAD's main

goal is equitable and sustainable development with women and men as decision makers (Parpart, Connelly & Barriteau, 2000: 136; Tasli, 2007: i).

2.8.2. Female agency

According to Danielsson & Jakobson (2008: 43), female agency concerns development policy of the planned approach towards women when supporting them. This refers to the lenses through which women are viewed during the intervention process. In contrast to WID, which views women as recipients in development interventions (education and training, income, employment opportunities, property), GAD encourages that women equally become part of decision-making process. GAD perceive women as agents of development who are capable of identifying their challenges, proposing solutions and empower themselves provided that they are offered support if required (Parpart, *et al.* 2000: 135; Rai, 2011: 45). This empowerment enables women to meaningfully participate in development, ensure that development also address their needs, they are part of decision-making and equally share the benefits of development.

2.8.3. Adopted strategy

Each theoretical framework has interventions which it perceives necessary in order to confront the identified problem. Both WID and GAD identified addressing practical needs of women as a required intervention, GAD went a step further by aiming to bring structural changes in society regarding the status of women and empower them to become agents of change in the long term (Reeves & Baden, 2000: 5). Challenging patriarchal structures and gender relations in society bears long-term impacts towards gender equality.

2.8.4. Summary of comparison between WID and GAD

Below is a summarised version of the two theoretical frameworks and how they differ from each other.

Table 1: Summary of comparison between WID and GAD

Perspective	Women in Development	Gender and Development
1. Main focus	• Integration of women to development activities	• Gender equality in decision-making.
2. Goal	• Efficient and effective development initiatives which include women	• Equitable development outcomes which include men and women in decision-making
3. Root problem	• Exclusion of women in development interventions	• Fundamental factors in society which are a foundation and used as machineries to maintain gender inequality (e.g. patriarchy).
4. Female agency	• Women as recipients of development	• Women as agents of change who are capable of crafting their own solutions provided that they receive necessary support when needed.
5. Adopted strategy	• Addressing practical needs.	• Addressing strategic interests with long term impact.

2.8.4. Gender and Development

WID specifically believed that integration of women to economic activities within societies would eventually improve their situation without looking at the social constructs that resulted in women being excluded from development issues in the first place. One of the loopholes within WID was that it assumed male experience could be generalised to females and that all would benefit equally as societies increasingly became modernised (Rathgeber 1990: 493). On the other end, GAD places much more emphasis on the contribution of both men and women to development and sees women as equal agents of change to men rather than passive recipients of development assistance (Rathgeber 1990: 493; Tasli, 2007: 23; Aguinaga, Lang, Mokrani & Santillana 2013: 44). The GAD approach was then considered an appropriate theoretical framework to form the basis of this study as it aims to assess the extent to which

women in the rural areas of Bergville are able to become agents of change within their community by being afforded an opportunity to meaningfully participate and make contribution towards development initiatives. The study further assumes that women are capable of contributing meaningfully to development as their male counterparts so as to ensure that their views and experiences become part of national decision-making process.

This approach further bases its argument on the fact that development is meant to benefit the entire community, men and women, and therefore, there must be equality in order to provide benefit, control and decision-making in development interventions (Moghadam 1990: 9). Moreover, GAD warns that marginalisation of women in the development process has adverse effects on the success of national development (Moghadam 1990: 8; Aguinaga *et al.* 2013: 45). These are the same sentiments shared by this study, such that not utilising the democratic avenues of equal rights to participation for all, including women, will result in rural development that does not address the needs of women in the study area. There is a need for development initiatives to be able to directly address and respond to the needs of rural women in order for their active participation to remain at the centre (Rai 2011: 32; Jaquette 2017: 245). Such participation must be meaningful in a sense that inputs made by women towards development must be given the same value as that of men and to ensure that development also respond to their needs. Rai (2011: 33) further argues that impediments which emanate from gender-based division of labour from home must be addressed through initiatives by the government which take into consideration that women have other duties that they still need to perform over and above participating in development initiatives. GAD also puts greater emphasis on the participation of the state (municipality) in promoting women's emancipation (Rathgeber 1990: 494). In this study, an emphasis is made on the role to be played by both the community and the municipality in ensuring that development interventions become a success and achieves its intended objectives.

2.9. Different forms of community participation and communication

At times, citizen participation does not necessarily lead to empowerment. For empowerment to become a reality, Narayan (2002: 14) contends that it requires a process through which the targeted group is strengthened and equipped to gain full control over and be accountable to decisions that affect them. For empowerment to take place, participation must be inclusive of the poor and the previously disadvantaged and marginalised groups within society, as well as

further encompassing the change of behaviour within relevant government bureaucracies (Crook, 2003: 4).

2.9.1. Ineffective community participation

Williamson & Sithole (2006: 12); Mautjana & Makombe (2014: 54) and Hofisi (2014: 1127) warn against "tokenism, phoney and manipulation" types of community participation that do not offer the kind of empowerment contended by the previous authors, where the community members are given an impression that their views matter but they are not used to organise and influence change or decisions, and consequently cannot hold the government officials accountable.

Another form of malicious 'participation' is the use of advertisement in the newspapers targeted at communities largely known to be illiterate, as that form of communication is not likely to incite participation effectively. According to Hofisi (2014: 1132), such forms of participation are "not effective in ensuring that the poor take part in participation since they are either illiterate or lack access to such resources". It has been widely revealed that the majority of the population in rural areas are women and they happen to fall amongst the poorest of the poor, consequently they are deprived of having a voice in any development initiatives taking place in their communities. While affording the poor an opportunity to participate is key in making participation a reality in the IDP process, in this particular instance, the concept of participatory democracy fails women or the poor and does not serve its purpose in affording citizenry voice for all.

2.9.2. Effective community participation

To guard against such "tokenism, phoney or malicious" forms of participation as alluded by the scholars above, scholars warn that as much as public participation is aimed at giving citizens pride and ownership over decisions taken, it is important for the authorities to ensure that effective communication tools are used to pass useful information or messages to the public (Ndevu 2011: 1249; Sebola 2017: 25). This includes mass meetings, *"imbizo"*, community radio stations, social networks, radio, flyers and other forms of communication which are easily accessible depending on context. The use of any of these methods must be predetermined by the demographics of a specific community for the communication to be effective. An important point raised by Sebola (2017: 28) is that the adopted participative theory is not the only contributory factor which leads to meaningful public involvement in South Africa. The manner and the process in which public participation is introduced or communicated to the public or participants is equally important. This contends that an

invitation or dissemination of public participation by the municipal authorities for communities to participate in any decision-making process must be in a manner that is universally understood in that particular community and the importance of their participation must also be equally understood. Phago (2008: 239) further argues that both the government or municipal authorities and the community members must have a full understanding of the significance of community involvement.

2.9.3. Communication

One cannot deny the fact that there have been traditional modes of communication that prove effective in the previous centuries, even for South Africa. Phago (2008: 238) & Sebola (2017: 29) are in agreement as far as this point is concerned. In the twentieth century, effective community involvement or participation from marginalised backgrounds or rural areas was made possible through mass meetings (Phago, 2008: 239). However, as mentioned in the previous paragraph, for participation to be effective, the mode of communication used must appeal to the audience or the community as the demographics of communities have evolved over time. The two authors (Phago, 2008:239; Sebola, 2017: 35) concur with each other and proclaim that social media appeals to the majority of the population, hence municipalities should mostly use it as a tool to enhance community participation.

Even though social media has been indeed popularised in the twenty-first century, it still does not appeal to all and using it as the main platform to enhance community participation may hinder the process rather than bearing any positive impact. This is more specific to women in the rural areas that Hofisi (2014: 1132) has already alluded are mostly illiterate or lack access to such resources. Rather than focusing on one method while excluding others, which might result in exclusion, it is advisable for municipalities to thoroughly assess the character of the community and then make a decision for the tool that is more appropriate or suitable. Municipal delivery systems should be inclusive and accommodative of groups which are, or tend to be, marginalised or disadvantaged, such as people who cannot read or write, people with disabilities or women (RDP White Paper 1994: 41; Local Government Review 2003/04:38; Thornhill 2004: 477).

The responsibility of ensuring that the marginalised groups, such as women in the rural areas, are empowered where they are lacking to fully take part in development processes in their communities lies with the government itself, specifically local government (Williamson & Sithole 2006: 2; Hofisi 2014: 1137). The responsibilities of local governments in executing

this task are also clearly articulated in the Local Government Municipality Systems Act. In an effort to defend government, Shange (2014) contends that there are some educational strategies that have been applied by certain municipalities in an effort to increase rural women participation in development but they proved not to yield positive results due to the gendered nature of rural communities. One specific reason referred to is the high migration of men to cities in search for jobs, this leaves rural women with more burdens to care for their families and very little time to participate in any activities outside of their homes. This further makes it difficult to empower women in the rural areas (Dyubhele, Roux & Mears 2009: 230; Shange 2014: 109).

Another reason as to why the established community participation channels do not yield anticipated results, such as sense of ownership amongst the community members, is that those responsible for facilitating the process tend to be fixed to the same strategy, such as general community meetings, over and over again. There are particular complexities related to different stakeholders or groups within societies. For instance, in a study conducted in one village in the Limpopo province, those working in the agricultural sector who were disabled could not be part of the meeting scheduled for participation, firstly, due to time constraints and secondly, due to lack of transport to take the disabled members to the meeting (Mayekiso, Taylor & Maphazi 2013: 192). Rural communities largely depend on the agricultural sector for survival and it is mostly women who participate in this sector. Their non-participation in any proposed development in their communities is rather disturbing as it implies that their needs are not catered for in the IDP documentation and therefore, will not be addressed. To guard against this, Govender & Reddy (2011: 66) warns that local government institutions must never assume that public participation techniques or strategies are going to be the same for all communities as this might not produce fruitful results or lead to meaningful participation.

2.10. Indicators for effective community participation

Community participation can be done with good intentions from the local government to ensure that the community sincerely expresses its challenges and needs, while further proposing a way forward in resolving those challenges, alternatively these challenges can be resolved as a form of 'box ticking' where the municipality can ultimately report to have undertaken the process but with no intentions of using the public's inputs in decision-making.

Scholars warn against such malicious participation as it does not serve any purpose for the intended outcome of development for the beneficiaries (Ndevu 2011: 1250; Sebola 2017: 28). For community participation to be meaningful and effective in benefiting the target communities, there are indicators or qualities that it should adhere to.

2.10.1. Identify with democratic principles

South Africa is a democratic country, and as such community participation to bear meaningful contributions to the target population must identify with democratic principles. For community participation to come into practice in the development sphere, it was pivotal to ensure that every citizen is afforded a voice in matters that affect their community regardless of their social class in society. Dola & Mijan (2006: 2) concur with this notion and further state that sustainable development requires collective action that closely identifies with democratic community. Democratic principles to be observed in the community participation process involve; equal opportunity for participation from all levels, government accountability to the people, reduced mode of command and control by the government, giving a voice to the previously marginalised, the process described also follows prescribed legislative framework that facilitates consultation and involvement of civil society in decision-making (Fourie 2001: 217; Dola & Mijan 2006: 3; Mafunisa & Xaba 2008: 453; Wiebe 2011: 581; Thebe 2016: 713). These are some of democratic principles to be recognised in community participation and they will ensure citizenry voice in development initiatives in their respective communities.

Wiebe (2011: 583) adds that regardless of different classes which might exist in communities, participation affords all community members to have a voice irrespective of their socio-economic status. This amounts to equal opportunity for all. Transparency and openness also serve as other important factors that cannot be ignored for community involvement to be effective. According to Fourie (2001: 221), another good quality of public participation involves openness and disclosing to the public available options for extending participation to them. This implies that the public is informed of all different platforms in which they can make their inputs in development and where there are potential barriers that could prevent them from participating in such platforms, these barriers are addressed by the responsible authorities. Moreover, when there is transparency, it does not merely end at informing citizens of these available platforms, the citizens should be further provided with reliable information throughout the consultation process. For meaningful participation to be fully

realised in a democratic arena, records of those consultations must be readily available for public indulgence (Marais, Quayle & Burns 2017: 40).

2.10.2. Community involvement in decision-making

One other indicator closely linked to democratic principles which scholars often declare as important for effective community involvement is when citizen's inputs and ideas emanating from the participation process indeed do serve the intended purpose of informing or shaping decisions that are taken, as far as development is concerned. Having a voice in planning, decision-making, implementation and evaluation of development are key indicators of participation (Kebede 2016: 13; Marais *et al.* 2017: 40). Marais *et al.* (2017: 47) emphasises the importance of record keeping on how inputs were provided and how decisions were made, in order to track if those decisions taken were indeed informed by the public inputs. This becomes an important aspect of the process as there are claims that, at times, public consultations are mere formalities as decisions are taken prior to the participation process. Real and effective public participation does not serve as 'tokenism', where consultation is only done to provide public satisfaction when in fact the decision has been made (Dola & Mijan, 2006: 3).

The crucial nature of public involvement in decision-making emanates from the very nature of development interventions, especially in rural areas, in a sense that it exists so as to provide change and solutions to many challenges which are encountered by these communities. For sustainable solutions, development experts or municipal officials cannot solely decide the outcome, they need first-hand information from those who live in these conditions on a daily basis. Fourie (2001: 218) & Thebe (2016: 716) reaffirm this and state that it is the local communities democratic right to be consulted and participate in decision-making in any matters which directly affect them.

Additionally, while more emphasis is placed on community involvement in decision-making, the process does not begin or end at that stage of the process. Henceforth, Marais *et al.* (2017: 41) also emphasised record keeping for the entire consultation process, in each project embarked on, because the community must be involved for the entire project cycle. Responsibility for implementing an intervention may lie with the community itself or government authority, but whoever it lies with, the community must be involved in all stages of the project cycle (Fourie, 2001: 224; Draai & Taylor, 2009: 114).

2.10.3. Accountability to the community or provision of feedback

After gathering ideas from individuals regarding a particular matter, and utilising their views in decision-making, feedback should be provided, in terms of the execution of the project. The same applies for communities whom have taken part in participation towards any proposed development initiative in their area, it is the responsibility of the municipal officials to communicate how outcomes were informed with the decisions that were taken. Marais *et al.* (2017: 46) warns that neglecting this factor in community participation is likely to compromise the whole process and to destroy public trust. This makes the provision of feedback another important indicator for effective participation, as it further sets out a tone for participation in future projects. When communities are provided with feedback, in terms of how their inputs shape decisions being made by the authorities, while creating change in their communities, they are encouraged to participate moving forward.

2.10.4. Functional ward committees

The role played by ward committees in ensuring that meaningful community participation takes place in local communities can never be emphasised enough. They serve as communication agents between communities and the municipality and are meant to be champions of community participation. Therefore, functional ward committees result in effective public participation because their effectiveness translates to healthy communication between the municipality and the citizens. Ward committees in the local government sphere are regarded as main drivers or enablers of public participation (Draai & Taylor 2009: 119; Mashiachidi & Moeti 2016: 403). In this instance, functional ward committees mobilise for the community to get involved in processes of development in their area.

However, when elected to serve in such committees, some of these individuals are not clear, in terms of their mandate and duties, and in some instances even if they are clear, they lack necessary skills to effectively execute these duties. It becomes the responsibility of the municipality in question to ensure that these individuals receive adequate training to capacitate them to participate in municipal activities, such as their role in facilitating community participation (Mashiachidi & Moeti 2016: 406).

As highlighted in the problem statement, one of the responsibilities for ward committees, which municipal councillors and selected community members are expected to form part of, is ensuring that communities have a voice or are able to meaningfully participate in

development that could be taking place in their area. One important advantage for the existence of ward committees is that they are from the communities they represent and understand their daily struggles. The assumption is that ward committee members know and understand their respective communities well and are more likely to have their best interest at heart, as compared to external bodies, such as government officials (Masango, Mfene & Henna 2013: 92). However, such is not the case in Okhahlamba Municipality, where the IDP indicated that due to dysfunctionality of these ward committees, community participation is severely affected, studies conducted in two of South Africa's Municipalities (Buffalo City and City of Tshwane Municipality) indicated that even though there were challenges in the functioning of ward committees in these municipalities, there are no visible signs that community participation was negatively affected (Napier, 2008: 165; Masango *et al.* 2013: 96).

Instead, studies rather show that challenges, such as zero remuneration to ward committee members, lack of resources to execute their duties and no clear terms of reference, in terms of their functions and duties that exists in ward committees affect their operational functioning (Ababio, 2007: 620; Mziwakhe & Reddy, 2008: 677; Masango *et al.* 2013: 98). Even though these challenges affect the ward committees morale negatively, their commitment to serving their communities ensures that this does not affect their duty of ensuring that participation takes place in development. It remains a puzzle to be uncovered by this study as to what the challenges faced by ward committees in Okhahlamba Municipality are, as well as why and how they hinder community participation in development.

2.10.5. Empowerment of the marginalised and capacity building

Empowerment and capacity building in public participation or involvement does not end with the ward committees or the municipal staff, it extends to the general public. Communities, especially rural communities, are largely populated by poor, illiterate women who do not understand the value of their participation in any municipal activities. An overwhelming majority of scholars are in agreement that this is where capacity building and empowerment of these communities is required (Fourie, 2001: 218; Dola & Mijan, 2006: 4; Mafunisa & Xaba, 2008: 453; Thebe, 2016: 716). It becomes the responsibility of the municipality or the development planners involved to ensure that the community understands its role in the participation process and the reasons behind its importance. Fourie (2001: 226) and Mashiachidi & Moeti (2016: 404) advise that for effective participation to take place there

must be a universal and full understanding and knowledge of the citizen participation process and clearly defined benefits of participation for community members.

With a specific reference to women in rural areas, there are instances where they cannot read or write or, at times, are not conversant with the language (English) or terms being used. The communication strategy used must take into account the marginalised group in the community (Thebe 2016: 715). This permits for all voices within the community to be heard and taken seriously, so that their needs and desires are also addressed by the development intervention. This empowerment further provides the local people with an ability to have their own voice on matters of their development through mobilising their own resources, identifying underlying problems and suggesting possible solutions irrespective of their social position in society (Wiebe, 2011: 581; Kebede, 2016: 15). Through being provided with a platform to participate in development interventions in their areas, local people feel empowered and develop a sense of ownership towards the end products as they know they were part of the decision-making. The community can take pride in the fact that the final product emanates from their own thinking and deliberations (Thebe, 2016: 714).

In the rural areas, capacity building and empowerment is specifically important for effective participation in development. According to Dola & Mijan (2006: 4), effective community participation for rural areas provides the necessary training to enhance knowledge and skills in participation, as poor rural people might find it difficult to articulate their needs or to identify them. This is where capacity building and empowerment factors in where intellectual development is encouraged for the locals to be actively involved.

2.11. Key role players in facilitating community participation
In the context of community participation, there are important actors who are meant to assume specific roles, in order to ensure that the initiative becomes a success. These are discussed below.

2.11.1. Local Government
In South Africa, the establishment of three spheres of government post-1994 left the local government with one major task of working directly with communities in ensuring that service delivery is accelerated as the sphere closest to communities (Govender & Reddy 2011: 65; Mayekiso *et al.* 2013: 187; Mautjana & Makombe 2014: 52). This largely implies that the success of community participation in development projects is dependent on the

effectiveness of the municipality in ensuring that such citizenry voice does take place. Govender & Reddy (2011: 65) adds that meaningful participation is imperative for values of effective local governance to be realised. Meaningful participation is about the ability to influence decisions, which is often difficult for poor individuals, marginalised groups and communities who are socially, economically and politically excluded (Moyo 2014: 5154; Mautjana & Makombe 2014: 53).

The local government sphere was solely established to stimulate and promote the notion and culture of democratic government at its foundation. Promoting democracy at this level implies giving ordinary citizen a voice in matters of governance, which is one of the reasons for the formation of ward committees in municipalities as they are primarily tasked with ensuring that this takes place. Heydenrych (2008: 703) contends that only through transparent and open means of public participation can local governments be able to truly achieve democratic governance for rural communities. Concerning the main aim for the existence of ward committees, the White Paper on Local Governance (1998) clearly articulates that the central role of ward committees is to facilitate communication between the communities and the government authorities and, most importantly, represent public interests within the government systems. In other words, ward committees are meant to centralise and break any barriers of communication that could potentially exist between government and local communities. With failure to do so, Magstadt (2006:91), Thebe (2016: 718) and Maphunye (2017: 481) warn that excluding communities from processes of participation in decision-making will result in the community losing interest in all matters pertaining to governance. It is, however, regrettable that some of these committees operate and exist merely for compliance rather than ensuring meaningful participation by communities (Heydenrych (2008: 705).

2.11.2. Community

The role played by communities is in ensuring that development achieves the intended goals through their participation in clearly articulating to development practitioners the extent of their problems and challenges which have been adequately dwelled on. In a nutshell, communities remain key role players in development to ensure that development interventions do respond directly to their needs as the beneficiaries.

2.11.3. Community Organisations

In addition to individual community members directly participating in development, community organisations also remain the voice for the community as they always have their best interest at heart. These are organisations that advocate for the eradication of different social dilemmas which require developmental interventions to overcome, hence they are better afforded to take part in development processes. To a certain extent, a collective voice, with a backup of valid data, carries more weight than individual voices or 'claims'.

2.12. Factors contributing to limited participation by rural women in development

Different studies have observed that women participation in any activities outside their home is limited, particularly for women in rural areas. Kongolo (2009: 13) attest to this statement and make specific reference to limited involvement of rural women in development activities. Reasons behind such limited participation remain a puzzle which requires urgent solutions, so as to provide meaning to participation for rural people, the majority of which are women. This is more so due to vast literature showing that women have been involved in development for the longest time, with a number of international declarations signed promoting rural women involvement in development. However, such declarations seem to have only been successful in raising awareness around challenges faced by rural women instead of addressing their needs, aspirations and ultimately meeting their expectations (Hofisi & Xaba, 2008: 459; Kongolo, 2009:15). This does not suggest that rural women are not capable of making meaningful contribution towards development in their areas, however if reasons behind such limited participation are not rectified, it means that these women are at risk of remaining marginalised, not having their voices and needs heard and therefore, not benefiting from development initiatives. Hence, this section looks at major constraints for rural women as far as participation in development is concerned.

2.12.1. Lack of or limited education/ Illiteracy

The main purpose of a development initiative is to effect change in the lives of communities while affording community members an opportunity to participate and have a voice on how such change is to be effected, which in turn leaves them with a sense of ownership over their livelihoods. However, the inability to attain formal education deprives rural women of the freedom to affect change in their lives and in their environment (Shange 2014: 114; Mashiachidi & Moeti 2016: 402). Limited education leads rural women to believe that their participation in development is not necessarily needed and is not going to add any value,

since they do not have a clear understanding of the participation process. This can be due to mode of communication or language used during the community consultation process or unclear explanations as to 'why participation', especially to uneducated community members. Educational level is important for human capital as it is a required tool to stimulate, create, achieve and enhance productivity, as well as foster active involvement of rural women in development (Kongolo, 2009: 21; Mashiachidi & Moeti, 2016: 403).

Consequently, illiteracy contributes to rural women's level of confidence and self-esteem. Their illiteracy causes an inferiority complex and may make them think they cannot make any meaningful or worthwhile contribution, they further perceive innovation and solutions to their problems as something that must come from educated people or the authorities (Fourie, 2001: 222). These women become comfortable and trust the next person, or an external body, to provide them with tailor made solutions to their problems; a person whom they believe is more capable of providing sustainable solutions because of their education.

2.12.2. Lack of capacity building

Lack of education has been identified as one of the major constraints hindering women participation in development in the rural areas. This factor further escalates and affects their self-esteem as they tend to believe that they are not capable of making any meaningful contribution. It remains the duty of the government or responsible authorities to ensure that rural women who cannot participate in development due to illiteracy are capacitated and empowered to do so, in order to be able to articulate their challenges when needed and have them addressed. Unfortunately, literature suggests that lack of government support or empowerment to ensure that these women, or marginalised groups, are included in the participation process is lacking and therefore, further contributes towards limited participation (Fourie 2001: 223; Hofisi & Xaba 2008: 458; Kongolo 2009: 21; Mashiachidi & Moeti 2016: 402). Such efforts may include employment of experienced officials by the municipality to deal with the needs and demands of rural women, in order to enable them to participate. This, in turn, can address the language barrier, illiteracy, provision of clarity on the importance of participation for rural women and also empower them to believe in themselves.

At times, such participation does not take place due to lack of empowerment amongst the disadvantaged and marginalised groups within communities, including women. Ndevu (2011: 1252) and Mautjana & Makombe (2014: 54) then propose that in order to "allow for a more equitable development process, disadvantaged stakeholders should be empowered to increase their level of knowledge, skills and control over their own livelihoods, also as regards development initiatives affecting them". This can potentially go a long way in addressing nonparticipation by marginalised groups but evidence suggests that there is reluctance amongst local authorities in finding new tools that promote active and genuine participation rather than settling for passive processes (Kukumba & Nsingo 2008: 116; Govender & Reddy 2011: 73; Mautjana & Makombe 2014: 65).

2.12.3. Lack of government resources

Another factor which is closely linked to limited government support relates to resources that are meant to be put in place by the municipality, in order to ensure that there is sufficient mobilisation for participation to be successful. Lack of funds and necessary infrastructure, such as transport from the municipality are often cited as hindering factors which prevent municipalities from ensuring that communities form part of the participation process. This means that most marginalised women in rural areas are often not able to travel to meeting venues and therefore, cannot be part of the consultation process (Mafunisa & Xaba, 2008:457; Kebede, 2016: 11; Mashiachidi & Moeti, 2016: 402). It remains imperative that if the government is serious about effective participation, resources must be made available to ensure that it becomes a success.

2.12.4. Time constraints

At times, all resources can be made available to enable the community to participate in any development initiative taking place in their communities, only to find out that community members are pressed with other duties which do not allow them to take part. This is more so for rural women with who it indicated that they are already tasked with taking care of the household, while their husbands are away at work or engaged in other income generating activities to be able provide for their families. Kebede (2016: 11) and Mashiachidi & Moeti (2016: 402) argue that the nature of the participatory approach hinders rural women participation in any development initiative. This is partly due to the vastness of rural areas, where women can at times be required to travel long distances to the meeting venue while still fulfilling household duties, based on the designated gender roles.

However, the issue of household duties as one of the burdens hindering rural women from taking part in development processes within their communities has been overemphasised and this study seeks to unravel fresh data. Williamson & Sithole (2006: 3) rather shifts the focus to decentralised government and argues that it does not serve its intended purpose of inclusive and enhanced participation of communities in development and accelerated service delivery. According to the author, decentralised government limits women's voice and service delivery process as patriarchal systems are promoted and defended at local levels and this consequently limits women's voice in development processes in the rural areas. In this instance, Hofisi (2014: 1130) agrees with Williamson & Sithole (2006: 7) in stating that it is the responsibility of government to encourage women empowerment at all levels of society, regardless of where they are located.

2.12.5. Cultural values

Social positions that rural women sometimes find themselves in and their roles within their households do not allow them to articulate and express their feelings, opinions and thoughts freely, which may have an impact on how they conduct their lives in public spheres (Williamson & Sithole 2006; Shange 2014). This supresses rural women's views and voices in rural development and failure to address these views implies that rural development strategies fail to improve the living conditions of women. Lack of encouragement and support for rural women to freely express their views outside of their homes, due to social constructs and culture, results in their inability to contribute or participate meaningfully to development. This is a current issue, despite the South African Constitution's Bill of Rights enactment on every individual's right, both male and female, to freedom of identity and freedom of expression.

There are other factors related to power relations which are closely linked to patriarchy and have the potential to influence rural women participation in development processes within their communities. The International Research on Women (ICRW, 2005) elaborates on this point and states that violence against women reduces their participation in the labour market, activities outside their homes and productivity because abused women are often isolated and participating in income generating activities may become problematic. Fourie (2001: 223) and Moyo (2014: 5997) concur with the findings of the report and state that gender-based violence against women, and other cultural values which limit women to certain spaces within society, are other factors perpetuated by patriarchy in the rural areas that prevents women from partaking in activities outside their homes.

Meanwhile, Williamson & Sithole (2006: 9) extend the same argument in stating that having women as ward councillors in one of the municipalities in the rural areas of Umsinga in Kwa-Zulu Natal proved to have a positive impact in ensuring that women take part in development processes in their area. This is solely based on the perception that women councillors are able to address other women's needs and take cognisance of issues, such as time and venues where community consultation meetings are held, in order to ensure that they fit in their schedules and are able to attend. It has been argued "that participation and representation of women in politics, national legislatures and municipal councils have grown steadily in South Africa, and this has become a subject of debate in political and academic circles" (Myeni, 2014: 57). However, this is not a regular occurrence and the question remains then, what happens in communities where ward councillors are men, especially in the rural areas, as it has been evident that patriarchal practices are still very much dominant.

2.13. Experiences from other developing countries

One point of interest worth noting from the review of literature is that South African rural areas are not alone in being confronted by patriarchal practices and other challenges that ultimately hinder women participation in development or any activities that are outside their homes. Most Asian and other sub-Saharan African rural communities share some of these experiences, as this was revealed in several studies conducted in rural areas in Nigeria (Chigbu, 2015:335). These studies found that Nigeria is a patriarchal society largely characterised by acute discrimination, inequality, marginalisation and exclusion of women which ultimately determines their position in society (Omoyibo, Egharevba & Iyand, 2010: 3363; Bolaji, 2011: 1406; Amusan, Saka & Ahmed, 2017: 8442; Okoji & Ayuba, 2018: 12225). These scholars conducted case studies with Nigerian rural women to gauge their experiences in development participation within their communities and found that patriarchy has limited their active involvement in development activities taking place outside their homes. Similar to South Africa, women's role in Nigeria as mothers and wives is regarded important and overly emphasised (Omoyibo *et al.* 2010: 3366). These domestic activities often keep rural women occupied in such a manner that they hardly find time to participate in development.

Moreover, most Nigerian culture regards women as private property which is owned by men in marriage (Omoyibo *et al.* 2010: 3373). This belief has generated a false stereotype

amongst both men and women in believing that men are superior to women and are the ones who hold power and authority when it comes to decision-making. Omoyibo *et al.* (2010: 3374) and Amusan *et al.* 2017: 8444) argue that this contributes to women not realising the role they are meant to play towards development, as they see men as the rightful holders of power and therefore, better positioned to make decisions as far as development is concerned within their communities. Further to this, some rural women in Nigeria are prohibited by cultural traits from participating in certain contexts and as a result, even if they do attend community meetings where proposed development interventions are discussed, they are not allowed to be heard in public (Okoji & Ayubi, 2018: 12226). Such socio-cultural structures strictly reserve outside activities for men and prevent women from contributing towards development as they cannot voice out their opinions towards decision-making even if they have good and valuable ideas to share.

These factors and others often contribute towards failed development projects that rural women cannot own up to as they do not respond to their needs due to their silenced voice in the development agenda. Bolaji (2011: 1409) reiterates that sustainable development must not exclude any group in society for it to be successful, but Nigerian government's limited understanding of the importance of including all beneficiaries and removing all the cultural impediments that exist in the fabrics of its rural societies have made this achievement difficult to attain.

(Chigbu, 2015: 335) contends that even though Nigerian rural women's involvement or participation in development is often not documented due to cultural practices (patriarchy), they have however, been taking part in development processes in their communities through the advice and influence that they have over their husbands or sons within their homes. The difference between the case of Nigeria and South Africa is that even though patriarchal practices hinder women from formally participating in development activities in the former, the literature indicates that they still manage to have their voices 'heard'. They manage to do this through influencing their husbands' decisions, inside their households, on development in cases in which they experience challenges to participate directly.

Another African developing country which documented participation of rural women in development is Botswana. According to Mookodi (2005: 2), the country does not differ much from Nigeria as even though the country's development discourse aims to integrate rural women in the development agenda and ensuring that they form part of decision-making, it

lacks the political will to address challenges of inequality faced by women. These challenges include lack of necessary resources and empowerment needed in ensuring that rural women fully understand their role in development.

Empowerment tools for rural women's active involvement in development as previously marginalised group in society can never be emphasised enough. A case study conducted in Georgia revealed that as part of patriarchal practices, culture of society also contributes to rural women's limited participation in development, as they also suffer from a lack of confidence and inferiority (Gamisonia, 2017: 11). The study reveals that rural societies in the country have been socialised to believe that women largely depend on men and such dependency socialisation includes women depending on men for decision-making or reserving decision-making as a man's role (Gamisonia, 2017: 13). Similar to the case of Nigeria as discussed above, due to gender division of labour and socialisation, rural women tend to reserve development participation for men, and ultimately lose self confidence in getting actively involved in communal activities.

Despite the above, with developing countries having demonstrated cultural traits as main impediments to rural women participation in development, the Latin American region has seen an increase in the role of rural women in development (Inter-American Development Bank, 2014: 4). However, their involvement is not seamless. The region also documents gender division of labour within the household as a constraint that leaves women with less time to participate in development initiatives outside the home.

All the above are but a few experiences of rural women participation in development from other developing regions in the world. The experiences do not differ much from South Africa, with cultural traits serving as a major impediment. Dekens & Voora (2014: 3) advise that empowerment and gender equity programmes aimed at raising awareness and initiating a shift in mentality towards rural women are necessary. Such programmes must be initiated for both men and women.

2.14. Summary
Development interventions in the rural areas are implemented with the primary aim of alleviating poverty amongst the poor, with women being mostly affected by this scourge. However, at times, these interventions fail because of the manner in which community participation is handled by the authorities in government responsible for facilitating it, treating it as a compliance issue rather than an important prerequisite for development in the

participatory democracy. The concept of effective and meaningful community participation by all citizens in development was introduced at the attainment of democracy and the government have introduced different legislations since then to ensure that communities fully utilise this platform for their benefit and overcome poverty.

This chapter looked at different rural development strategies that particularly encouraged citizen participation since the advent of democracy in the context of South Africa, the plight of rural women in general, importance of participation in rural development and factors that potentially hinder women participation. The study further went beyond the South African borders and explored experiences of rural women participation in development from other developing countries and regions, such as Nigeria, Botswana and Latin America. Moreover, a theoretical perspective suitable to fully describe why rural women participation in development is important was considered. In essence, this study aimed to determine the nature and extent of rural women participation in community development projects, the literature reviewed in this chapter provided a holistic overview of this phenomenon. To uncover facts on this as far as women in the rural areas of Bergville, a qualitative research approach was utilised and is discussed in detail in Chapter Three.

CHAPTER 3

Historical context and research design

3.1. Introduction

In order to adequately answer the key research questions and fulfil the research objectives, researchers must consider how they plan to respond or investigate these questions (Mouton, 1996: 107; Chilisa & Kawulich, 2012: 51). This follows from the research problem, with a detailed explanation of how the study was executed discussed below. This chapter is divided into two sections; the first section covers the historical context, which outlines the contextual background on the topic in South Africa, followed by the historical context of the study area in order to paint a clear picture for the reader on different dynamics and the extent of rural women participation in development within the Kwa-Zulu Natal province. A brief history of Bergville is then given, discussing different socio-economic conditions affecting women in the area and details on three development projects the study focused on. The second section is the research setting and design followed in the study to understand participation of women in development projects in the rural areas surrounding the Okhahlamba Local Municipality. It clearly outlines the steps and research procedures followed, as well as tools employed during data collection and how the collected data was analysed.

3.2. Historical context

Participation in development differs from country to country. South Africa has had its own dynamics in this regard since the concept was introduced after the attainment of democracy. In addition to that, women have also been impacted differently as a marginalised group in society. This section aims to provide historical context on the basis of public participation in development in South Africa and issues of women participation.

3.2.1. Public participation in South Africa

The concept of public participation has been widely defined in Chapter Two as simply referring community's involvement in development planning. It has been introduced to various societies during various eras. In the South African context, this concept was

introduced at the dawn of democracy as a way for the government to include people's voice and power in development planning. Hartslief (2009: 330) and Tau (2013: 152) unanimously agree that public participation was introduced in South Africa with the sole aim of addressing the inequalities of the past, where decisions were taken without the involvement of the majority. This was introduced after 1994, when the democratic government had to shift from the previous autocratic governance to a more people-centred form of governance. Public participation then created a democratic platform for ordinary South African citizens to have a voice in governance and exchange service delivery ideas with the government.

Hartslief (2009: 329) further contends that this was not a new concept altogether for African societies as *imbizo,* a term which refers to 'calling together', dates back to the precolonial era where community matters were raised, discussed and the Chief or *Induna* was expected to respond or provide direction. Even though *Izimbizo* has evolved over time, they are still widely utilised by government officials as another form of public participation. This process of *imbizo* does not differ much from public participation in the modern day, as it still involves the exchange of ideas between the community and government officials with the aim of achieving seamless service delivery.

South African government is divided into three spheres, national, provincial and local (municipal) level. The local government is the closest to the community and therefore, better equipped to facilitate public participation by working closely with ward committees. The Constitution (1996), White Paper on Local Government (1998), Municipal Structures Act (1998) and Municipal Systems Act (2000) clearly make provisions and legislate how public participation is to be carried out for the benefit of South African citizens at large (Govender & Reddy, 2011: 61; Tau, 2013: 153; Molepo, Maleka & Khalo, 2015: 346). These legislations are enforced by the local governments and are each discussed in detail in Chapter Two of this report.

In spite of the existence of legislations in guiding the process of participation in South Africa, there is evidence that it is still not carried out in the manner that fully aims to benefit community members. Even though the country has made provisions for various platforms of public participation, at times, public servants tend to treat these as mere formalities without proper follow-up's, feedback to the community or monitoring tools in place (Hartslief, 2009: 334; Govender & Reddy, 2011: 62; Tsheola, Ramonyai & Segage, 2014: 394). Reasons cited for poor execution of this important activity range from lack of resources, time constraints

and limited knowledge of public participation processes by municipal officials (Hartslief, 2009: 335). Due to this, community members at times are not informed if their inputs did influence decisions in actuality. This happens despite one of the values for public participation being the provision of feedback, in terms of how community members' inputs affected decision-making (Tau, 2013: 160). Elsewhere in this dissertation, Mautjana & Makombe (2014: 54) and Hofisi (2014: 1127) warn against this form of public participation and coin it 'phoney participation'. Hartslief (2009: 336) further warns that the government's failure to address the states challenges poses a danger to render this important democratic consultative process redundant.

Failure to address challenges in public participation is but one of the factors which endangers the gains of democracy for South African communities. Tsheola *et al.* (2014: 393) points out that in South Africa, public participation is important to guard against the widely spread service delivery protests. When communities are not satisfied with the state of service delivery, they take their frustrations to the streets and revolt against the authorities. This is most likely in cases where public participation processes are not carried out correctly and therefore, development initiatives and services provided to the community do not meet their needs, as scholars have pointed out previously. Studies conducted in the City of Tshwane (Gauteng province) and Vuwani (Limpopo province) respectively highlighted that the widespread of service delivery protests are a manifestation of wrongly executed public participation and community members are surprised when the implementation of services does not match decisions they had sought to influence during community meetings (Tsheloa *et al.* 2014: 396; Molepo *et al.* 2015: 349; Ngcamu: 2019: 5). These are the results of treating public participation as a mere formality, rather than a necessity for effective service delivery.

3.2.2. Women participation
Since the attainment of democracy, South Africa has introduced different legislative frameworks aimed at transforming the status of women from different walks of life. Whether those have been able to work in favour of women or not is questionable. However, the government is adamant that there has been progress made in this regard. This was reiterated by the former Minister of Economic Development, Prof Hlengiwe Mkhize in 2014, when she delivered a keynote address at the National Movement of Rural Women Symposium and stated that through rural women's access to land, their potential has been unlocked and their

contribution towards economic transformation within these areas is starting to bear fruitful results (National Movement of Rural Women Symposium, 2014). The former President of the Republic of South Africa, Jacob Zuma, also echoed similar sentiments in the foreword on the Status of Women in the South African Economy and stated that there has been considerable shift or transformation in the emancipation of women in country. However, he pointed out that an assessment of the past twenty years reveal that notwithstanding the progress made, women have not progressed as rapidly, in terms of socioeconomic empowerment and gender equality (Status of Women in the South African Economy, 2015).

It is however, pertinent that in most instances, legislations aimed at empowering women, such as the recently passed Women Empowerment and Gender Equality Bill in 2013, mostly treat women as a universal group with shared experiences, while ignoring other social factors that are instrumental in shaping women's experiences. A detailed analyses of the Bill can be found in 3.2.2.1.

While the legislation does make specific mention of women in rural areas, it is minimal or does not come to fruition. For instance, the Women Empowerment and Gender Equality Bill of 2013 only partly focuses on the empowerment of rural women at the end of Chapter three out of seven chapters contained within the Bill. The difference between women based in South African rural areas and those in urban cities in this democratic dispensation are the levels at which they experience empowerment aimed at uplifting women in totality. Below is an overview of selected legislative frameworks that have been introduced in South Africa with the primary aim of transforming the position and status of women in public affairs. These legislative frameworks, in contrast to those discussed in Chapter Two, are looked at from the perspective of understanding their specific role in broadening rural women's involvement in the development arena.

3.2.2.1. Legislative frameworks on the participation of rural women in development

Policy dialogue around the empowerment and emancipation of women can never be overemphasized, especially looking at the history of South Africa where women were mostly marginalized and lacked access to relevant skills and opportunities outside their homes (May & Mudarikwa 2014: 3). This report has demonstrated how the country's previous apartheid system specifically affected rural women. Ngcongo (1993: 9) explains that emancipation of women would mean the removal of all factors, laws, attitudes and norms which prevent women from reaching their full potential as human beings of equal dignity with others. In this

study's context, this implies capacitating and providing necessary support to rural women in order to enable them to make meaningful inputs to development for their own well-being as rural dwellers. Following is an outline of how the White Paper on South African Land Policy (1997) and Women Empowerment and Gender Equality Bill (2013) aim to remove barriers which prevent women in South Africa from realising their full potential and address all challenges faced by women in society.

3.2.2.1.1. White Paper on South African Land Policy - 1997

South African history and legacy is mostly characterised by conflicts that came about as a result of infightings on the issue of land. This includes unfair or racially determined distribution of land and forced removals of Black people from the areas in which they reside (Kloppers & Pienaar, 2014: 677). When democracy was attained in 1994, these are some of the imbalances that the newly elected government had to address, hence the White Paper on Land Policy as per Section 25 of the Constitution. It places substantial emphasis on the importance of gender equity in land access, and the importance of women participation in decision-making during the consultation process. For people situated in the rural areas and farms, a Rural Development and Land Reform programme was developed and its objectives are highlighted in Chapter Two under the literature review.

In light of this study, even though this legislation and programme were aimed at addressing the imbalances of rural dwellers holistically, as far as the distribution of land is concerned, the main focus is how this empowered and continues to empower rural women and increase their capacity to participate in matters outside their homes or development as a previously disadvantaged group in society. Despite the government's claim that rural women are making strides in redefining land rights in the context of customary law, the report prepared by the Commission for Gender Equality reveals that unequal access to land remains as one of the key challenges hindering much desired equality (Commission for Gender Equality, 2010). It is further argued that even in instances where rural women do get access to land, they normally struggle to use it in a manner which is beneficial to them and their families in the longer term due to lack of knowledge regarding available avenues that could be of assistance and guidance (Arends, 2009: 6).

This implies that the South African Land Policy's aim in increasing rural women participation in decision-making is seldom achieved and therefore, only results in 'phoney or token' participation as alluded to by Mautjana & Makombe (2014: 54) and Hofisi (2014:

1127) elsewhere in this dissertation. The White Paper on South African Land policy was partly meant to empower rural women in reclaiming what was wrongfully taken from them by the apartheid system, but this kind of participation does not empower women to achieve long-term sustainable livelihoods.

3.2.2.1.2. Women Empowerment and Gender Equality Bill (WEGE) - 2013

This is the most current legislative framework on gender equality, which was passed by the National Assembly in 2013, it reiterates a greater need for a meaningful presence of women in decision-making (Dube, 2014). This piece of legislation received much criticism due to identified duplication with other existing pieces of legislation, such as the Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act of 2000. A large proportion of the provisions in WEGE can be found elsewhere, most evidently in Chapter 5 of the Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act of 2000, which still has not been brought into force (Bliss 2014: 2).

Another piece of legislation which seeks to achieve similar objectives as the WEGE Bill is the National Gender Policy Framework, which seeks to establish a clear vision and framework to guide the process of developing laws, policies, procedures and practices which will serve to ensure equal rights and opportunities for women and men in all spheres and structures of government, as well as in the workplace, the community and the family (National Gender Policy Framework 2002: 4). Similar to WEGE, the National Gender Policy Framework equally advocates for the creation of a conducive environment and platforms which will enable women to have a meaningful voice in decision-making.

Steward (2013: 1) pointed out that the Women Empowerment and Gender Equality Bill will affect only the fortunate 4.2 million women who already have formal sector jobs, while it will do little or nothing to empower and address the inequality of the remaining 85% of marginalised women and female children in the rural areas. The Bill is therefore likely to address the interest of employed urban women, leaving rural women to fend for themselves while there is a legislation claiming to advocate for the position of women in society at large.

Even in instances where women share the same space, the challenges they face differ. The Bill assumes that rural women experiences and challenges, with regard to gender

equality and empowerment, are universal and mostly confined to land, agricultural or farming activities. May & Mudarikwa (2014: 3) criticizes this notion made by the Bill as it completely ignores the plight of rural women and is indicative of little to no research being done on what is needed to realise gender equality and empowerment for rural women. Rural women also need to be empowered and capacitated to make meaningful inputs towards decision-making outside their homes beyond farming and agricultural activities. Instead of advocating for this, Section 11(d) further states that measures must be put in place to 'ensure equal representation and meaningful participation of women in traditional councils' (Women Empowerment and Gender Equality Bill, 2013: 9). This further places rural women under the authority of traditional leadership which, at times, is deeply embedded in patriarchal practices and the Bill fails to express avenues available to women should their voices be oppressed while utilising this platform in expressing their views.

However, the Minister for Women at the time, Lulu Xingwane, was confident that the legislation would fill a gap by addressing challenges faced by women in the South African society (South African Press Association, 2014: 1). To defend the Bill, the Minister made specific reference to Chapter Three which spells out the significance of equal representation, participation and socioeconomic empowerment of women in the rural areas (Women Empowerment and Gender Equality Bill 2013: 7). Section 7 (1)(b) of the Bill states that 'public bodies must develop measures aimed at achieving 50 percent representation and meaningful participation of women in decision-making structures (Women Empowerment and Gender Equality Bill, 2013: 8). This is inclusive of building their capacity to participate, as well as advocating on educating the communities at large to accept women as their equals. This was found relevant for this study as Williamson & Sithole (2006: 3) and Hofisi (2014: 1130) point out that patriarchal practices are prevalent in South African rural areas and therefore, limit women's meaningful participation in development. Practical implementation of the Bill in capacitating and empowering rural women will, therefore, assist them in realising their full potential to be agents of change within their communities.

Moreover, this is based on the same premise as this study, which is anchored on Gender and Development theory (GAD), and places much emphasis on the contribution of both men and women to development, it sees women as equal agents of change as men rather than passive recipients of development assistance (Rathgeber 1990: 493). This theoretical framework is thoroughly discussed in the preceding chapter. Enactment of WEGE Bill can be viewed to be representing a new dawn for rural women where such initiatives are likely to eradicate

patriarchal practices, even in the development sphere, and afford rural women a voice that is taken into consideration during decision-making. Rural women's views and active involvement in decision-making can only be truly valued if the community at large understand their importance.

It is important to note that since the dawn of democracy, South Africa has enacted a number of legislations aimed at empowering women in different spheres of society. However, this study only found two pieces of legislation (White Paper on South African Land Policy, 1997 and WEGE Bill, 2013) to be relevant to its discussion because, as compared to others, they are much more focused on addressing issues of rural women specifically, their status in society and participation in activities taking place outside their homes; which is the core focus of the study. Other legislations, such as the Skills Development Act (1998), the Employment Equity Act (1998) and the Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act (2000), treat women as a homogeneous group while the experiences of rural women, those in the formal employment and those in cities differ drastically and each require their own distinct interventions.

3.2.2.2. Women's right to development - State institutions promoting constitutional democracy

South Africa is a member state to a number of international conventions promoting the rights of women and has a constitutional obligation to ensure that values and rights enshrined in Chapter 7 of the Constitution are a reality for the citizens. The country then established institutions or 'watchdogs', as per Chapter 9 of its Constitution, to strengthen constitutional democracy in the Republic (Constitution of South Africa, 1996). Commission for Gender Equality and the South African Human Rights Commission are two institutions identified in this study suitable for advocating and ensuring implementation of women's right to development, especially those in the rural areas who have had an absent voice, and still have to a certain extent, in the public domain.

3.2.2.2.1. Commission for Gender Equality (CGE)

The mission of the Commission for Gender Equality (CGE) is to promote respect for gender equality and the protection, development and attainment of gender equality (Commission for Gender Equality, 2014). In the context of rural women participation in development, the Commission is meant to monitor and evaluate practices of local government in ensuring that women in those areas are afforded an equal opportunity to meaningfully participate in development and decision-making. Even though the Commission claims to be advocating for

women's rights from all walks of life and it succeeds to a certain extent, studies show that it often fails to meaningfully empower rural women in this regard (Waiganjo, 2014: i). It is claimed that this is attributed to by lack of collaboration with other gender machineries or civil society organisations that are instrumental in enforcing gender equality and its inability to successfully consult rural women for their contribution on matters that affect them (Waiganjo, 2014: i; Stevens & Ntlama, 2016: 48). CGE, however, remains a good machinery as a state institution in ensuring constitutional democracy for women, but if women do not benefit equally from its services, it runs a risk of working against itself.

3.2.2.2.2. The South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC)

The Human Rights Commission is the national institution established to support constitutional democracy and is committed to promote respect for, observance of and protection of human rights for everyone without fear or favour (South African Human Rights Commission, 2016). A point worth noting regarding the function of this institution is that its functions are not limited to protecting rights of any group of people, but human rights of all citizens. This is done through investigation and evaluation into cases in which there are allegations of human rights being violated in any way, inclusive of rural women's rights to development. Even though the SAHRC is not directly responsible for ensuring rural women's rights or participation to development, its active involvement in prosecuting cases of violation of these women's rights can contribute to strengthening their voice in development matters. Similar to CGE, there are claims that there is a lack of coordination between SAHRC and the general public, which leads to inaccessibility by the targeted beneficiaries (Stevens & Ntlama, 2016: 48). While the institutions are making progress in some areas, such disjuncture with the general public could potentially undermine women's right to development at large.

3.2.2.4. Enforcement for implementation of existing legislations

The previous section gave an overview of key legislative frameworks and institutions created in South Africa in ensuring that basic human rights are protected and, ultimately, specific rights for rural women to development. It is evident that South Africa is correctly 'armed' to eradicate any forms of inequality and exclusion of any groups of people based on gender, race or any form of difference, even though implementation and practicality of it might not be universally experienced by all citizens. In addition, Isike (2016: 4) reveals that the inequality gap in South Africa is still quite large, especially when it comes to the inclusion of rural

women in decision-making processes. The author, along with other scholars, add that this may be due to the manner in which some rural women still hold a notion that decision-making is reserved for the educated few and that rural development should, and could, happen without them (Khumalo, 2013: 49; Isike, 2016: 5; Mazibuko, 2017: 90). These women lack empowerment and guidance from the authorities which should enable their inclusion in development and for them to realise their potential in contributing towards change in their societies. This shows that despite the existence of legislation and constitutional bodies, rural women's right to development is severely undermined if it lacks proper empowerment.

Moreover, scholars often find alternative explanations behind South Africa's inability to achieve the intended results with all the necessary legislation in place. Catherine (2015: 43) and Mazibuko, (2017: 73) argue that in South Africa, an enabling environment has been created, through legislations and constitutional bodies, to ensure that women are afforded an equal opportunity in development, however, they have not been able to achieve the intended results as they are not legally binding and gender programmes are not accorded much importance. Stevens & Ntlama, (2016: 48) pointed out the disconnection between bodies, such as SAHRC and CGE, and the communities, as the bodies are meant to serve as watchdogs for the implementation of legislations aimed at eliminating inequality. As a result, rural women continue to face challenges with regard to inclusion in development, despite all legislative frameworks developed for their benefit and the attention given to them in international frameworks in which South Africa is also a signatory to (Catherine, 2015: 45). Legislations alone cannot ensure rural women's effective participation in development, there needs to be a political will to safeguard that rural women also enjoy equal rights as citizens of South Africa and these pieces of legislations equally exist for their benefit.

3.3. An overview of rural women participation in development –Kwa-Zulu Natal perspective

Chapter Two broadly discussed the realities of rural women participation in South Africa, as a whole, as far as development is concerned. However, South Africa has nine provinces in total and contexts differ and are shaped by different social factors from all the respective provinces. This implies that even though rural women experiences in development has been discussed broadly in Chapter Two, there could still variations depending on each province.

3.3.1. Participation in development in KZN

The main thrust of public participation in South Africa is to deepen the principles of democracy at the local level and ensure that citizens form part of decision-making. However, this process can be translated differently in various communities. Similar to most parts of the country, Kwa-Zulu Natal communities realise the great need to be consulted and get involved in development activities as this ensures integrated planning by the municipalities (Odendaal 2007: 73; Kondlo 2010: 384; Khan, Khan & Govender 2013: 137). To these communities, public participation process implies having an active voice during planning, implementation and completion stages of the project. Familiar methods utilised in ensuring that this takes place within the province include community meeting, roadshows and *izimbizo* where communities get to voice out their development needs (Kondlo, 2010: 384; Barichievy, Piper & Parker 2005: 283; Duma & Mubangizi 2019: 245). Even though these channels of participation are open to all community members, participants in two case studies conducted in Kwa-Natal felt that these are only done to comply with legislation, as there is no proof that their inputs during these sittings do inform decision-making (Khan *et al.* 2013: 137; Duma & Mubangizi 2019: 248). However, these sentiments can differ from those of rural women in the province. The section below looks at the reality of rural women, as far as public participation is concerned, in the Kwa-Zulu Natal province.

3.3.2. Participation of rural women in development – Kwa Zulu Natal

The study focus area is located in one of the rural areas of the Kwa-Zulu Natal province, a province where the power of traditional authorities and patriarchal trends has been well documented, these factors tend to shape and limit women's activity outside the household and, consequently, in development (Williamson *et al.* 2006: 13; Hosegood, 2011: 145; Shange, 2014: 107). In rural Kwa-Zulu Natal, the tradition of male authority, even today, remains a stumbling block towards transformation in the rural areas where male traditional leadership is still strong (Isike & Uzodike, 2011: 230). Such traditional trends manifest themselves by restricting women to certain spaces and the manner in which they are meant to carry themselves. These are patriarchal trends that dictate that women are meant to be submissive to their husbands, and in society as a whole, and remain objects to men. One cultural practice that is now wrongly carried out and violates women in the rural areas of Kwa-Zulu Natal is *'ukuthwala'* which is abduction of a girl child for marriage. Findings from Pfarelo, Kugara & Mdhluli (2017: 9010) reveal that the '*ukuthwala',* custom which most people in the 21st century assume ended in the 1960's, is still largely practiced in some parts

of rural KZN. Some parts of the province which are still seen taking part in this custom include areas, such as Zwelibomvu, Bergville, Kwa-Ngcolosi, Emaqadini (Pfarelo *et al.* 2017: 9011). However, this does not conclude that these areas in totality practice the custom openly; it simply means that there have been incidents where girls were abducted for marriage.

Another patriarchal practice that limits rural women participation in Kwa-Zulu Natal is the lower value placed in a girl child's education as compared to that of a boy child in most families. A case study of the Human Rights, Democracy and Development (HRDD) project conducted with some rural communities in Kwa-Zulu Natal (Dalton, Escourt, Qanda, Tugela Ferry) reported that girl children often enjoyed school but were often forced to drop out because of a combination of factors, such as poverty, gender discrimination and the generally low value placed on education within the family (John, 2013: 9). This continues through to these rural women's adult life as they are raised to believe that their participation is only valued inside the household and this is likely to affect their level of participation in development initiatives outside their homes.

Moreover, in the rural areas of Kwa-Zulu Natal, gender remains a socially-constructed concept that determines and shapes the experiences of women, it goes as far as determining their roles and responsibilities in such a way that their place is still confined in the home (Bob, 2008: 110; Mkhize & Cele, 2017: 130). Such socialisation of women in the rural areas of Kwa-Zulu Natal as outlined in Chapter Two is a reality for some rural women in general; Kwa-Zulu Natal sets an example of such a reality. Confinement of women to the home then leaves the public space reserved for men, in such a way that married women sought permission from their husbands should they wish to participate in activities taking place outside their home, as they do not want to be seen as being disobedient to their tradition (Bhengu, 2010: 8; Rudwick & Shange, 2011: 70). This shows that the extent of rural women participation in development activities in the rural areas of Kwa-Zulu Natal is largely determined and controlled by their husbands. This can have a negative impact towards the contribution that women in these areas can make towards development interventions.

In a case where women take active part in activities outside their homes or become vocal in societal gatherings, their roles and ability to balance family life and the roles they have assumed in society is continuously questioned. Isike & Uzodike (2011: 230) and Mkhize &

Cele (2017: 130) argue that in Kwa-Zulu Natal, women who take active participation in public settings are labelled as *'rebels, wanting to be men, cultural deviants, out of control, social transgressors who do not know their place'* and other concepts that seek to demonstrate that the public space does not belong to them. Isike & Uzodike (2011: 233) further unpack this argument by highlighting that non-assertiveness and docility are the hallmarks of the 'good' Zulu woman in Kwa-Zulu Natal, a notion that remains dominant in these areas. This poses a threat towards rural women's effective participation in development, as they fear being labelled and viewed as rebels who go against their culture. Rural women are mostly awakened to respecting their culture and tradition; Chapter Two highlighted to a greater extent literacy levels amongst these women and how that effects their level of awareness towards their Constitutional rights. It can be deduced that between being a 'good' woman and a 'cultural deviant' who goes out of her home and is vocal about matters affecting the society, these women are most likely to choose being a 'good women' who is socially accepted within the society. Some rural women even believe that gender equality only applies to urban women, not rural women (Rudwick & Shange, 2011: 70).

Moreover, the majority of rural Zulu speaking people maintain a patriarchal and primordially perceived cultural system which, in the context of *'hlonipha'* or respect, involves disempowering women (Rudwick & Shange, 2011: 66 and Sihlali, 2018:87). This concept is predominantly used to dictate acceptable behaviour for women and how wives, especially young wives, are meant to behave around their husbands and other male relatives of husbands. This ranges from their control of posture, gesture, avoidance of eye contact with male relatives, not speaking to them directly and avoidance of calling out certain names. (Rudwick & Shange, 2011: 68). This impact on rural women's ability to participate fully in community meetings as an expression of their views is already restricted by the notion of *'hlonipha'*. There are certain words they cannot use and might struggle to clearly articulate their views, especially when such meetings are conducted by a male person.

In the Zulu tradition, the man remains the head and the leader of the household. This implies that his views surpass any other views and his word is to be respected; in the process, the wife's views are oppressed or blatantly disregarded. In the study conducted in one of the rural areas of Kwa-Zulu Natal (Umsinga), Bhengu (2010: 8) contended that some women admitted that within their households there is still much oppression and even when they make suggestions, husbands easily disregards them, even if what they are suggesting is going to

work. This, yet again, impacts on confidence when interacting with the outside world, in the form of community meetings, they already believe that their views are not going to be considered as they have been socialised to believe that a man's view is the most valid and worthy of consideration to inform decisions.

Bhengu (2010: 8) argues that, for decades, these factors have reserved rural women's space to be in the household, while men take part in activities happening outside the home. This is further witnessed through normalised migration of rural men to cities in search of employment, while leaving rural women or wives behind to care for the children (Kongolo & Bamgose, 2002: 84). Despite this, Williamson & Sithole (2006: 13) is of the view that there has been a diminishing significance of *amakhosi* or traditional leaders which is indicative of a new space for rural women in the province to be able to seek their agency.

Even though there is such evidence that rural women in Kwa-Zulu Natal have been able to penetrate the space of development agenda to have their voice heard and decentralised government have taken effect to ensure that public participation also become a reality for rural women, they continue to face challenges in maximising their participation (Mogotlane, Hazel & Mthembu, 2007: 37; Shange, 2014: 107; Jili & Masuku, 2017: 550). Shange (2014: 117) conducted a study on rural women participation in development in Msinga, one of the rural areas in Kwa-Zulu Natal, and found that the women's social structure is hardly integrated to the development spectrum as migration of men to big cities for job opportunities leaves them with the burden of taking care of children and the household at large. This leaves rural women with little or no time to take part in any activities that are taking place outside their homes, including participation in development. Due to this factor, rural women hardly find time to attend meetings where development is discussed and the authorities fail to accommodate this whenever community meetings are held (Shange, 2014: 118). Moreover, another study conducted with women in Umlalazi (north coast of Kwa-Zulu Natal) on rural women's access to land, also found that even in instances where women do attend community meetings, there was little evidence that their inputs actually contribute or informed decision-making (Jili & Masuku, 2017: 551). This was also observed in Chapter Two, where such participation of rural women in development was only seen as token or phony, with no significant contribution.

In the absence of active women participation in the development arena, one would then rest on the fact that agency of women organisations occupy that space in ensuring that rural women's interests and views are heard. Unfortunately, three studies conducted in the Nkandla and u-Msinga area respectively concluded that there are also not enough women organisations to advocate for the rights of rural women and, even in cases where they are present, their voice is very minimal (Williamson & Sithole, 2006: 9; Sharaunga, Mudhara & Wale, 2013: 137; Shange, 2014: 118). These studies reveal that, despite governments intervention of ensuring the citizenry voice in the development space in South Africa, through the introduction of IDP's and decentralised governance, women in the rural areas of Kwa-Zulu Natal are still, to a certain extent, not fully represented in this space due to social factors that shape their realities.

3.4. Research setting or area

Although some studies have been conducted on rural women participation in KZN, such as '*Neglecting the 'majority': an overview of the economic plight of young females in KwaZulu-Natal*' by Isike & Uzodike (2011), '*Integration of indigenous knowledge and skills for the development of rural women in Kwa-Zulu Natal*' by Shange (2014), '*Access to Land and Women's Participation in Small-Scale Farming at uMlalazi Local Municipality*' by Jili & Masuku (2017) and others, no study has been conducted in Bergville. Bergville, established in 1897, is a communal rural area situated in the Northern part of the Kwa-Zulu Natal province, South Africa surrounded by a number of small villages. The area is under three Chieftaincies or traditional authorities; ama-Zizi, ama-Ngwane and ama-Swazi, with the Ama-Ngwane traditional authority being the largest amongst the three (Mazibuko, 2010: 4). All three traditional authorities are represented in this study, as each authority has a ward participating. The Bergville area falls under Okhahlamba Local Municipality, hence the study interchangeably uses the term Bergville or Okhahlamba Local Municipality, which reports to the bigger umbrella of u-Thukela District. U-Thukela is one of the ten district municipalities in the Kwa-Zulu Natal province which were established in the year 2000, during the turnaround process of local government in the country. One major spatial feature that is the pride of Bergville is its beautiful mountains commonly referred to as Drakensberg Mountains, which are recognised as a heritage site. These are the highest mountains in Southern Africa with peaks that rise to 3,482 metres in height (Natural World Safaris, 2010).

These mountains serve as a natural boarder between the Kwa-Zulu Natal province and the Kingdom of Lesotho.
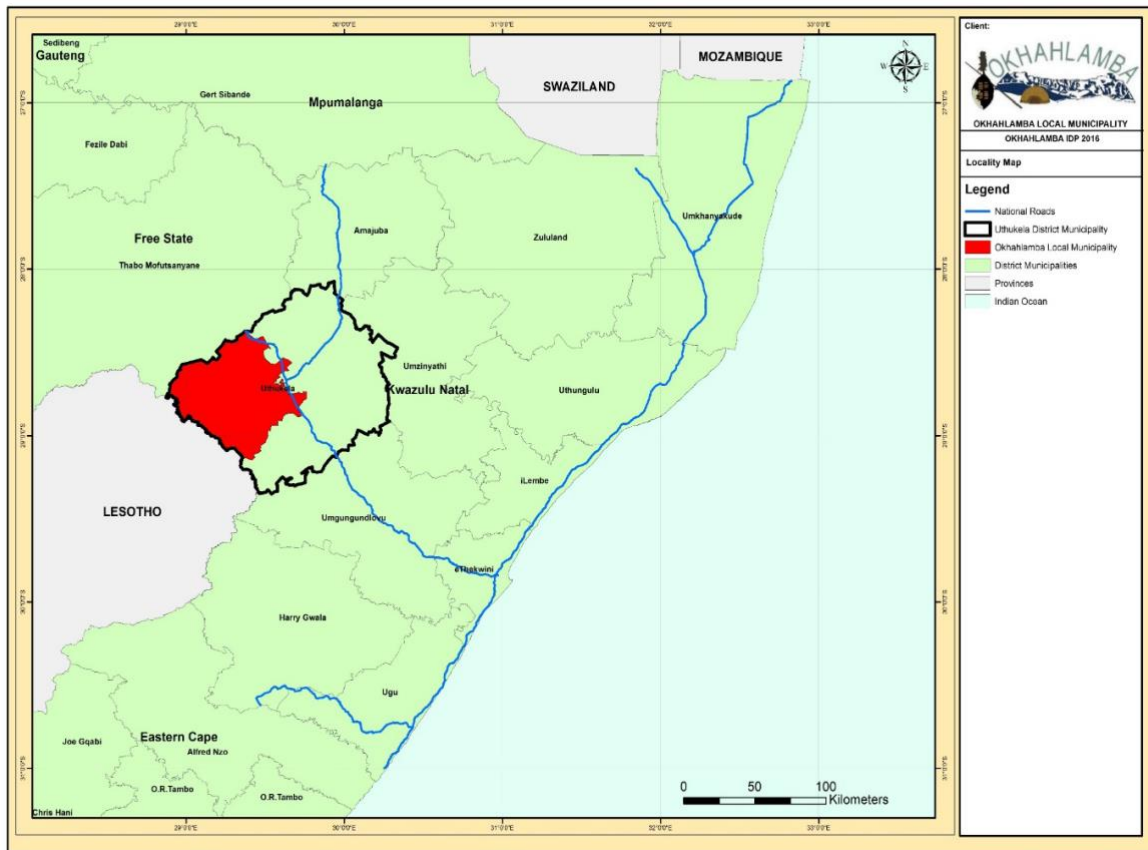
Figure 1: Locality of Okhahlamba Local Municipality in Kwa-Zulu Natal

(Source: Okhahlamba Local Municipality Integrated Developmnet Plan 2017/18).

The total population in the area fluctuates as people migrate to bigger cities in search for better job opportunities. According to the Municipality's IDP 2017/18, there was population growth experienced, as the population increased to 135 132 in 2017 as compared to 132 068 in 2011 and this growth accounted for a 1.2% growth rate which could be a result of improved infrastructure and improved service delivery within the area (Okhahlamba Local Municipality IDP, 2017/2018). Out of the total population of 135 132, 53% is female and out of the total number of 29 510 households, 53% of them are headed by females (Stats SA, Community Survey 2016: 18). The Municipality's 2017/18 IDP further indicates that the community is characterised by high levels of poverty as an overwhelming 43% of the population does not receive any form of income, whilst 28% earn between R1-R400 per month and 11% earn between R801-R1600 per month (Stats SA, Community Survey 2016:

11). As the majority within the community, women are likely to be the most affected group by these conditions and any form of government intervention or development is their main, if not only hope to escape poverty.

This study examined the participation of women in three projects which have been implemented within the municipality out of a total of fifteen (15) wards; projects details are as follows:

- ***Housing and toilets development project (Dukuza Housing project, 2014/15 financial year) – Ward 4***

The housing development project was mainly concerned with fulfilling the government's mandate of ensuring that communities are provided with basic services, such as shelter, water, and sanitation services. In this instance, the community was provided with houses and toilets. It was established that the area is characterised by high rates of unemployment, with women being a majority in the community, as most men migrate to urban areas for job opportunities and also a bulk of households in the area are female-headed. Hence, it was imperative for the study to understand the extent of women participation as main beneficiaries from conceptualisation to the implementation of such a project.

The budget for this project was R2 600 000 in total and commenced construction in the year 2016, with the completion date being 2018 (Okhahlamba Local Municipality Annual Report 2017/18). The project scope was 500 units, but while in progress it was discovered that other beneficiaries were not correctly captured and there was an increasing number of households which were not budgeted for (Okhahlamba Local Municipality Annual Report 2017/18). This affected the project budget and the delivery timeline. To accommodate this and counter the challenge, the municipality had to request the Department of Human Settlements for a project scope extension by sixty seven (67) units, in order to accommodate beneficiaries that were not captured (Okhahlamba Local Municipality Annual Report 2017/18). Moreover, the initial project plan had to be revised to include the newly added households. The project was concluded with the total of five hundred and sixty seven (567) houses constructed, transferred and successfully handed over to the rightful owners.

- Road infrastructural development (Mnceleni Gravel road construction project, 2016/17 financial year) – Ward 10

This project was the construction of a gravel road. It was chosen for the study mainly because it focused on improving community infrastructure and, ultimately, meant to benefit the population at large. As the majority in the community, it was imperative to assess women participation in the project. As per the Municipality's Key Performance Area, service delivery on road construction is one of the key elements on its overall performance as it directly impacts the community and the community's initiative. Such projects determine the municipality's capability to deliver services to its people, as per their suggestions.

The municipality's annual report for the financial year 2017/18 indicated that the initial budget for the construction of this gravel road in Ward 10 was R2 500 000, but upon completion the total spend amounted to R2 014 000 (Okhahlamba Local Municipality Annual Report 2017/18). Despite having spent less than what was initially budgeted, there were challenges encountered along the way. Major challenges included availability of suitable material for re-gravelling of the roads, as the commercial farmers are not prepared to have burrow pits on their properties, failure by ward councillors to correctly inform the community members about the project which resulted in some community members questioning the relevancy and urgency of constructing the chosen road, while there are others which are believed to be in a lesser state (Okhahlamba Local Municipality Annual Report 2017/18). Lack of effective communication between the ward councillors and the community members negatively affected public participation, and its core values, which are to ensure that developments directly respond to the needs of the community. The municipality, however, committed to implement suitable mitigation processes to ensure that such challenges are eliminated moving forward.

- Improvement of community facilities (Rookdale Community Hall, 2015/16 financial year).

This was an umbrella project mainly concerned with building of community halls, crèches and the fresh produce market. This study focused on the community hall which was built for the Rookdale community. Similarly, this was meant to benefit the community at large through the hosting of different events and holding of meetings. This project was approved and budgeted for R1 022 993 and no adjustments were made; moreover, the community hall was completed within the agreed timeframe. The municipality's performance report of services rated this project at three (3) which indicates that the appointed service provider in this instance fully met the standards expected in all areas (Okhahlamba Local Municipality Annual Report 2017/18).

3.5. Qualitative research design and methods

Babbie & Mouton (2001: 74) describe research design as a plan or blueprint of how the researcher conducts an inquiry to a designated problem. This study employed the qualitative research design method. In order to gain an understanding of the qualitative research method, it is necessary to provide Nieuwenhuis & Smit's explanation of what the method entails. According to Nieuwenhuis & Smit (2012: 126), "qualitative research is concerned with understanding various processes and aspects which tend to influence behavioral patterns". This definition of qualitative research fits this study as it aimed to understand, rather than merely explain, factors that potentially affect and, consequently, limit women participation in development in the rural areas of Bergville. The research was carried out to uncover the experiences of women, in regards to being afforded an opportunity to form part of the public participation process, as far as development in their area is concerned.

Nieuwenhuis & Smit (2012: 126) extend their explanation and cite that this method seeks to narrate the experiences of those studied as seen through their eyes, as they occur in their natural settings. In support of this view, Bless, Higson-Smith & Sithole (2013: 16) and Bryman (2001: 49) stated this point further by outlining that the qualitative approach focuses on how the subjects views a particular phenomenon or issue. This is an instrumental reason for which the qualitative methodology was chosen for the study, as it aimed to deeply understand and describe the nature of women participation in development projects in Okhahlamba Municipality, through gathering data from the women firsthand who are involved in the public participation process in the area. This enabled the participants to describe the reality of their level of involvement and participation in development interventions in all the three wards selected for the study at Okhahlamba Municipality. Moreover, municipal employees and ward committee members were able to describe their experiences and views on women participation in the area and the research established the extent of functionality of ward committees and how this effects public participation, especially that of women. Lapan *et al.* (2012: 25) further state that within qualitative research, less emphasis is placed on uprooting cause and effect, and results are rarely generalized to the larger population beyond the original research setting. Hence, the findings from this study cannot be generalized to all rural women in South Africa, as these were only true and valid for women at the Okhahlamba Municipality based on their experiences.

The use of qualitative method also ensures that researchers study events as they occur in their natural settings and attempt to make sense of the phenomena, in terms of the meaning

participants attach to them. In this study, the researcher formed part of random community meetings prior to a focus group session with women, where important aspects were noted during the interaction within the meeting which was later verified with the participants during the focus group session. While doing this, the researcher was able to act as an insider to observe the pattern of participation between male and female members of the community. This method enriched and supported the findings gathered during focus groups as the researcher was able to collect additional data by observing the behaviour and patterns of participation amongst women in these meetings and further note the effectiveness of meeting facilitation in encouraging active involvement of women in these kinds of community seating's.

Lapan *et al.* (2012: 37) supports this notion and highlighted that this method is useful when researchers wants to study day-to-day respondent interactions and the meaning attached thereof. This assisted in observing the behaviour of the municipal officials in facilitating community participation. Moreover, it has been proven in previous studies conducted on the topic, that qualitative methodology is suitable when investigating participation in development projects as it allows the participants to describe their surroundings as they understand them and for the researcher to interpret this information in a more descriptive manner (Mouton, 1996: 34).

3.5.1. Pilot study

Before the researcher could begin with the data collection process, a pilot study had to be conducted, in order to gauge if the participants were a suitable audience in providing relevant data which would meet the set objectives of the study. A pilot study is imperative whether in a qualitative or quantitative study, in order to determine if the relevant data can be obtained from the participants (Strydom & Delport, 2011: 394). A pilot study was commissioned to check if the targeted population understood the key concepts and would be able to give relevant answers to accurately answer the research question. The study was piloted with twelve (12) random women in the area, three (03) municipal employees and seven (07) ward committee members. Factors covered by the pilot study were as follows:

- Respondent's understanding of the key term 'participation';
- Respondent's understanding of value for public inputs and participation in development matters in the area;

- Participant's understanding of participatory democracy; and
- To establish a relationship with the participants, both the rural women and the municipal officials.

Outcomes from this technique gave the researcher a green light to proceed with the study, as good relationships were established with the participants and an indication was given that participants had relevant information that could enrich the findings of the study.

3.5.2. Data gathering techniques

Analysed data had to be collected following the correct research protocols in order to ensure validity and reliability of the findings. Below is an outline of different techniques and methods used in gathering data from all the participants.

3.5.2.1. Non-scheduled structured interviews'

The first technique used in this study was 'non-scheduled structured interviews' which 'consists of asking participants to comment on broadly defined issues' (Bless *et al.* 2013: 193). This technique was used during the pilot phase of the study which was conducted prior to the study's official commencement, in order to check if the targeted participants understood key concepts and would be able to give relevant answers to accurately respond to the research question. In summary, the questions were drawn prior to the interviews but the researcher was at liberty to formulate additional questions during the process, driven by the responses from participants. This technique was used with all the participants; women, municipal officials and ward committee members, and the questions were structured around understanding women participation in development projects and its value towards sustainable development in the area.

3.5.2.2. In-depth semi-structured interview

Following the use of the qualitative research method, the in-depth semi-structured interview was found suitable as the method of data collection for this study to be used with all participants. According to Ritchie (2009: 58), in-depth or unstructured interviews are considered a main qualitative research method when collecting data. Lapan *et al*. (2012: 78) further state that semi-structured interviews are used when the researcher wants to identify commonalities and differences across individual participants, on one or more topics, and to further identify intragroup differences in expressions. Given the research topic for this study,

which also aimed to identify and explain different experiences of rural women in a participatory democracy, semi-structured interviews were found to be a suitable method of data collection.

According to Ritchie (2009: 67), a good feature of using interviews as a method of data collection is that the researcher can use a range of other techniques to probe for more information or explanations behind the respondent's initial answers. In this sense, the researcher engaged and remained interactive with the participants and was able to get more insight from them on one-on-one basis. This was particularly relevant within this study as the literature indicated that most rural areas are characterised by patriarchal conditions and women still find it difficult to express their views freely in public spaces. With women participants, these interviews were conducted in the comfort of their homes, whereas in the case of municipal officials and ward committee members, the interviews were conducted at the municipal offices. The researcher asked questions and noted down participants responses, while recording the entire interview session for backup and verification purposes. Even though some participants were shy to express themselves freely while engaging with the researcher, the majority was able to engage freely during these in the absence of men whom they might be intimidated amongst.

In the semi-structured interview method, three sets of separate standard questionnaires (for women, officials from the municipality and ward committee members) were used as data gathering instruments for all participants. According to Lewis (2009: 32), face-to-face interviews are mostly appropriate when the study is conducted amongst the illiterate community. Okhahlamba Municipality is located in the rural areas and some of the participants were elderly women who could not read and write. Face-to-face interviews were also appropriate as the researcher explored fully all the factors that underpinned the participants' answers.

3.5.2.3. Focus group discussions

Another method of data collection used in qualitative studies that was utilised in this research was focus group discussions or field research. According to Babbie & Mouton (2008: 292), focus groups save time and 'tend to allow space in which people may get together and create meaning among themselves rather than individually'. In this study, this technique was mostly useful with women participants, as the literature indicated that, in most cases, women in rural

areas are still not open to voice out their opinions in the public spheres. The focus group only consisted of women, hence, this method assisted in shaping their thinking and enabled them to freely express themselves. Babbie & Mouton (2008: 292) further iterates that using a focus group helps in uncovering information a researcher would not be able to access through other methods. Due to traditional setting of the rural communities, the researcher struggled to have some women express themselves entirely during the individual interview sessions, focus group sessions then assisted in gathering more information, to verify information collected during individual interviews and also the researcher's observations.

This technique was used with the twenty four (24) females from the sample broken down in three (03) smaller groups, as Babbie & Mouton (2008: 292) and Neuman (2014: 310) advise that researchers need to bear in mind the size of the group as it might be a challenge to facilitate larger groups. Smaller groups were easy to achieve within this study as women were from three different wards. Another focus group discussion was held with ward committee members to enable them to share diverse experiences, as they were from different wards. All these sessions were conducted with the purpose of achieving the study objectives, as a result the researcher guided the discussions to ensure that relevant information was obtained.

3.5.2.4. Participant observation

Another technique used for data collection in the study was participant observation which 'allowed the researcher to be an insider and offer deeper insight into the research problem since she observed the confidence of participants and was able to note their experiences and interaction without disturbing their behaviour', (Bless *et al.* 2013: 188). The researcher was clear about aspects aimed to observe. Therefore, the types of observable data for this study was; 'expressive movement (eye movements, facial expressions, bodily movements or posture), language behaviour and time duration (how long the people being observed engage in what they were doing)', (Babbie & Mouton, 2008: 293). It emerged that most female members of the community being studied were not as expressive when making inputs in community meetings as compared to male members. Furthermore, when making inputs, they were not engaging fully on their points in such a way that, at times, even important points did not receive attention they deserved due to lack of clarity. In this way the researcher was able to determine women's freedom of expression during community meetings and whether their inputs during such meeting were valued. Using this data gathering procedure, a lack of confidence in expressing views was detected amongst women, hence their duration of engagement for providing input was relatively short.

3.5.2.5. Document analyses

Document analyses were used to obtain additional information on the following three projects that the study focused on:

- Housing and toilets development project;

- Road infrastructural development; and

- Improvement of community facilities.

The researcher utilised documents, such as IDP's, Okhahlamba Municipality's annual reports and Strategic Framework to extract crucial information regarding the mentioned projects.

3.5.3. Population

Although one would like to study the entire population, in order to be more concise and provide a detailed picture regarding a specific phenomenon, qualitative research only uses smaller samples (Bless *et al.* 2013: 179). From a larger pool of women in Okhahlamba Municipality, whom amount to 53% of the total population (Okhahlamba Local Municipality IDP 2017/18), the target population was women at Dukuza, Mnceleni and Rookdale area who have been or are still part of the identified development projects that took place in these areas. The interviews were conducted face-to-face with participants either at their homes or public spheres post-community meeting. However, it is worth stating that communicating with this pool of participants was challenging, as they were either rushing home straight after community meetings or when at home they were always engaged in household chores. Women have been chosen for this study because studies indicate that despite the attainment of democracy, which prescribes everyone the right to participation, rural women are still not afforded the same opportunity to participate meaningfully in development initiatives in their areas due to different reasons cited previously.

Moreover, another pool of cases was cited for this study from the government, specifically the Okhahlamba Municipal officials who are responsible for facilitating the process of community participation or involvement in development matters. This ensured that the researcher was able to reveal the employees understanding of public participation; how they ensure that participation methods used enable effective and meaningful contribution by target beneficiaries in development initiatives, challenges encountered in the process of participation and their views on how community participation could be improved or enhanced to ensure inclusivity. A challenge encountered with this pool of participants was that due to

the nature of their work, which necessitates that they are out of the office often, their questionnaires had to be emailed and filled in within their own timeframe. However, follow up face-to-face interviews were arranged to clarify certain matters and probe for further information.

Additionally, ward committee members also formed an important component of the target population, as the literature clearly stated the role they are meant to play in ensuring that community members have a view in development initiatives taking place in their areas of residence.

3.5.4. Sampling technique

Sample size for the study was relatively small, as per the criteria for qualitative research approach, hence the sampling technique chosen was one which was suitable for a smaller sample. According to Babbie & Mouton (2001: 166) "social research is often conducted in situations where the choice of probability samples used in large scale surveys is quite limited". For this reason, qualitative researchers use non-probability sampling (Neuman, 2014: 167). Based on the small sample size for the study and the study's qualitative nature, a non-probability sampling method was used. This sampling method allowed the researcher to purposefully select participants with relevant information which best helped to understand the problem (Lewis, 2009: 7). Literature has shown that rural women face various predicaments in taking part in public participation, such as house chores and other gender roles assigned to them as women (Tau, 2013: 155; Moyo, 2014: 5994), in order to understand this from Okhahlamba Municipality's perspective, it was best to sample women.

With regard to the sample size for the study, there was no predetermined number of participants due to the fact that in qualitative research "a sample is considered to be adequate if it allows all possibilities or aspects of the researched phenomenon to be identified", (Bless *et al.* 2013: 164). A sample size was determined at a saturation point by the researcher during data collection when adding more participants proved not to produce any new or fresh information. Neuman (2014: 167) further stated that the use of non-probability sampling in qualitative research is proof enough that researchers using this approach rarely determine the sample size in advance. The specific type of non-probability sampling used was purposive sampling which allowed the researcher an opportunity to intentionally select participants whom were able to provide rich and valuable information to answer the research questions.

The literature demonstrated that some women in rural areas are still not open to voicing out their views anywhere outside their homes, the selected type of sampling then ensured that the researcher eliminated the types of participants who held back and were not willing to give out the information, for any particular reason, to enrich the findings of the study. The researcher did incur such cases during data collection, this is reflected on in the findings chapter.

Despite this, in qualitative research a sample is hardly predetermined, ideally the researcher would aim that the total number of women to participate in the study is thirty (30) females, being 18 years of age and above. The achieved sample for this pool of participants was twenty four (24) participants due to reaching the saturation point. All three selected projects were represented in the sample. The planned sample size of municipality officials was ten (10), however only four (4) officials participated. This was due to the municipality only have five officials working with public participation. On the other hand, a planned sample of ten (10) participants from ward committee members was reached. The final total sample size for the study was thirty eight (38) participants. The researcher chose these participants as females are the majority in the community and therefore, the major beneficiaries of any development intervention, whilst the municipal officials serve as project administrators and the ward committee members are mainly tasked with ensuring that community participation does take place prior to any development project.

This sample was carefully selected using purposive sampling, another type of non-probability sampling, to ensure that female ward committee members do not form part of the twenty four (24) female community members who participated in the study. Unfortunately, with the selection of municipal officials, the researcher was not at liberty to select participants as it depended on the municipality's workforce. Nevertheless, regardless of the absence of choice from the side of the researcher; professionalism from these officials was demonstrated and provided true reflection of events. Below is the table on how the sample was broken down and the research technique used during data collection with each group of participants.

Table 2: Sample breakdown and research techniques

Participant	Number of participants	Qualitative research technique	Rationale
Females from the general community	24	Non-scheduled structured interviews (pilot study)	To establish the interaction and relationship with participants. To establish the community's broader understanding of community participation
		Semi-structured interviews	To identify and explain different experiences of women in Bergville as far as participation in development is concerned.
		Participant observation	To determine women's level of freedom of expression during community meetings and if their inputs are taken into consideration at all.
		Focus group discussions	To give female participants a platform to freely express themselves in a group setting and observe as they shape each other's ideas during engagements.
Ward committee members	10	Non-scheduled structured interviews (pilot study)	To establish the interaction and relationship with participants.
		Semi-structured interviews	To obtain first-hand information from the ward

			committee members, in terms of existing challenges as far as their functioning is concerned and how it affects public participation.
		Focus group discussions	To get diverse views and experiences of ward committee members in mobilising women to take part in public participation and allow them to share different experiences from their respective wards.
Municipal officials	04	Non-scheduled structured interviews	To establish the interaction and relationship with participants.
		Semi-structured interviews	To obtain first-hand information from municipal officials, in terms of challenges encountered in involving women in development initiatives and different mechanisms in place to promote women involvement in these interventions.
		Document analyses	Data gathered from municipal officials was further supplemented by document analyses such as annual reports, IDP's and the municipality's strategic

			framework.

The table above clearly articulates that the sample was inclusive of women, ward committee members and municipal officials from Okhahlamba Municipality from three wards, as discussed previously.

3.5.5. Data analysis strategies

Collected data was analysed using thematic analyses, or coding, as the main tool when analysing qualitative data. This allowed for classification or identification of themes or patterns of collected data into categories that were relevant in responding to the research question (Kawulich & Holland, 2012: 231; Leedy & Ormrod, 2015: 310). The general themes identified are discussed in detail under Chapter Four, where data is analysed. According to Lapan *et al.* (2012: 41), qualitative research further triangulates different types of data, comparing and contrasting results to find and explain commonalities and differences. In this study, this method assisted the researcher to examine how responses from different participants complement each other, in order to the deepen understanding of the topic. Additionally, findings are presented in tables and graphs in Chapter Four, where necessary, for simplicity and to clearly demonstrate patterns that emerged. Document analyses, in terms of project reports and minutes from the previous community meetings, were also used to obtain additional information which helped to enrich the findings of the study.

3.5.6. Limitation of qualitative method

While qualitative methodology was chosen as a suitable method to be utilised in conducting this study, it does have weaknesses which the researcher had to guard against, as not to compromise the credibility of findings. According to Leedy & Ormrod (2015: 278), 'one strength of qualitative methods is that through participant observation, the researcher might observe other *facts* about the subjects' interactions that a standardised quantitative measurement instrument would never be able to uncover'. This implies that the researcher becomes a crucial instrument in the research process through observations made during data collection. However, this can become a weakness for this method as the 'human mind' can

easily be biased due to its preconceived theories and expectations (Nieuwenhuis & Smit 2012: 138; Leedy & Ormrod 2015: 278). Such bias of the instrument or qualitative researcher may negatively affect the quality of data gathered. Measures to ensure validity and reliability of the findings were in place to guard against bias for the study at hand, these are discussed in detail under 3.5.7 below.

In addition, another weakness is that qualitative researchers are rarely concerned with accurate measurement of the findings and, as a result, the researcher is not able to authenticate or validate the results objectively against the scenarios provided by the participants during data collection (Nieuwenhuis & Smit 2012: 137). This leaves qualitative researchers with less 'control' over the content of the findings while the participants are left with more control. Qualitative researchers then cannot measure the reliability of participants' responses, hence they are more concerned with credibility and trustworthiness of participants. The section below highlights how this qualitative study ensured credibility of the findings, since it was not able to measure accurate validity.

3.5.7. Measures for validity and reliability

After having identified and formulated a clear research problem, and further selected a research method for the study, researchers then must specify what measures would be put in place to ensure the quality of the findings emanating from the study, regardless of the weaknesses outlined above (Bless *et al.*, 2013: 221). In the realm of social sciences, this refers to the concept of validity and reliability, concepts which have distinctive characteristics depending on the research design for a particular study. In contrast to quantitative studies, when ensuring validity and reliability is invested in **trustworthiness**, divided into different components which can be given to the research process and the findings (Neuman, 2014: 144).

The first component to be used in the study to ensure trustworthiness of the findings is **dependability or consistency,** through the use of a standard questionnaire during the interviews with the participants in order to maintain consistent observations throughout data collection process. According to Neuman (2013: 145) this is one of the techniques used by qualitative researchers to ensure reliability, as they advocate mainly for consistency in how they make observations overtime. As indicated previously, the researcher used participant observation during community meetings to identify the pattern of women participation.

Neuman (2013: 145) further states that in pursuit of reliability, qualitative researchers emphasise the value added to data collected due to flowing interaction between the researcher and the respondent. The use of non-scheduled structured interview during the pilot study and participant observation ensured that such interactions and relationships are developed between the participants and the researcher. Additionally, the researcher did not encounter any challenges developing these deeper relationships with the participants as certain characteristics are shared between researcher; originally from Okhahlamba Municipality, Zulu speaking and female, and respondent.

Even though the researcher may share certain social factors with the participants which enabled relationships to develop, through education the researcher could have acquired a different social class from that of women who are still based in the area and never been exposed to much advanced education levels. It is crucial, therefore, that the researcher engages in reflexivity — a reflexive stance in which biases or prejudices are brought to the forefront and analysed, in order to understand the researchers' influences on the project that will enable them to make a decision of the appropriateness of their influence (Waterman, 1998: 23). The researcher was aware of personal bias as a woman of a different social class, even though originally from the area. This guarded the researcher against possible wrongful interpretation of data and ensured the objectivity of the study.

On the other hand, qualitative researchers are more concerned with authenticity, credibility and transferability of the findings as far as validity in concerned (Neuman, 2013: 146). As Babbie & Mouton (2001: 271) emphasise the importance of adopting the insider's perspective in qualitative research, in order to generate truthful and legitimate findings, the researcher focused on providing a fair, honest and balanced account of how women in Okhahlamba Municipality understand the importance of their participation or involvement in development intervention, or whether they feel participatory democracy benefits them in this manner. This was done through **'participant validation or member checks'** by verifying the researcher's understanding of observations made with those observed or the participants (Nieuwenhuis & Smit 2012: 138). An element of bias is identified as one of the weaknesses for qualitative research and this strategy ensured that it does not compromise the findings or tamper with the outcomes.

Leedy & Ormrod (2015: 279) further state that to avoid potential contradicting observations, qualitative researchers must **spend considerable time on site**, as short site visits are unlikely

to yield quality data. This required the researcher to spend a considerable amount of time in the field and be part of different community meetings to observe, overtime, women participation in these meetings, rather than relying on few encounters and making conclusions based on limited interactions. The researcher aims to contribute to a better understanding of women's participation in development initiatives in the rural areas of Bergville.

3.5.8. Ethical considerations

To ensure that participants feel secure and willing to participate in this research, it was necessary to follow certain ethical considerations, with these considerations communicated to the participants themselves. Given that some of the participants were sceptical of sharing information with an outsider, perhaps fearing that the researcher might use it against them, it was necessary to communicate to the participants about the confidentiality of any information that they will provide for this research. More so, the participants were also made aware of the fact that if they wish to remain anonymous, they could do so freely and were assured that data collected from the interviews was only for academic purposes.

General objectives of the study were communicated to the participants to allow them to have a clear understanding of the study. In this case, participants were made aware that the main objective of the study was to evaluate their participation or involvement throughout the development initiatives in their ward. All these factors were entailed in a consent form, (attached as annexure D), that all participants signed before their participation.

3.5.9 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed in detail, the methods used to understand rural women participation in development projects in the context of rural Bergville within Okhahlamba Local Municipality, as well as the historical context of the area and other relevant issues faced by women in rural KZN. The historical context covered details development dynamics in South Africa and further focuses on rural women participation within these interventions in the context of Kwa-Zulu Natal province. Research setting provides the reader with a thorough understanding of the rural Bergville and the background of the three development projects selected for the study. The use of qualitative research methods ensured that deeper

understanding of women participation in development within the municipality was obtained from women themselves, ward committee members, as well as from the municipal officials. As much as semi-structured interviews served as a vital tool in collecting data from all participants, focus group sessions and participant observation were equally important to allow for freedom of expression for those participants who could not express themselves during individual interviews. Despite limitations of qualitative methods that could have compromised the quality of the findings, measures for validity and reliability were in place to ensure objectivity of findings. Chapter Four below discusses the findings that emerged from the study.

CHAPTER 4

Presentation of Findings

4.1. Introduction

The previous chapters have provided the basis for this study, in terms of the problem statement, aims and objectives, previous literature and how it was conducted, as well as methods of used for collecting data with an intention to meet the set objectives. Specifically, Chapter Three outlined the historical context and research design, prepared a foundation for this chapter and gave a comprehensive description of Kwa-Zulu Natal as a province and some of its commonly known factors, as well as the dynamics and how they affect women participation in development. It further provided necessary details on the research setting, in order to enable the reader to relate better to the research findings presented in this chapter. Chapter Four, therefore, presents the empirical findings that were collected using data collection methods described previously. It is, however, important at this stage to allude to the research's rationale and objectives, as the findings directly respond to these and ultimately answer the research questions. The research aimed to assess rural women meaningful participation or involvement in development interventions with the research area being Okhahlamba Local Municipality, located in the Northern part of Kwa-Zulu Natal, Bergville. This chapter will elaborate more on how collected data responded to research questions and set objectives. Chapter Four begins by presenting demographics of the participants followed by discussion of findings. Due to research being qualitative in nature, analyses and interpretation of results are descriptive and supported by frequency figures and graphs where necessary.

4.2. Demographic information

Participants' demographic information provides necessary data regarding participants of the study, such as the total number of participants, age, gender, marital status, and education. These are important factors or variables in describing patterns as provided by participants during data collection. For instance, in this study a women's marital status may be used to make a differentiation in their ability to attend community meetings.

4.2.1. Total number of participants
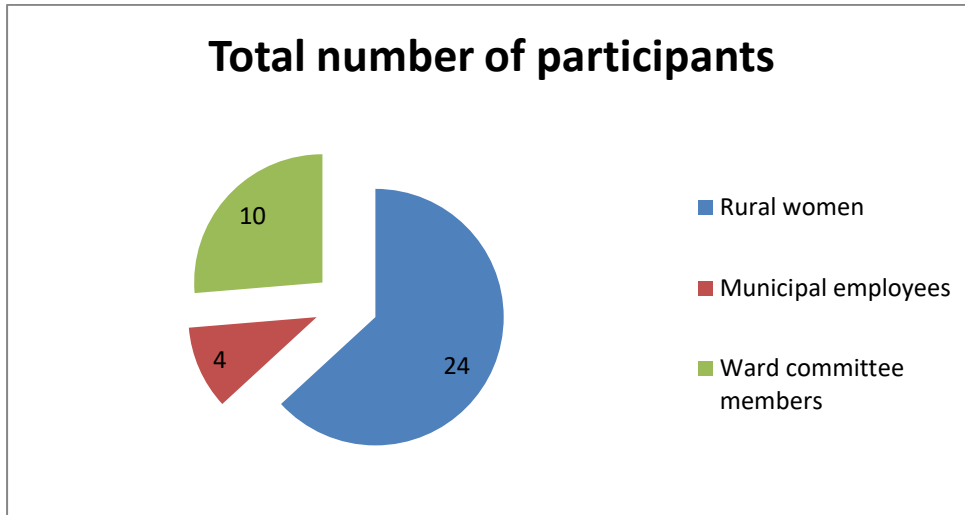
Figure 2: Total number of participants

The figure above shows the total number of participants in the study from all the three categories. In total, the participants were thirty eight (38) with the majority, 24 of them, being women spread across the three wards. Another category of participants was the municipal employees, of whom there were four, and ward committee members, of which there were ten (10). Amongst these participants, municipal employees were key informants as they were the ones who were better positioned to provide the researcher with additional information pertaining to the chosen projects, locate ward committee members and direct the researcher as to the location and demarcation of wards.

4.2.2. Participants per project
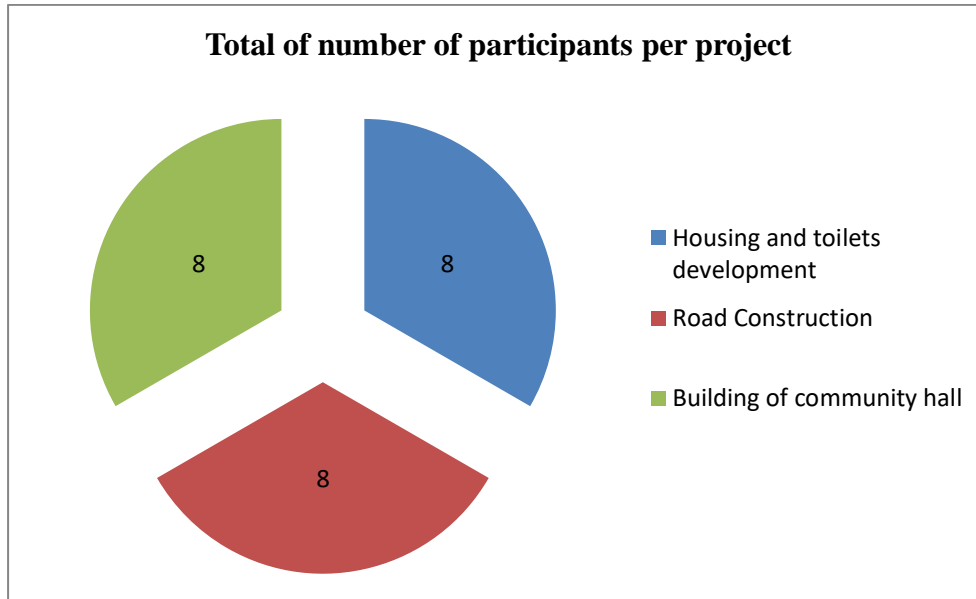
Figure 3: Participants per project

The study drew participants from three different projects that have been implemented at the Okhahlamba Local Municipality, as demonstrated in the above figure, namely, housing and toilet development, road construction, and building of community hall. There were eight (08) participants from each project and in total this amounted to twenty four (24) in the rural women category, as shown in Figure 2.

4.2.2. Participants' age

Age

- 18 - 25 years
- 26 - 35 years
- 36 - 45 years
- 46 years & above

8.3%
16.6%
25.0%
50.0%
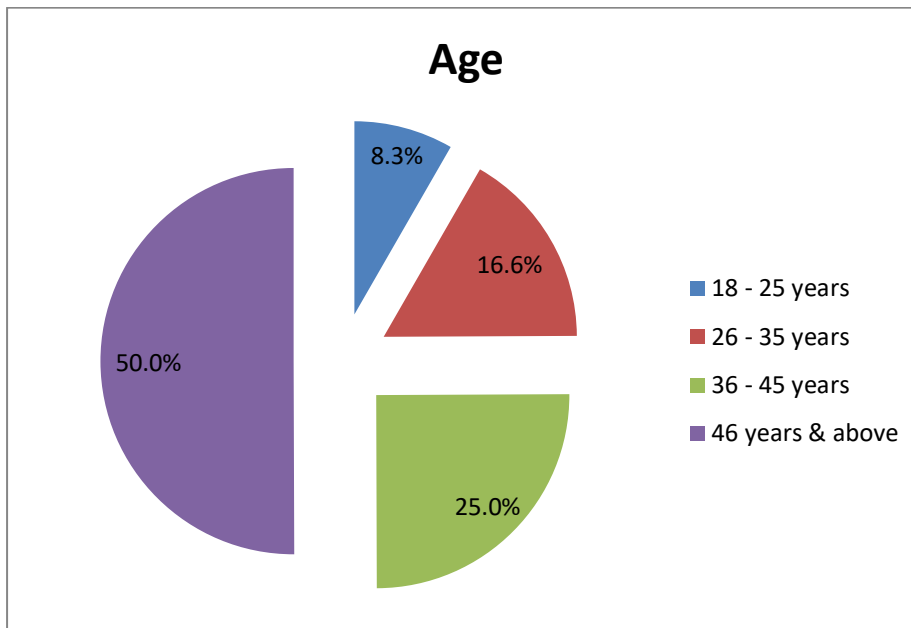
Figure 4: Participants age

Figure 4 above depicts that out of the total of twenty four women from the community who participated, an overwhelming majority of twelve women, half of the sample (50%) who participated in the research study were 46 years of age and above, followed by those who were between the ages of 36 years to 45 years, (25%) who totalled to six women. In South Africa, one is classified as 'youth' until they reach the age of 35 years, women who indicated that they fall within this category were only four, 16,6% of the sample, and two (8,3%) fell in the category of 26-35 years and 18-25 years, respectively. The age profile of participants is not in line with what was depicted in the Municipality's 2017/18 Integrated Development Plan. The 2017/18 IDP stated that out of the total population of 135 132, the majority, 56% of the population, are those ranging between the ages of 15 to 35 years, whom are classified as youth (Okhahlamba Local Municipality 2017/18 Integrated Development Plan, 2017: 17). This claim by the municipality's IDP can easily lead one to assume that the majority of participants in this study would be the youth, which proved untrue. From these statistics, it can be deduced that there is a possibility that while Okhahlamba Local Municipality is characterised by a large youthful population, the youth might still be reluctant to participate in any matters pertaining to development initiatives.

While the non-probability sampling method was used, in order to ensure that the study selected relevant participants who were suitable to provide relevant information to answer the research question, the factor of age was not taken into consideration. As explained

previously, this method only ensured the relevance of information provided by participants, and that female ward committees do not form part of rural women sample. Consequently, youth participants were only six in total.

4.2.3. Marital Status

Marital Status

- Single
- Married
- Divorced
- Widowed

21.0%
25.0%
0.0%
54.1%
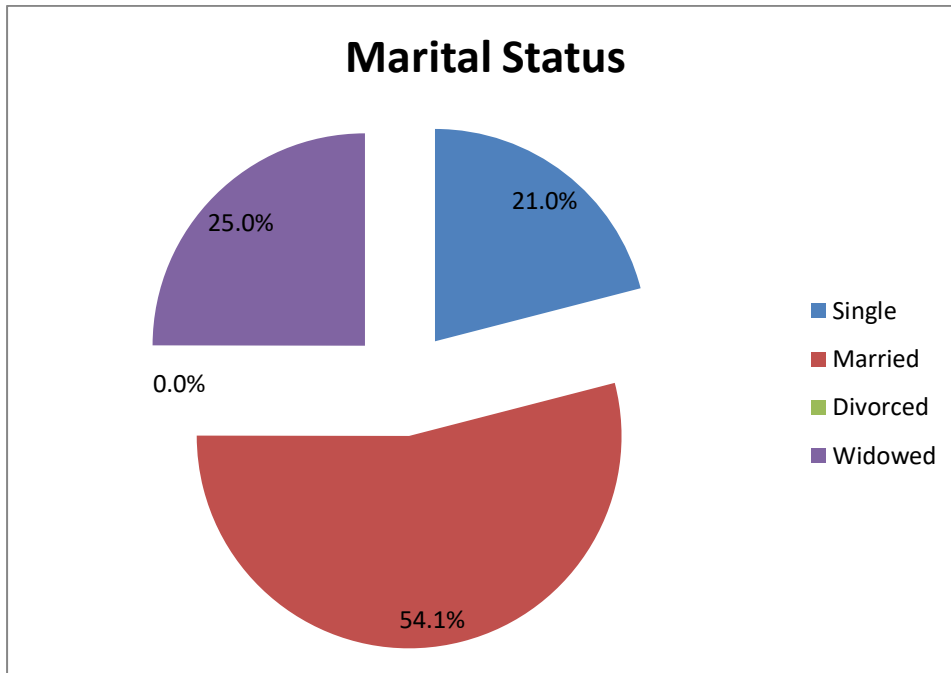
Figure 5: Marital status

Figure 5 above is the distribution of participants' marital status. Literature indicated that in some instances marital status of women may influence their level of participation or involvement outside their homes. According to Okoji & Ayuba (2018: 1226), 'some of the women have been conditioned by socio-cultural structure not to be heard in public, especially in the presence of their husbands even when they have 'good ideas'. In this research study, while there were no participants who indicated that they were divorced, the majority, 54,1% of the sample, were married, while the others were split between single and widowed. The distinction, in terms of their level of engagements during community meetings, will be made under thematic analyses.

4.2.4. Level of education

Level of education

Level of education	No formal education	Some primary school education	Some high school education	Post matric certificate or diploma	Baccalaureate degree & above
Level of education	37.5%	25.1%	20.8%	12.5%	4.1%
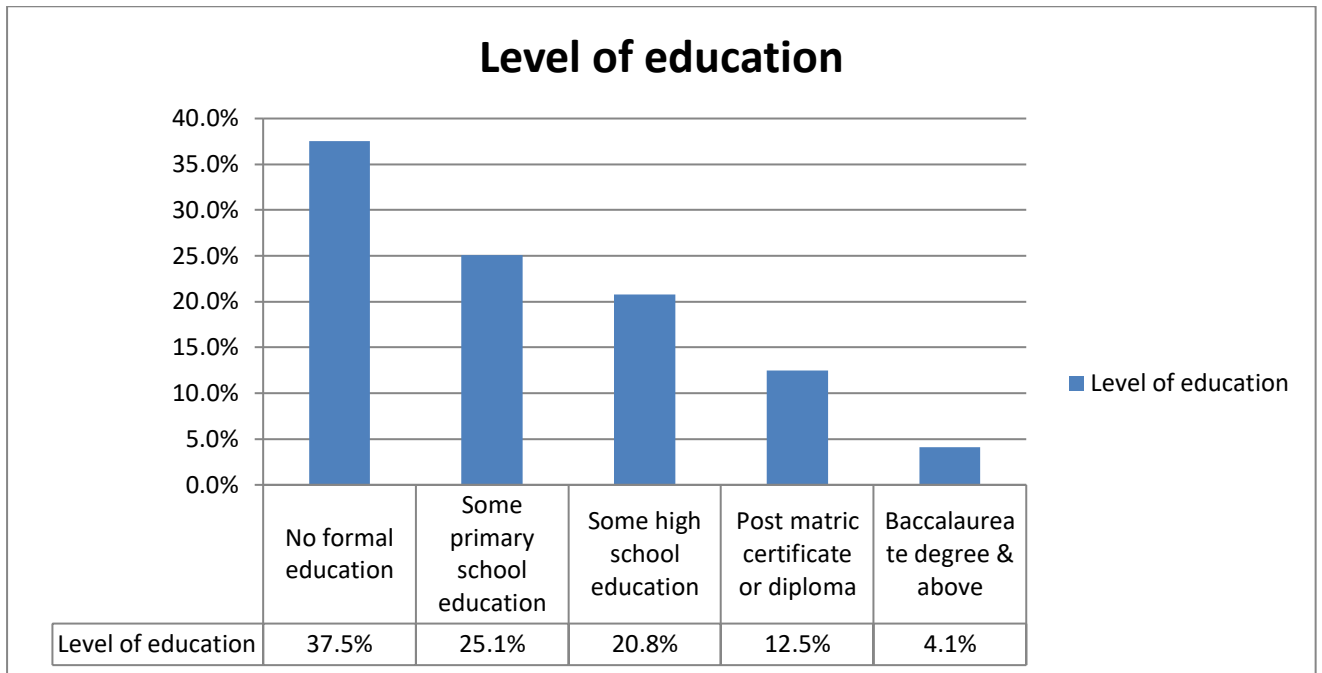
Figure 6: Level of education

The level of education amongst rural women was also identified within the literature review of this study as another determining factor which influences their understanding of community participation and therefore, their level of involvement in development matters within their communities. It was echoed that their limited involvement in these spaces is partly due to illiteracy and lack of understanding the importance of such an activity. In this research, amongst twenty four (24) women who participated, the majority (37,5%) had no formal education, followed by 25,1% who had some primary school education, which would not enable them to understand community participation practices in a meaningful manner. Women who indicated to have some high school education were 20,8%. Those who had either post-matric qualification or a baccalaureate degree amounted to 12,5% and 4,1%, respectively. From this, it can be concluded that the majority of participants were either completely illiterate or partially literate. The literature review indicated that rural women's level of education tends to influence their participation in development initiatives in their respective communities. Education is also used as one of the variables in this study to measure women's level of participation.

4.2.5. Employments status
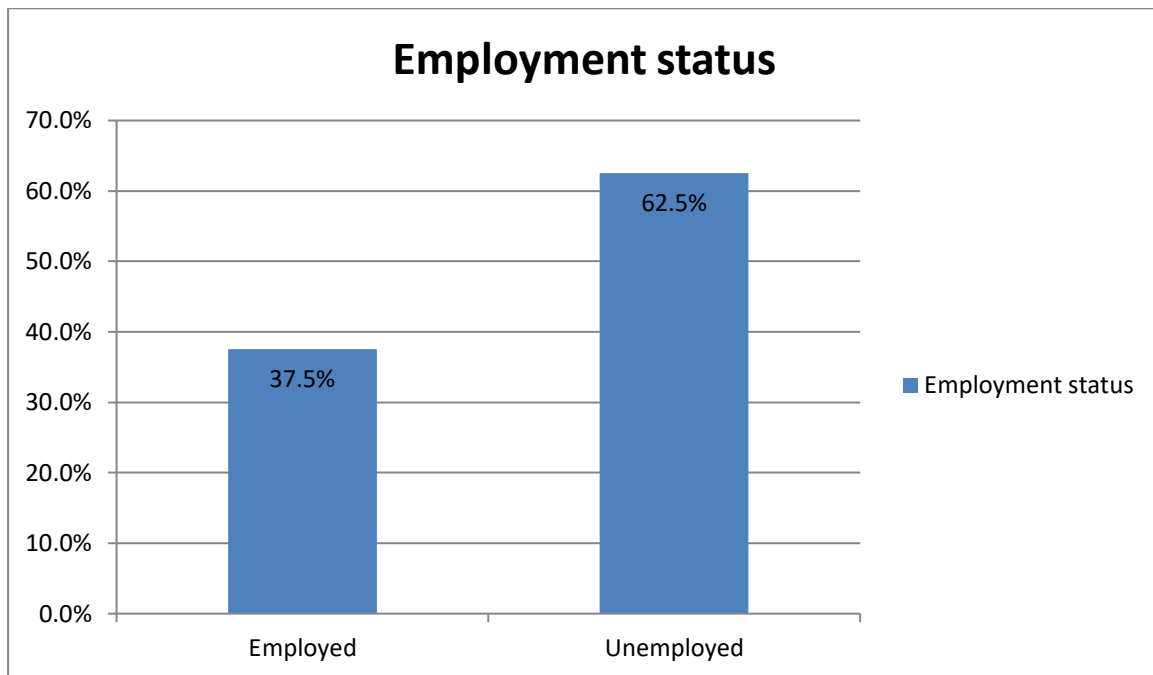
Employment status

Figure 7: Employment status

Figure 7 above is a collection of respondent's employment status. The literature of this study strongly contended that rural women are normally confined to household duties or chores in such a way that they are excluded from any employment or activities taking place outside their homes. This is due to a lack of education or required skills for formal employment, as has been illustrated above with this study's participants. The graph above indicates that only 37,5% of participants in this study indicated to be employed while the majority, 62,5% of the sample, indicated that they are unemployed. Under normal circumstances, this would suggest that such high levels of unemployment amongst these rural women would result to them being more active in development initiatives in their area. This would be attributed to unemployed participants having more time at their disposal, in comparison to employed participants. However, the participants level of involvement is to be explored in the following section.

4.3. Discussion of findings

This section interprets and describes the findings from the study in light of the research problem statement and research objectives. The findings are organised in a thematic manner, as per set objectives of the study, outlined in Chapter One. New insights have been uncovered

in this section, as far as rural women participation is concerned at the Okhahlamba Local Municipality.

4.3.1. THEME A: Assessment of participants understanding of public participation and rural development

Objective: To interrogate and assess how the concept of public participation is understood by women, municipal authorities and ward committees.

There are two main concepts being measured in this study; 'public or community participation' and 'rural development', therefore it is important to gauge participants' understanding of these concepts, and their importance thereof.

4.3.1.1. Public participation

Under the South African democratic government, dispensation of public or community participation has emerged as an important aspect in ensuring the quality of service delivery to communities. It is, firstly, entrenched in the Constitution, where Section 152(1) stipulates the objectives for the existence of the local sphere of governance, as it places public participation at its centre. Fourie (2001: 217) contends that public participation requires an acceptance that every citizen has a democratic right to take part in the decision-making process that directly affects an individual. The Constitution makes provision for the establishment of different legislations to serve as a guide to the facilitation of public participation by respective local governments. These include; the White Paper on Local Governance (1998), Local Government Municipality Structures Act (1998) and the Local Government Municipality Systems Act (2000), these are discussed in detail in Chapter Two.

However, understanding the concept of community participation and the role that community members are meant to play can be complex and differ from one person to the next. This is more so for rural women, who have been widely described under the literature review as mostly illiterate and often show little interest in matters taking place outside their homes. As a starting point, the researcher gauged participants understanding of community participation and two themes emerged out of their responses; women in this regard described public participation as either *'taking part in community affairs' or 'active involvement in decision-making'.* Responses in this regard ranged as follows:

'I believe it is community involvement in the affairs taking place in their societies'

OR

'Taking part by community members in matters that affect them'.

OR

'Involvement of the community in affairs that directly affect them'

These are mere examples of how participants demonstrated their understanding of the concept which led to the extraction of the two themes. These themes are further discussed in detail following figure 8 below.

Women understanding of community participation

- 33%
- 67%
- Taking part in community affairs
- Active involvement in decision making
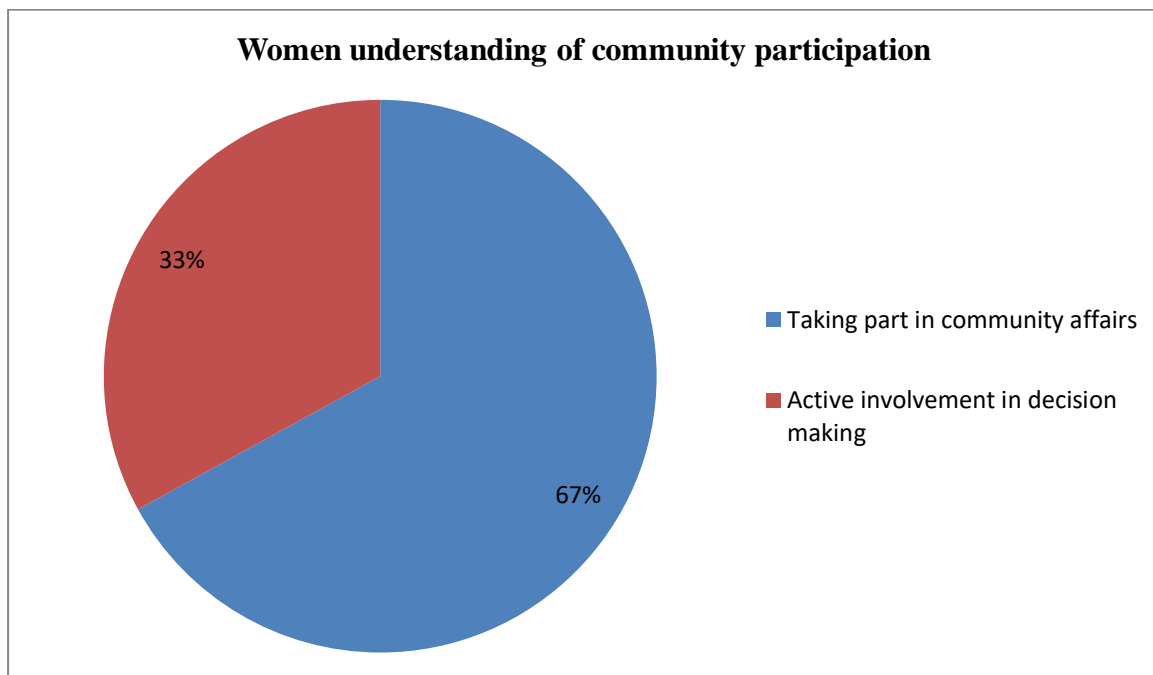
Figure 8: Understanding of public/community participation

Figure 8 above shows diverse understanding that women interviewed for the study had on the concept of public participation. Both explanations provided show that participants possessed a certain level of understanding the concept. The minority (33%) which translate to eight women, indicated that community participation encompasses *active involvement by community members in decision-making and matters of governance and what should happen in their respective areas.* This gives community members an opportunity to voice out their needs and be a part of discussions on how those needs can best be addressed. Some

participants further explained how this process translates into meaningful contribution towards development processes, as they are the ones who understand their problems. This explanation does not vary greatly from definitions that have been provided by most scholars. Masango (2002: 52); the European Institute for Public Participation (2009:6) and Mofolo (2016: 232) all concur with this notion and define public participation as 'a deliberative process through which affected citizens, civil society organisations, politicians and officials are involved in policy decision-making'. From this view, community members are then enabled to form part of an integral process through providing solutions to address their needs and therefore, minimise the risk of development interventions implemented in their areas being rejected.

In this definition, participants acknowledge themselves as main sources of information in the community participation process. Meyer (2001: 93) and Mofolo (2016: 233) emphasised on the importance of community member's participation in the development process and further add that they are comprehensive sources of information, with rich knowledge of local conditions which will enrich decision-making that can only be gathered from them. In this instance, participants demonstrated an understanding that for successful development interventions or projects that respond directly to their needs within their wards, their opinions and inputs are important. Only three participants who were profiled as being in the possession of a bachelor's degree demonstrated a thorough knowledge of the term, as compared to other participants, and pointed out that even though the process of facilitating community involvement is widely known to be initiated by the government, it is equally the responsibility of community to ensure that this takes place:

'This involvement can either come in the form of facilitation by government officials, community leaders or can be initiated by the community'.

This is an important element of community participation as it points out that some of the participants are aware that they do not have to wait for the government to initiate development initiatives in their areas. The community is also capable of organising itself and raising issues with government authorities, if necessary. Mofolo (2016: 230) contends that at times, failure by communities to initiate this process, results in service delivery protests, especially in rural areas where inter-governmental relations are sometimes not clear to the public.

The above insert from the participant is also a clear indicator that the role of ward committees is also acknowledged in the community participation process, as reference is made to *'community leaders'*. This is another important aspect, as literature clearly specified the role ward committees play in being the communicating agents between the community and local government. Mofolo (2016: 232) further advocates that educating communities about processes of participation in the democratic dispensation should be the function of local government as they are closer to communities.

Women's description of public participation in this manner can be said to have been influenced by their level of education, as it was those who formed part of the minority, 4.1% and 12.5%, who were profiled as being in possession of either post-matric qualifications or a bachelor's degree, respectively (as shown in figure 5). The fact that in this study, out of twenty four (24) women who participated, only a minority pointed out this factor is concerning and calls for the municipality to engage more in educating the community around processes of community participation. The women's limited access to education should not translate to them also having a limited voice in development, while South Africa is said to be a democratic state where citizens have equal rights, and development is meant to benefit the entire community regardless of their social status within society.

Figure 8 further shows a second part of public participation definition that some women provided, as far as community participation is concerned. This definition encapsulates doubt and rather a vague translation to their understanding of the concept. This was in regard to the 67% of women who described community participation as '*taking part in community or societal matters'*. When probed to elaborate more on this, two participants responded as follows:

'When you respond to the municipality's call to attend or form part of community meetings whenever it is called it means you are participating as a member of the community'.

<div align="center">AND</div>

'When you gather with other community members when there are meetings that is taking part in societal matters and translates to community participation'.

This is viewed as a vague translation because taking part can mean being part of the meeting and the receiver of information, without one's inputs forming part of decision-making process, which is important in community participation. Even the participants' elaboration to

the question, as demonstrated above, shows that their understanding of the concept is indeed vague as they only refer to being in attendance in community meetings. Moreover, it can also be loosely translated to only being employed to work in a project being implemented in the community. Fourie (2001: 219) makes a clear distinction between participation in decision-making and being employed to work in the project being implemented in the area. As much as being employed brings financial empowerment to community members and their respective families, meaningful participation takes place when community members make considerable inputs from the implementation up to completion stage and management of the project. For the government to ensure that it gives real content or meaning to participation, it is important to ensure that the community understands what participation is (Heydenrych, 2008: 715; Roodt & Stuurman, 2011: 65; Sebola, 2017: 26).

As shown in Figure 8, only 16 (33%) out of 24 participants demonstrated a clear and fair understanding of the concept 'community participation'. This suggests that there are gaps that the Okhahlamba Local Municipality should still fill in ensuring that the community clearly grasps the concept and its importance in contributing towards sustainable development in their area, as Mofolo (2016) emphasised.

- *Municipal officials*

Interestingly, all four municipal officials interviewed gave a contradicting account of women's understanding of the importance of public participation within the municipality, in general. This category of participants indicated that their experience working with women in the area suggests that women thoroughly understand the importance of their involvement in development initiatives proposed or implemented in their respective areas of living, they proclaimed that public participation has become rural women's way of life at Okhahlamba Municipality. They explained that this is demonstrated in their deep understanding of government programmes, as compared to men, and their eagerness to make inputs during community meetings. It remains a paradox that the municipality can be confident that the community fully understands public participation, while the members of the community itself do not share similar sentiments on the matter. This is yet another indication for a dire need to educate the public about public participation processes and its importance.

Furthermore, the importance of having a competent staff complement which is knowledgeable in its core processes cannot be overemphasised. This results in greater satisfaction for those who are at the receiving end of the process. In this case, it was also important to also gauge the municipal officials' knowledge, who are tasked with public participation, of the concept of public participation. Moreover, to gather their knowledge of processes to be followed during public participation and key role players. As indicated, there were only four officials who are tasked with this responsibility at Okhahlamba Local Municipality out of which three are permanent and one is employed on temporary basis.

While one participant did not demonstrate thorough understanding of public participation, except that it is an *'important involvement of communities in public affairs'* due to limited experience in the field, the other officials understanding of the concept was indicative of their depth of knowledge emanating from their experience in working with rural communities. Municipal officials described public participation as:

'An important engagement for and by the community. It dates back to deprivation trap where people were voiceless; especially women because they believed their inputs were worthless, whereas they were the ones mostly affected by poverty and other social ills in societies. What is good now is that women are more aware of their rights and understand their importance in participation process and the empowerment it comes with';

'It is an active engagement of the community in the development processes in their area to ensure that it directly responds to their needs and challenges';

AND

'Community participation encapsulates the community members taking part in decision-making process as far as development of their area is concerned'.

Looking at all four responses, it can be seen that the municipal officials understand the concept on different levels and have various objectives with the extracted themes as follows:

- Involvement of the community in public affairs;
- Engagement for and by the community to ensure that development respond to their needs; and
- Community taking part in decision-making process.

Figure 9 below graphically shows how the four municipal employees understood the objectives behind or the importance of community participation in development.

Muncipal officials understanding of public participation

- Involvement of communities in public affairs
- To directly repsond to public needs
- Being part in decision making process
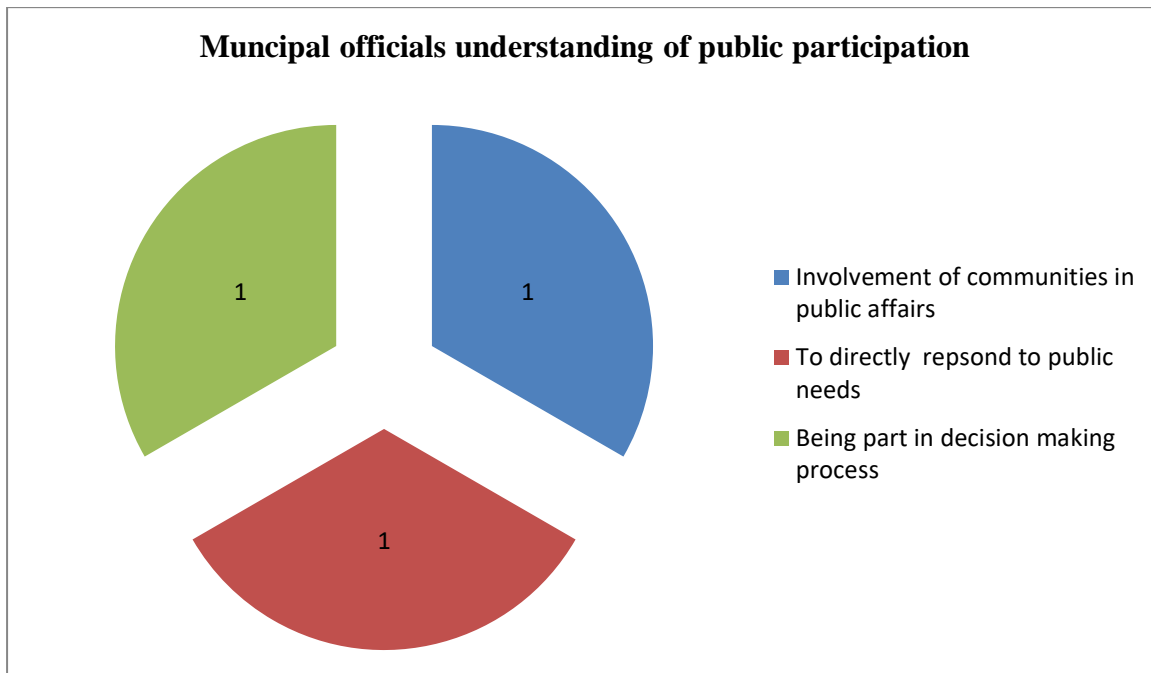
Figure 9: Municipal officials understanding of public participation

The above responses acknowledge that an important role player in the participation process is the community. It further concurs with scholars within the literature review who shared a notion that meaningful public participation is for the benefit of the community itself as it ensures they clearly articulate their problems or challenges, while at the same time, combine strategies and intervention to address them. Another crucial point to the response is the acknowledgement of the constitutional provision on engagement under the Bill of Rights, which stipulates that 'everyone has the right to freedom of expression which includes freedom to receive or impart information or ideas' (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996).

Moreover, public participation aims to address the imbalances of the past where marginalised sectors of society were not given an opportunity to have a voice, especially on matters of governance. Women are classified as a marginalised group in society because gender roles specifically confined them, and in some areas still confine them, to household duties while public matters be attended to by men (Kerasi *et al.* 2017: 192). The municipal official's understanding of the concept captures this and points out that public participation partly aims to address this and contributes to the empowerment of women by making them believe in themselves and that they are capable of contributing meaningfully towards the development

of their communities. This is, more so, for women in the rural areas as the literature evidently stated that the majority of the population within these communities are women, as men migrate to urban areas for employment opportunities. This implies that rural women are indeed the ones who are subject to poverty and all the social dilemmas, therefore, women are more suitable to be actively engaged in development processes. From the municipal employee's insert above, it can be deduced that these officials clearly understand public participation processes and its importance, even though this does not guarantee it is put into practice as stated and cascaded down to community members.

4.3.1.2. Rural Development

Similar to community or public participation, the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa also makes equal emphasis on the importance of rural development in ensuring that these communities' needs are addressed and their living conditions improved. Government's commitment to this was manifested through the formation of a Ministry on Rural Development and Land Reform which should continuously ensure building of sustainable rural livelihoods. The literature review showed development, in general, as a process of change, improvement or transformation for the better. Gauging participants views on rural development as a term was important to establish if they do recognise its interrelatedness to public participation. Meyer (2001: 96) alludes that the two concepts are interrelated as meaningful public participation and extraction of relevant information from the community members during consultations or community meetings result in successful sustainable rural development.

In this regard, as far as rural development is concerned women's responses were two-fold; others broadly described it as *'bringing change to rural communities'*, while others saw it as a '*transformation process for these communities*'. Some of the responses amongst those who viewed development as encompassing *change* for rural communities were as follows:

'Rural development is about bringing much needed and desired change in the rural areas. Such change is meant to improve the standard of living for people in these areas';

'Rural development is all about bringing change in rural areas to better the lives of those living in these areas'.

This encapsulates rural development as aiming to improve the quality of life for rural dwellers and uplifting rural communities in the democratic country to ensure that all citizens enjoy similar privileges regardless of where they are staying. This translates to ensuring equality, especially in access to services by citizens which is the cornerstone of democracy and ensures that democratic gains are equally shared. In a way, women viewed rural development as aiming to bridge the gap created during apartheid where rural communities were largely neglected as far as provision of services is concerned.

Another pillar of rural development women participants provided was that it encompasses *transformation* of rural communities, which still amounts to change and bridging the gap between rural and urban areas. One participant clearly stated that rural development is about;

'Transforming rural communities for the betterment of their lives';

'I understand that it is transformation and improvement of living conditions for rural communities';

 Figure 10 below demonstrates the frequency of these two views amongst the participants:

Understanding of rural development

37.5%

62.5%

■ Rural development: Change   ■ Rural development: Transformation
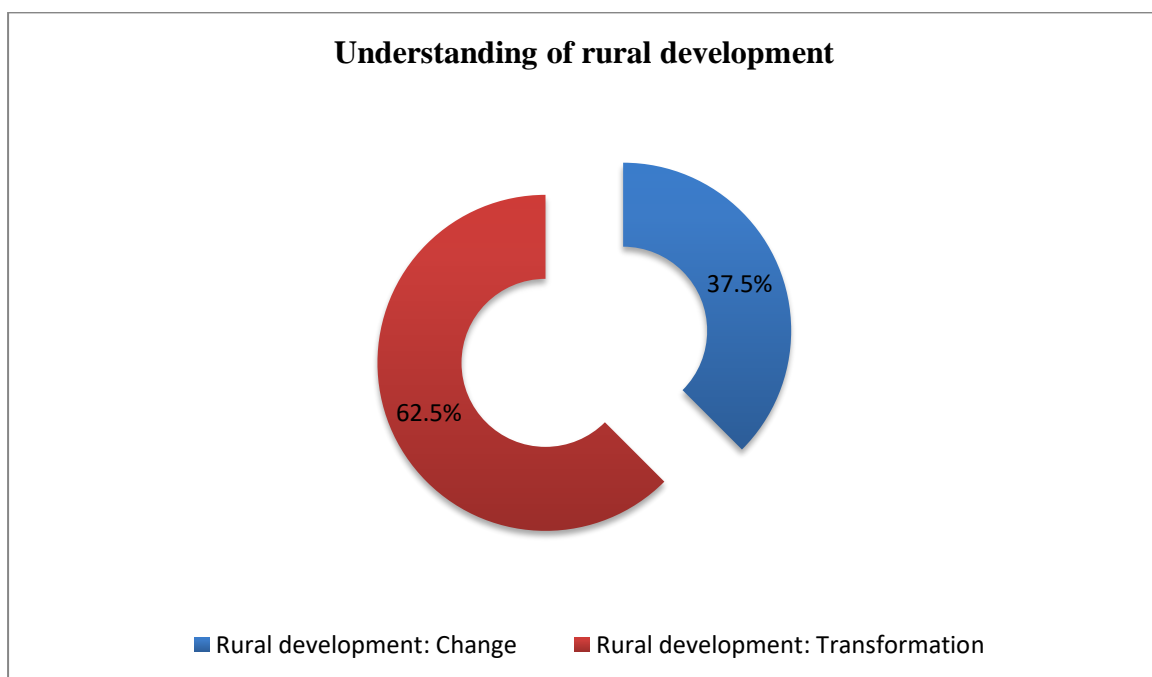
Figure 10: Understanding of rural development

Figure 10 above shows that the majority of women, 62,5% (15 participants), understood rural development as implying transformation while 37,5% (9 participants) described it as referring to change targeted at rural people. These descriptions indicate that participants at

Okhahlamba Local Municipality were aware that development for them is about mobilising all resources possible, in order to remove all barriers that exclude them from enjoying better living conditions, which then translates to much desired transformation or change.

Findings under this theme demonstrated that the majority of participants did not have a fair understanding of the concept 'public participation' as they described it as taking part in community affairs. This understanding is rather vague, as it does not capture the essence of community members' inputs or role in decision-making. It only captures merely being part of community meetings which does not necessarily translate to meaningful participation by the community. On the other hand, only a minority seemed to have understood the concept, its importance in contributing towards decision-making and their role in ensuring that it does take place. Amidst the community's lesser knowledge of the concept, municipal officials demonstrated thorough understanding of public participation and its importance in sustainable development. It appeared that those who are meant to have fully grasped the concept of public participation (community members) as key role players do not fully understand its importance. This objective was met as the findings managed to gauge the participants understanding of concepts.

4.3.2. THEME B: The nature and extent of women participation in community development projects

Objective: To determine the nature and extent of women participation in community development projects in the rural areas of Bergville.

This theme dealt with the comparison of participants responses, as per three sampled projects; housing development, road construction and building of community hall. Responses are compared in order to point out respondent's different public participation experiences and views from all the three projects.

4.3.2.1. Identification of project need

The involvement of communities in development for desired change in communities has been overemphasised in this report. For public participation to translate into meaningful and desired change which responds to the needs of the community, members in that particular community must have been afforded ample opportunity to be part of the entire process,

whereby the project is discussed. Fourie (2001: 224) equally believes that the beneficiary community should be involved in all stages of identification, implementation, handing over and management of the project. Such involvement will ensure ownership of the initiative by the community.

The participants' views on who identified the need to implement respective projects were split across all three wards. Those who benefitted from the housing project stated that the need to implement the project was identified by the community itself, while the majority of those who benefitted from road infrastructure and building of the community hall were either not sure or specified that it was a discussion between the community and municipal authorities.

Who identified the need for the project

	Community	Not sure	Community and municipality
Housing	88%	12%	0
Road construction	25%	62%	13%
Community hall	37%	25%	38%

Housing   Road construction   Community hall
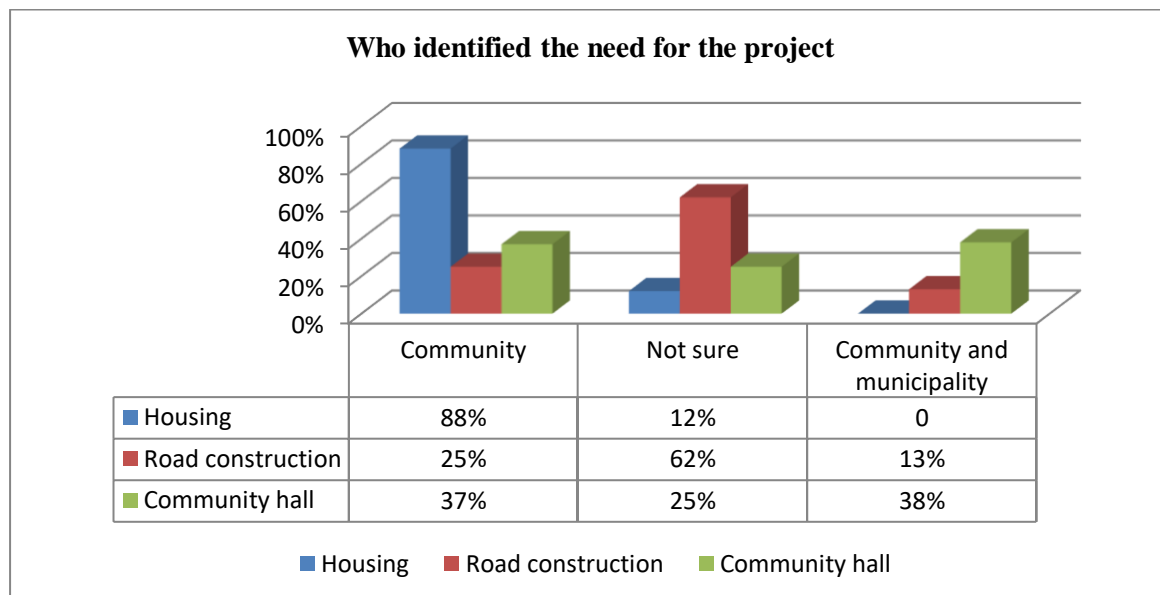
Figure 11: Identification of project need

Figure 11 shows that when participants were asked who identified the need to implement the project, the majority (88%) of those who benefitted from the housing project strongly demonstrated that it was identified by themselves as the community, in a series of planned community meetings and by means of raising concerns with ward committee members who then initiated a meeting with the relevant municipal authorities. Only 12% (1 participant) indicated uncertainty to this question, which does not show much significance. Some participants from Dukuza ward who benefitted in Dukuza Housing Project stated that:

'The need to build houses and toilets for the community was identified by the community itself, as it was something that we have been complaining about as the community'.

'The community kept on raising the need of houses during community meetings as there are high levels of unemployment, especially amongst the youth. Families are growing and there was a need for these as other families cannot afford to build additional houses in order to accommodate other members'

The above inserts are a complete indication that implementation of this project was a response to the community's need for housing. The need for the project was identified as, under the problem statement, it was articulated that the community of Bergville is largely characterised by unemployment and most families are headed by women who mostly rely on agricultural activities in order to provide for their families. The majority of households most likely cannot afford to build proper adequate houses to accommodate all family members, even though shelter is classified as a basic need in the Constitution under the Bill of Rights. Provision of such services by the government remains the only viable solution for the majority of Okhahlamba residents. The fact that some participants indicated that they were able to identify such a need within their communities and raise it with the relevant authorities shows a certain level of empowerment and awareness in matters of governance and public participation amongst these women. Moreover, this is a vivid indication that such projects are most likely to be treasured and accepted by the community.

Despite participants from the Dukuza ward having demonstrated a high level of sensitivity regarding the available channels of raising important development matters, another point emerged as participants from both the road construction and community hall projects specified that a need for the implementation of the project was identified by the community and the municipality. A total of five participants (62%) from the road construction project indicated that they were not sure who identified the need for the project, while 25% and 13% indicated that either the community or both the community and the municipality, respectively. Responses from the community hall project participants were almost equally split, as 37% stated that the initiative came from the community, while 25% were not sure, and others believed it was a joint discussion between the community and the municipality.

The researcher observed an element of uncertainty when identifying the need for projects amongst these participants. When asked if the need to implement the project was determined by the municipality or the community members, a participant from the road construction project replied as follows:

'I'm not so sure… I can say it was both the community and the Municipality because it was discussion between the two. Municipal officials also made their own inputs and influence during discussions'.

'I'm not sure about that'.

'It was the community and the municipal officials, both the municipal employees and the community were making inputs'.

As shown in Figure 11 above, several women provided similar responses that it was both the municipality and the community who identified the need for the project, which indicates uncertainty as when probed further; the reason was that it was due to a discussion between the two parties. With the notion that the municipality could have had an influence in the decision, as per the participants views, cannot be ruled out, it is also possible that participants could not distinguish between *'facilitation and participation'* in the meetings where the projects were discussed. This is most likely considering the fact that the majority participants in this study are illiterate, as discussed prior, and might not fully understand or follow the premise of participation as demonstrated in their definition of the concept itself. Moreover, uncertainty in this regard was attributed to by the fact that some participants indicated that they are not sure who identified the need due to inconsistency in attending community meetings. As a result, they only identified a project being implemented in their area and were grateful to have benefited.

'I'm not sure about that. I just saw a road construction taking place, but my neighbours were well aware of what was taking place. I was told it was discussed at the community meeting because I hardly attend; I was not on board… But I'm glad the road was fixed'

Some participants were only happy to have benefitted from the implemented project and were not concerned with how the project came to be conceived; indicative of women's limited understanding of their participation in development under the democratic dispensation.

Moreover, from their general experience in working with Okhahlamba Municipality communities, and also facilitating public participation, the municipal officials were asked if women always get involved from the planning, implementation and management of projects. All officials indicated that women are always involved in all stages of projects and further supported this by stating that most development projects within the municipality are initiated by women. However, this response only provides generalised information regarding general

women participation in development at Okhahlamba Local Municipality and might not necessarily apply across all the wards and projects. To verify this, women were also asked if their participation in the specified projects was throughout project lifespan or they only took part in certain stages.

At this juncture, it should be reiterated that meaningful public participation translates to involvement from planning up to the completion stage of the project. Participants were asked if they managed to participate in the entire project cycle and responses were as follows:

Did you participate in the project from planning to completion stage

	Housing	Road construction	Community hall
Yes	37%	25%	37%
No	63%	75%	63%
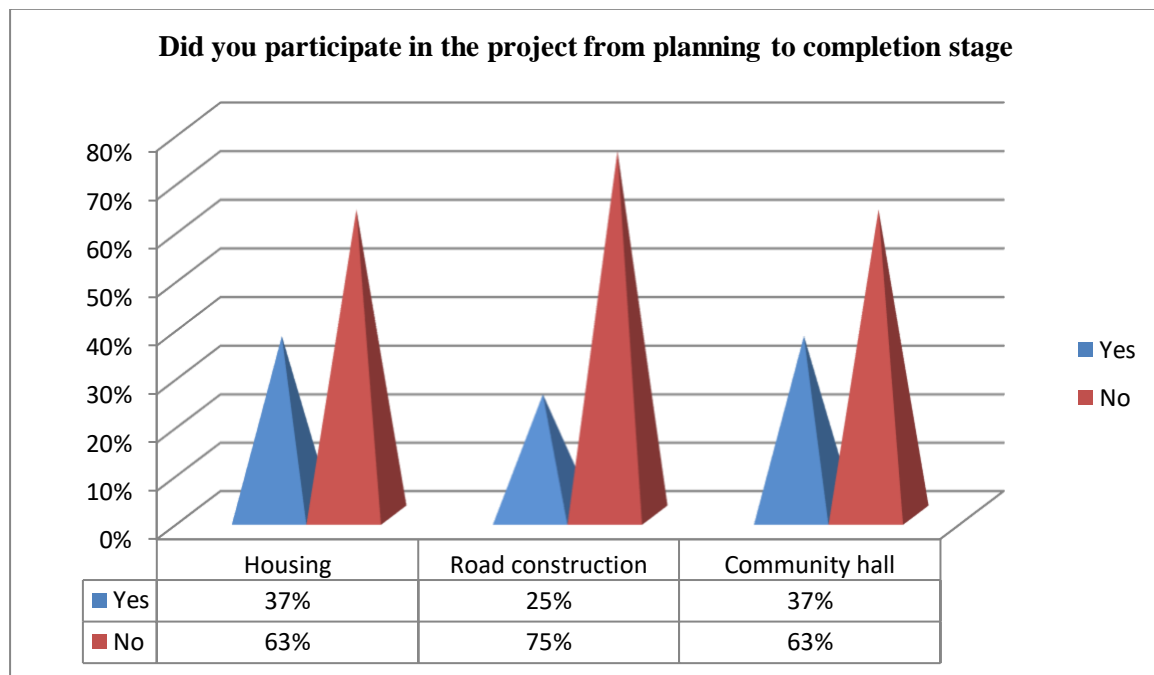
Figure 12: Frequency of participation in project cycle

Figure 12 illustrates that the majority of participants (housing: 63%; road construction: 75% and community hall: 63%) did not participate from planning up to the completion stage of the respective projects in their wards. Responses from the majority of women were not in line with those of municipal employees, as they indicated that they did not participate throughout the project cycle, while only a few indicated active participation from planning up to management of said projects. As shown in Figure 12, all these responses were spread across all three wards. Reasons for the absence of women at some stages of the project ranged from; domestic chores, taking care of the sick or elderly or being at work while other meetings took place. For instance, two participants from Mnceleni and Dukuza ward respectively stated:

'I have an elderly grandmother that I need to take care of. She needs attention most of the times as she is struggling with her knees. Sometimes I do attend the meetings called, but not all the time'.

AND

'I hardly attend community meetings because I'm working. I cannot risk losing my job due to a community meeting. Even if the meeting is held over the weekend, there is so much to catch up on household chores because I'm at work mid-week'.

These responses are in line with what the literature revealed on some factors that prevent rural women from attending or participating in activities outside their homes. This does not mean that municipal officials were incorrect in stating that women are actively involved in development matters in Bergville, however it can be indicative that they participate when their schedules allow them to, and when they do form part of community meetings where development initiatives are part of the agenda, they make meaningful contributions. Instead, there is no consistency in women participation in development projects, other than noting no participation at all.

The study was premised on the principle that identification of the need for the project and official hand over of the project to the beneficiaries is important, as they enhance accountability and transparency, which are important pillars of a democratic government. It sought to establish if feedback was given to the community and if thorough handing over of the project was done.

Was the project formerly handed over to the community upon completion

	Housing	Road construction	Community hall
■ Yes	75%	12%	38%
■ Could not recall	25%	88%	62%
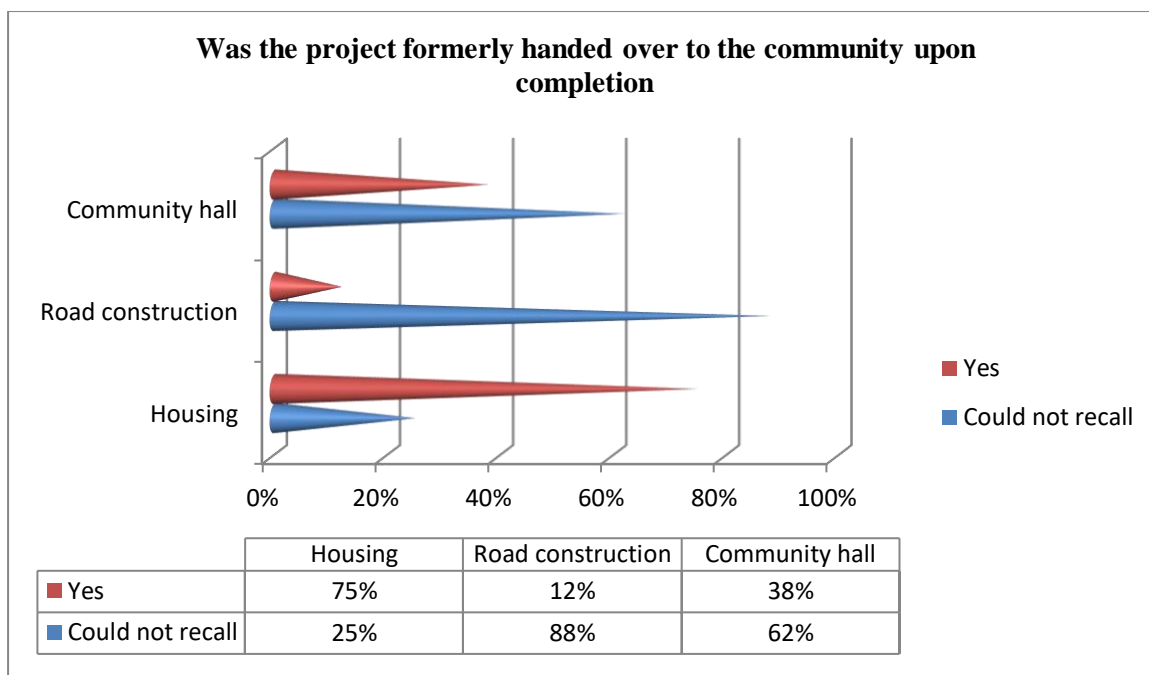
Figure 13: Project handover

The majority of participants from the road construction and community hall projects could not confirm if project handover did take place as their attendance of community meetings was not consistent (88% and 62%, respectively). On the other hand, participants who were recipients in the housing project did indicate that this important activity took place in their ward (75%). The responses further revealed an important notion as participants who benefitted from the housing project highlighted that during the official hand over, or project assessment meeting, those who had complaints regarding some of the houses or toilets built for them had an opportunity to raise and register such with the municipal authorities. This further indicates the importance of the official hand over as it ensures that the community receives quality services and services that are at the standard agreed upon during the initiation phase of the project.

The hand over meeting further contributes towards the sustainability and management of the project in the long term. If not done, it can contribute to the project not being utilised to its full potential by the community due to lack of information in accessing such. One participant from Dukuza housing project added that:

'Houses were officially handed over to us as the community. We were further informed about who to contact should we experience challenges with them within a specific period of time'.

Failure to do this has a potential to result in frustration amongst community members and may result in confusion amongst the community, in terms of accessing services that are meant to be of assistance to them, which then results in wasteful expenditure by the government.

4.3.2.2. Level of empowerment post the implementation of development initiatives

Women's responses regarding being empowered through development initiatives that have been implemented in their respective areas were divided, in terms of the projects implemented from each ward. Such empowerment was measured in terms of the long-term impact the project had on their livelihoods, its relevance to their needs as the community and their overall experience while participating from its inception up to completion.

All women who benefited from Dukuza housing project and a considerable majority from those who benefitted from Rookdale Community Hall project believed that the implementation of these projects in their wards was beneficial to them and the majority from the road construction project believed it did not empower them.

	Housing	Road construction	Community hall
■ Yes	100%	12%	63%
■ No	0%	88%	37%
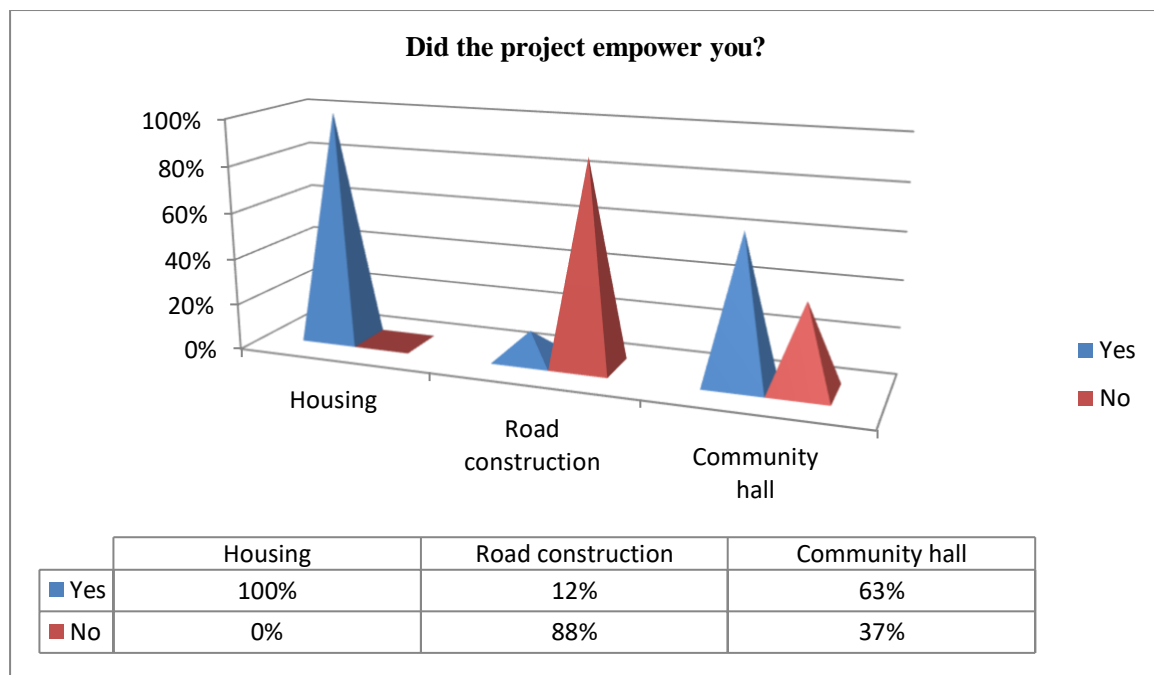
Figure 14: Empowerment from the project

It is graphically shown above that all (100%) participants from the housing project believed that they were largely empowered by the implementation of the project. In Figure 11, it is shown that participants from this project have clearly specified that the need to build houses

in their community was identified by the community. These are some of the benefits generated if the community is given an opportunity to decide on the direction that development is supposed to take in their respective communities. Maximum satisfaction and high levels of empowerment are the resultant, as these initiatives tend to respond directly to community needs. The most cited reason for this satisfaction was due to members of the community belonging to financially struggling, large families where housing or shelter is of utmost importance. High levels of unemployment, as cited previously, easily translate to poor housing. Participants further explained how additional shelter or housing assisted their entire family, as it served as much needed shelter to be utilised by the entire household, while others got to allocate it to their grandchildren who are able to use the additional shelter for doing their homework from school without interruptions. Some participants stated:

'I got to allocate the house to my grandchildren. This helps them do their homework without any disturbances from the main house'.

'We got an additional shelter in this household which have assisted. I assigned it to my older son as he is currently unemployed and cannot afford to build one for himself, we were overcrowded, and he was sharing with my grandchildren'.

This shows that the housing project assisted the community in this ward with alleviating overcrowding in households who could not afford to build themselves additional houses and furthermore, it responded directly to the needs of the community.

The literature stressed the importance of thorough community participation in ensuring that such satisfaction is achieved amongst community members. This is viewed as a benefit in understanding the needs of the community before the project can be implemented. In this instance, responses were a mixture of; those who indicated effective participation in the housing project, and those who stated that they never participated in the project from inception to completion, but they were highly empowered by the houses they received. This is not to claim that effective participation is not important to achieve community satisfaction and empowerment, but it does show that, at times, the nature of the project determines the level of empowerment, regardless of how public participation unfolded. For women in Dukuza housing project, it was important that the project coincidentally responded to their needs and they considered that to be empowerment from their perspective.

Almost similar sentiments to those shared in the housing project were also echoed by 63% of participants from the community hall project. Even though they did not dwell on how the project contributed to their empowerment, as compared to housing project participants, they did indicate that building of a hall was of assistance for the entire community. However, one participant stated that the hall is still a distance from other community members, as the area itself is vast, but it does assist with holding of community meeting as they previously used to be held at the sports grounds and sometimes would be negatively affected by bad weather conditions.

'It gave us a proper venue for the community to hold meetings. However, it is still a bit far from certain parts of the community. But that is because the area itself is vast and therefore, the hall cannot be close to everyone'.

These women also revealed that the hall further assists the community in hosting different events and ceremonies such as weddings:

'The hall helps for holding community meetings and other ceremonies such as weddings are held there. Plus, it is accessible to all community members'.

'The hall assists us as a community because before we used to hold our meetings at the sports ground at times and on rainy days, they could not even take place. Also, other community events can now be held there'.

Nevertheless, as compared to the housing project, the level of empowerment was lower as 37% still believed that they were not empowered.

Figure 13 further demonstrates that the majority of beneficiaries from the road construction project held completely different views regarding the project's capacity to empower them. A high number, 88%, of participants stated that they were not empowered by the road that was constructed in their area, while only 12% believed they were empowered. Five participants from this project believed they were not empowered by the project, due to its long-term impact which was not going to be sustained. Even though the road construction assisted the community, as it was no longer muddy during heavy rains, the road was still made of gravel, instead of tar, which they believed was going to have a lifetime impact. One participant's view regarding the matter is as follows:

'The gravel road cannot sustain heady summer rains, it easily gets swept away by floods and the road will be back to its previous state'.

However, when this study was conducted, the road was still intact and the participant was only speaking on her speculations that such could happen if the road was not tarred.

4.3.2.3. Types of empowerment

While talking to participants across the sampled three projects, it was observed that the passion regarding the empowerment of the projects differed drastically. Those who benefitted from the housing project were much more passionate, and their satisfaction much more visible and genuine, while women from the other two projects; the road construction and community hall, showed average satisfaction or no satisfaction at all. From this observation, it can be concluded that the level of satisfaction and empowerment from development projects seemed to be much higher when the provided services or finished product benefitted individual household separately as compared to when such services are to benefit the community collectively.

Furthermore, out of twenty four (24) participants, five (5) participants, across all the three sampled wards, revealed that they believed the projects empowered them, as they provided employment to their husbands, while only two participants indicated to have worked in the project. They considered this as partly empowerment, because it provided their entire households with income. When the researcher further enquired if they did not want also to work or be employed in the project, others cited the nature of work to be too 'masculine' and demanding for them. Another nine (9) participants indicated that they were empowered as they got to utilise the services provided while the remaining ten (10) participants believed there was no empowerment for them. Figure 14 below simplifies this description:

Type of empowerment
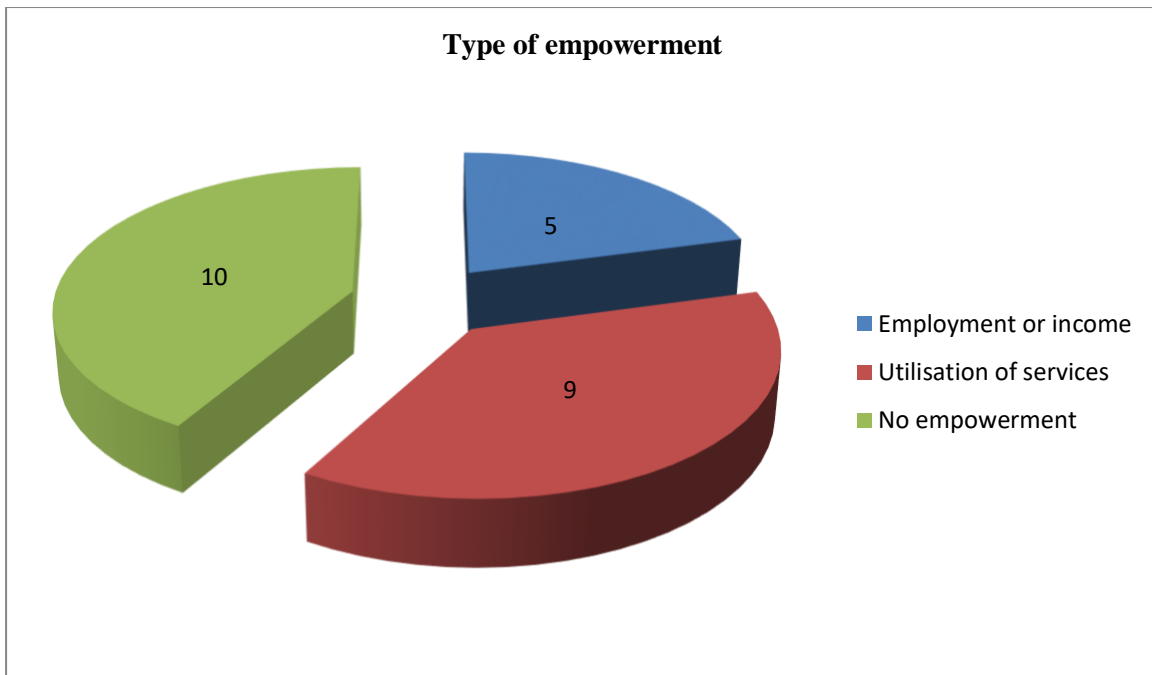
Figure 15: Type of empowerment

Figure 15 above clearly shows that participants did not view empowerment as embodying full control and freedom over decisions that affect them. They viewed it from the short- and long-term impact that projects are bound to have in their lives, partial control over resources and source of income for their families, even in instances where they were not directly employed in that project. While these factors are considered empowerment, getting freedom over decisions that affect them as rural women could be much more empowering, as they form part of the previously disadvantaged group in society.

In addition to the nature of empowerment that the implemented projects brought to participants lives, the study further enquired if other development initiatives implemented in respective areas generally respond to their needs as women. From all the participants responses it was gathered that neither of them have witnessed any initiative which was specifically aimed at changing or transforming women's lives as community members. Projects that have been implemented are aimed at catering for the needs of the community as a whole. For instance, one participant stated that one of the challenges confronting women is not being able to provide for their families, as most homes are female headed and women find it difficult obtaining employment due to lack of education. In such cases, participants suggested that they will appreciate being involved in projects aimed at equipping them with relevant skills that will enable them to be self-sufficient. The participants did not dispute if the projects implemented in their areas of living respond to the needs of the community

holistically, but at times there are challenges that solely affect women in society and those are the needs that they believe have not been directly addressed by development initiatives. This is a conundrum as municipal officials revealed that the existence of sector programmes within ward committees ensures that women's needs receive the attention they deserve and are addressed at all times.

Collected data under this objective suggested that even though women at Okhahlamba Local Municipality do not fully understand the concept of public participation in the context of rural development, they still participate in these initiatives. The extent of participation however, emerged to have been mostly influenced by the nature of benefits generated by the project. In an instance where the project was to benefit individual households, the housing project, meaningful participation from the community was higher, whereas where benefits were for the collective, the community hall and road construction, interest to participate was lower. This also influenced different levels at which participants got to be involved in the project. Where the benefits were for individual households, participants were most likely to be involved in the entire project cycle while there was reluctance where benefits were for the community at large. Meaningful participation in the entire project cycle proved to generate high satisfaction and empowerment for the beneficiaries of the project implemented.

4.3.3. THEME C: Challenges hindering rural women meaningful participation in development

Objective: To uncover challenges that hinder rural women meaningful participation in development, with an intention of assisting the municipality to address them, and improve its overall public participation strategy in the future

In addition to project specific responses, there were other general factors that emerged as challenges hindering women participation in development at Okhahlamba Local Municipality. These were factors that were not specific to the three sampled projects but affected women participation in general.

4.3.3.1. Attendance of community meetings

Over and above the reasons cited under Figure 12, regarding participants not getting involved entirely on projects in question from their respective wards, the study aimed to establish other reasons that potentially hinder them as women in the area to participate in meetings where development initiatives are discussed. In order to assess rural women participation, it is equally important to point out some of the impediments that prevent them from taking part, so that existing strategies used for participation can be updated to achieve optimal participation. The literature review did point out some factors which contribute to rural women not attending community meetings and, consequently, not meaningfully contributing to development. When women in this study were asked to indicate reasons that have previously prevented them from attending community meetings, the following themes or factors emerged:

4.3.3.1.1. Cultural traits

In the rural areas, the culture indicates that if a family is represented by one family member it is enough, he or she represents the views of that family collectively. However, as this study is only cantered on rural women participation, any family representative, unless it's a woman, at a community meeting would not amount to meaningful involvement. Figure 5, regarding demographic information, indicated that out of twenty four (24) participants, thirteen (13) participants (54,1%) were married. Out of the married participants, eight (08) or 62% stated that sometimes they do not attend community meetings simply because their husbands are the ones who attend, while they are occupied with other duties at home. The other five (38%) cited that meeting attendance at their households is not assigned to a specific person, anyone who is available attends.

Meetings attendance

38% 62%

■ Assigned to husband
■ Not assigned to an individual
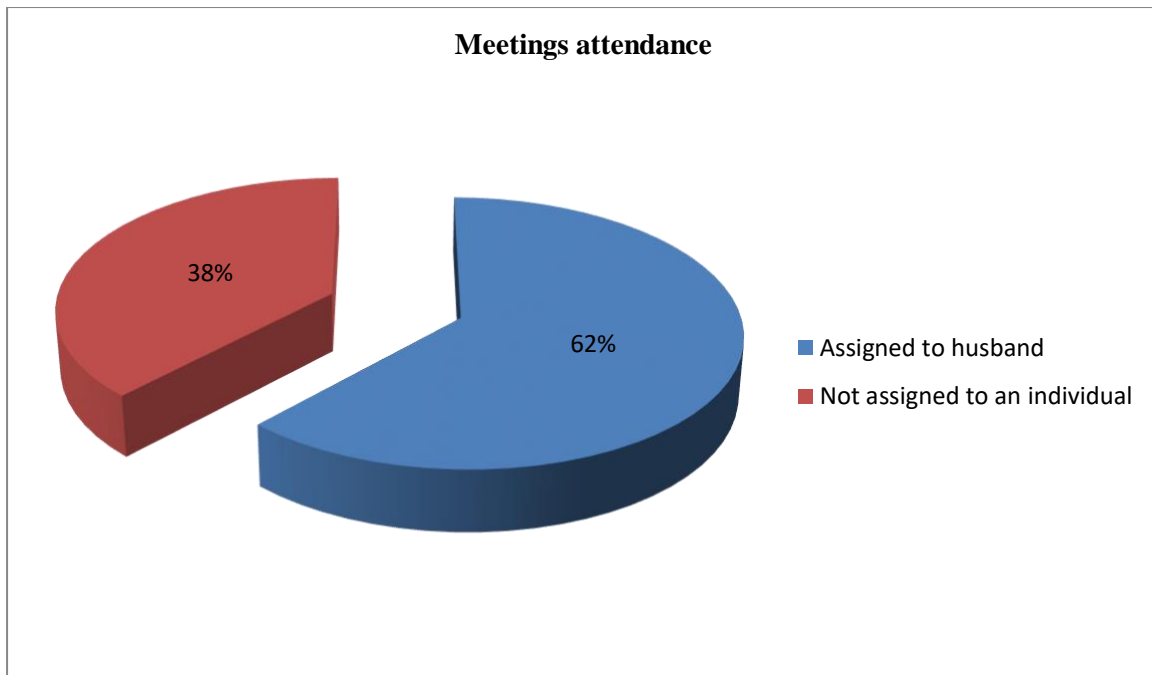
Figure 16: Meetings attendance

For these women, this seemed to be an 'unwritten' rule that the husband is the one who attends meetings. This can be noted as one participant, whose husband stays in Johannesburg due to work, further indicated that even though she attends community meetings when the husband is in the city, when he is home for holidays, he takes over and attends the meeting on behalf of the household:

'Sometimes I do not attend when my husband is at home or on leave from work. He is the one who attends'.

Moreover, this has become a norm for some women that has never been questioned or challenged. Another participant indicated that her husband has been attending community meetings over time and it has never been questioned, she seemingly still sees nothing wrong with the practice:

'My husband is the one who attends to community meetings. It has always been like that with no specific reason'.

Directly linked to women not being able to attend meetings due to the task being solely viewed as belonging to their husbands, other household duties also prevent them from participating in these meetings. Literature also highlighted the plight of rural women when it comes to running the household and being solely responsible for doing household chores due to gender roles socialisation, especially when their husbands have migrated to big cities for

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employment opportunities. This, however, is also the case in instances where husbands are not in big cities. In this study, whether the husband had migrated, passed away or was staying at home did not make a difference in household chores being a reason why women miss community meetings. Under this variable, all women emphasised that household chores are their sole responsibility and, at times, they cannot compromise and neglect these duties or 'let things fall apart' in their homes simply to attend community meetings. One woman cited:

'Other times I have household chores to take care of as I work during the week. It's not easy being a widow, you have to prioritise well and choose things that are going to benefit your children. Meetings are just meetings, you do not get money for attending and there are no penalties for not attending'.

This indicates an element of conflicting priorities for participants in this regard, as earlier analyses of their understanding of the importance of public participation was on average, yet when it 'competes' with household chores or taking care of their children for time, it becomes secondary. Moreover, women also cited elderly related sicknesses as an impediment which prevents them from attending community meetings. This was commonly shared amongst elderly women who indicated to be staying alone or with grandchildren.

4.3.3.1.2. Other community commitments

Rural communities are known for close ties amongst members and their principle in the spirit of *Ubuntu* which translates to them valuing support for each other and it being an important pillar of their livelihoods. Community meetings normally take place on weekends, which are the days planned for funerals or other ceremonies hosted which rural women attend in offering support to their neighbours, extended families or other community members. This study also established that women may not attend community meetings in order to attend these functions and offer their collective support to fellow community members who could be hosting such activities on weekends.

4.3.3.1.3. Low self-esteem

Under the literature review, low self-esteem amongst rural women also emerged as one of the contributing factors which limit rural women from effectively and meaningfully contributing towards development in their respective areas. Some participants stated that they sometimes do not attend meetings as they believe they are old, illiterate and therefore, cannot make meaningful contribution in meetings. Older women opt instead to send younger people to

represent their households if they are around. The belief is that no one is interested in what an old woman has to say about what should take place in the area, as far as development is concerned. Instead, younger people are much more suitable for such seating's as one woman specified why sending her grandson seems like a viable option for her:

'It is better that way because he is still young and can make meaningful contribution I believe'.

This confirms views that were shared by different scholars under the literature review, as rural women were described as believing that they have nothing valuable to contribute beyond the household. In addition, two women cited their illiteracy levels as yet another factor that makes them reluctant at times to be part of community meetings, especially when development initiatives are on the agenda. Even though they understand their conditions as clear as the community and challenges confronting them, some of the concepts used in meetings confuse them and they find it hard to follow the proceedings of the meeting. One participant explained that:

'I do not see the need to participate because I'm old and sometimes do not quite understand the terms used in those meetings'.

As a result, the responsibility of public participation is shifted to other members of the community who the women believe are more capable of grasping the content of meetings, such as men or the younger generation.

Moreover, the municipal officials further allude to this challenge when facilitating public participation at times. It is highlighted that some women from different wards lack confidence and are reluctant to participate and make inputs during community meetings as they cite their lack of education. They still believe and expect the government knows best, in terms of needs and solutions for the community, without the input of rural women. As a result, one municipal employee suggested that in order to ensure that women's voice is heard and create space in the development agenda at Okhahlamba Municipality, *'there is a need for seminars or workshops specifically aimed at empowering women in terms of how they can upgrade their skills and the value of their role in participatory democracy'.*

Local governments are formal structures and should have guidelines and policy documents to provide direction, in terms of filling gaps, should there be any, within its structures. In such instances where there are gaps, in terms of public participation, the study enquired if

Okhahlamba Local Municipality has any policy guidelines as to how to involve community members in the development processes within their area. It was established that the municipality does not have its own policy guidelines in this regard, instead it uses COGTA guidelines which the officials were not clear on, as it appeared that they had never put them into practice within the municipality.

4.3.3.1.4. Meetings location

It is common knowledge that rural communities are mostly vast geographic area. The literature acknowledged this factor and noted that the geography, combined with time constraints and lack of resources from government, could potentially bear negative effects for public participation. Additionally, the majority of community members in these areas are senior citizens, as the youth often migrate to cities, either for better job opportunities or institutions of higher learning. In this study, elderly related illnesses, such as sore knees, have been cited as one of the factors contributing to rural women not attending community meetings. Furthermore, the location of the meeting venue emerged as another contributing factor for elder women who are suffering from sore knees, as they cannot walk long distances and there is no transport provided to the meetings. These participants strongly believe that if the municipality deemed their inputs in meetings valuable, an effort would be made for them to attend. Working with a community, one must understand its calibre, needs and what they need to be supplemented with to accomplish certain tasks.

4.3.3.1.5. Notice of meetings

As indicated prior, the community of Okhahlamba Local Municipality is characterised by women who often are at home and have multiple conflicting responsibilities that demand their attention. This factor alone necessitates that if there are events, such as community meetings, which are bound to require community members' involvement, notifications to targeted participants must be done on time. Fifteen (15 women cited *'short notice for meetings'* as one of the reasons that may hinder their participation or involvement in community meeting, as they may have long standing plans they cannot cancel. If meetings are not announced well in advance to the community, there is a very high risk of lower turnout or poor attendance. This is shown in Figure 17 below.

Reasons for non-attendance of meetings

- Short notice — 15
- Other reasons — 9
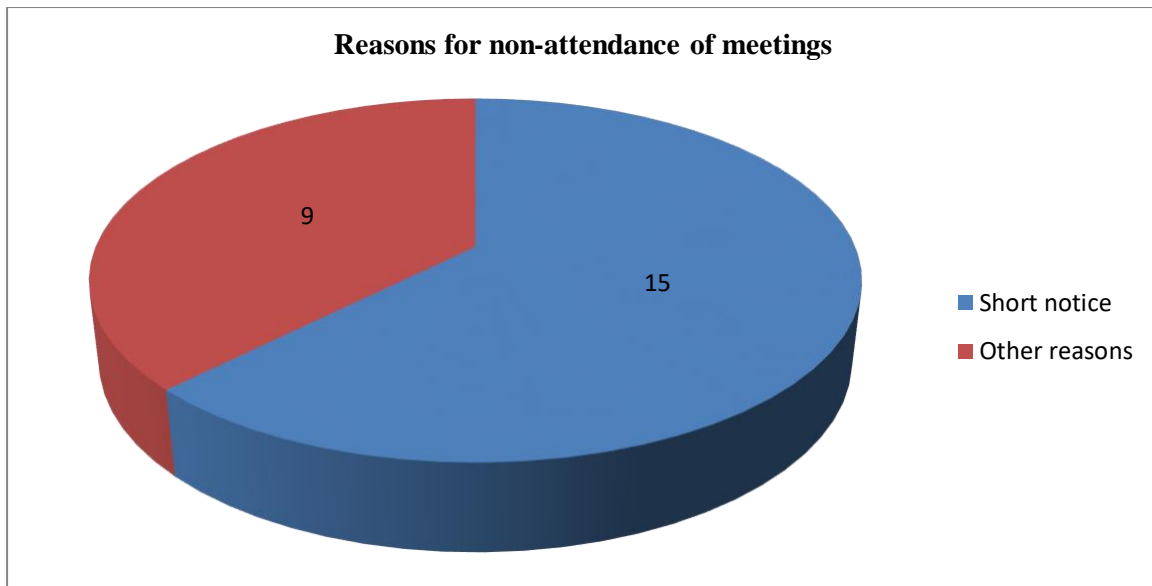
Figure 17: Reasons for meetings non-attendance

Considering that municipality officials have annual community meetings scheduled in advance for each ward, the short notice of meetings given to community members can be easily addressed. Even though participant's views were divided on this matter, as others strongly believed that they are always robustly informed of meetings but could not make it to meetings due to other commitments, it was important for this study to pay more attention where there seems to be dysfunctionality for it to be addressed where possible. For development interventions to truly empower communities, their active engagement on the matter is important and for that to happen, ensuring that meeting invitations reach them well on time and the message is spread across the whole community is key.

Closely linked to this is the mode of communication used to invite community members to meetings. Informing the community or public about the meeting to take place is the responsibility of ward committee members, as the communicating agents between the municipality and the community. This is as per the White Paper on Local Governance (1998), which articulates that the role of this structure is facilitating community participation and liaising with the municipality on behalf of the community at large.

During data collection, it was established that the method used to invite community members to meetings is the loud hail. Some municipalities make use of other systems, such as local radio stations, print media or social media. However, the municipal officials in this study indicated that such methods would neither be effective, nor reach to all community members, as not everyone has access to these platforms of communication. The literature also concurs

with this, as Hofisi (2014: 1133) stated that platforms, such as social media, would not be effective or bear any positive results for rural women as the majority of them are illiterate. Regrettably, women still pointed out some elements of ineffectiveness in the use of loud hail in this instance, as they believed that it does not robustly inform them of the meeting. This is due to other community members not receiving the message as they do not stay close to the main road.

4.3.3.2. Knowledge of ward committees

An important role played by functional and effective ward committees in meaningful public participation has been overly emphasised in this study. This was sparked by the Okhahlamba Local Municipality's 2016/17 strategic framework which indicated there was a dysfunctionality of ward committees which negatively affected public participation, as one of the committee's duty is to function as communicating agents between the community and government. The committee's dysfunctionality impacts public participation, as mobilisation for community meetings is negatively affected, creating a gap between the community and the municipality.

For effective functioning of ward committees, it will mean that the public or community is well aware of their existence and their functions.
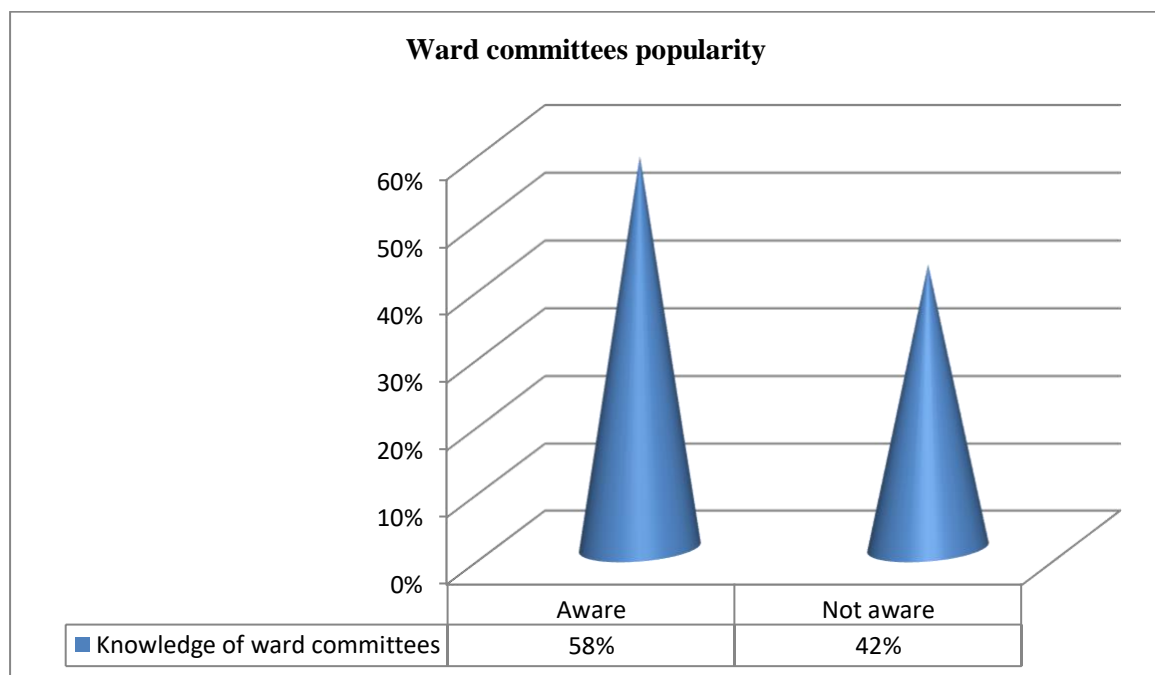
Figure 18: Ward committees' popularity

In this study, 42% of participants stated that they were not aware of the existence of ward committee's as important structures in their respective wards, while 58% of other participants indicated that they are well aware of ward committee members in their wards, as illustrated in Figure 18. Participants who were aware of ward committees further outlined some of their duties which they have come to understand as community members. Two functions emerged; community meetings mobilisation and serving as communicating agents between the public and the municipality through raising the community's needs and challenges with the municipality so that they can be attended to or addressed, this can be seen in Figure 19.

Figure 19: Ward committees' responsibilities

As such, it is implied that ward committees are fairly popular amongst the community members as half of the participants were aware of their existence and less than half were not aware. This, however, cannot necessarily be attributed to ward committees being dysfunctional, as some participants in this study clearly indicated that do not often pay attention to governance affairs due to reasons, such as being too old, the duty of taking part in activities outside their homes being assigned to their husbands or mostly being busied by household chores, these reasons stop them from attending meetings where community participation in any possible development initiatives takes place.

4.3.3.3. Functioning of ward committees

Additionally, municipal employees, together with ward committee members, interviewed affirmed that ward committees in Okhahlamba Local Municipality are functioning to their full capacity and there is a good working relationship between them, the community and the municipality. In aiding ward committee members with relevant skills, it was revealed that there are continuous training sessions conducted aimed at capacitating them to execute their duties and deliver results as per the municipality's strategic framework. During a focus group discussion with ward committee members, when asked if they are clear on expectations at the framework's foundation level, as far as participatory democracy is concerned, two members ascertained as follows respectively:

'Yes, we are very clear. There are workshops conducted aimed at teaching us about what is expected of us.'

<div align="center">AND</div>

'We also receive training from public participation practitioners and COGTA which assist us is delivering on our duties. We are trained based on our sector programmes in what is expected of us and what we need to look out for. Even the illiterate members are taken step by step to enable them to deliver on their duties.'

This confirms that the Okhahlamba Local Municipality has mechanisms in place to ensure that ward committees are well-equipped to execute their duties in ensuring that public participation for community members is meaningful. All other ward committee members were in agreement with this view. Further training is supplied for their specific sector categories; health, senior citizen, women, safety, allocated to them in order to guarantee that they understand different dynamics pertaining to their allocated sector programmes.

A healthy and cooperative working relationship between the municipality and ward committee members proves crucial in ensuring that the public are enabled to participate meaningfully in the development agenda in their communities. In total, the municipality maintains fifteen (15) wards and four employees within the Public Participation Unit. This implies that each employee within the unit is allocated four wards and four councillors, who report directly to the municipal employees on the functioning of the ward.

'This accounting procedure enhances the relationship and communication between the ward committee members and the municipality, and ensures that public participation becomes a

success as community's concerns are quickly cascaded to the municipality and get the attention needed.'

This was a comment from the municipal employee who believed that the allocation and division of wards amongst the employees contribute to a seamless working relationship with ward committees. As an accounting procedure, ward committees then submit minutes to their allocated municipal employee for any community meetings where the public proposed development initiatives in their areas. Furthermore, ward committees hold their own meetings once a month to discuss any matters that could be affecting their functioning, and are also required to submit minutes in this regard.

Moreover, it was established that ward committee members at Okhahlamba Municipality receive a monthly stipend of R1000 which was cited by municipal employees as another contributing factor to their commitment in executing their duties. All ward committee members are aware of the possibility of suspension and forgoing the stipend should they miss three consecutive meetings without any valid apology. However, Section 77 of the Municipality Structures Act 117 of 1998 clearly stipulates that 'no remuneration is paid to any of the ten ward committee members', which was also cited by other scholars under the literature review as a cause for poor functioning of ward committees in different Municipalities. The R1000 monthly stipend seems to be working well for the Okhahlamba Local Municipality as it has been established that they function to their optimal capacity.

This study's main focus was participation of rural women in development initiatives. While this is focused on ordinary women's participation in society, it was equally important to further assess their representation in ward committees as Section 73 (3) (a) (i) of the Municipal Structures Act 117 of 1998 is clear on the representation of women in the selection procedure of ward committees. Women are well represented in ward committees at Okhahlamba Local Municipality, this was visible during their focus group discussion where out of ten who were present, seven were women.

4.3.3.4. Measures to address non-participation

It is the responsibility of the municipality, together with ward committees, to introduce initiatives that encourage the community to participate in their own development, educate

them and raise awareness on the importance of their participation in general. Such mechanisms must address the aforementioned impediments and other challenges which women in this study have cited as hindering their meaningful participation. This study established if women from the sampled wards were aware of any initiatives of this nature and all participants in this regard were not aware of any programmes or mechanisms in place. This is despite the fact that these participants have indicated different impediments they encounter as far as public participation is concerned.

Despite the municipality having specified that they have never witnessed any challenges with women participation in Bergville as '*they are the one's mainly championing development in their areas',* there was clarification needed for the benefit of the study, if there are any mechanisms to guard against non-participation should it be experienced in any of the wards. Women, especially rural women, are the previously disadvantaged and vulnerable group in society and, therefore, mechanisms need to be in place to ensure that they are included in decision-making and their needs are also equally addressed. In this regard, the municipality officials mentioned that within ward committees there are categories or sector programmes amongst which each ward committee member is allocated to.

Table 3: Ward committees designated responsibilities

No.	Sector programme
1.	Youth
2.	Senior citizens
3.	Women
4.	People living with disabilities
5.	Farm dwellers
6.	Faith based
7.	Transport
8.	Health
9.	Education
10.	Safety

Duties outlined in Table 3 above were the municipality's 'tool' in ensuring that specific women needs are addressed, including challenges they may encounter when participating in development. The specific needs and challenges of women and their ability to meaningfully participate in development initiatives should be addressed within their category and

addressed with the municipality by the responsible ward committee member. It is not clear if this is in fact taking place, as women participants in this study did not mention this address.

Another programme has been implemented in the past which specifically aimed to bridge the gap between the community and the government. A municipal official explained the conception of the programme as a result of communities being ill-informed of the aforementioned sector programmes and the general functioning of the municipality. Although this programme was for the entire community, it should have raised awareness amongst women regarding these sector programmes. As matters stood, a pattern formed where the municipality appears to have programmes which are of benefit in promoting meaningful participation of women in development, while none of the participants seemed to have been aware of these programmes in question. An important question then remains; if such initiatives are in place, who are they benefitting if not the intended beneficiaries and whose responsibility is it to ensure that these are widely known by the public, in order to be fully utilised to their optimal capacity.

Objective number three (03) of this study was met based on findings which alluded to challenges which serve as hindrances towards women participation in development projects. These challenges were unknown to the municipality officials, as during their interaction with the researcher during data collection they could pinpoint any challenge. This study was premised on the 2016/17 Municipality's Annual Report which claimed that dysfunctionality of ward committees was one of the challenges identified as affecting public participation. Findings under this theme, however, suggested the opposite; ward committees are well-functioning and clear on their roles as communicating agents between the municipality and the community. Nonetheless, other challenges affecting public participation were identified. These ranged from cultural traits, low self-esteem amongst women, location of meetings and timing for notices of meetings. The municipality does have a 'strategy', in terms of sector programmes allocated to each ward committee member as discussed in Table 3, to address non-participation, however, it does not directly address these identified challenges.

4.3.4. THEME D: Gender and Development (GAD) theory in demonstrating the role of rural women towards sustainable development

Objective: To use Gender and Development (GAD) theory in order to demonstrate how women in Bergville can be viewed as agents of change in their community who are capable of contributing meaningfully towards development.

Gender and Development (GAD) theory was employed while assessing rural women participation in development initiatives at the Okhahlamba Local Municipality, Kwa-Zulu Natal. This theoretical framework was covered in detail within the literature review, and in essence encapsulates rural women's equality to benefit from development initiatives and their control over decision-making processes as far as development is concerned.

4.3.4.1. Women inputs towards decision-making

One of the indicators for effective and meaningful public participation which results in empowerment is when the community's views and inputs form part of or inform the decision making process. In the rural areas, such decisions and views are shared during community meetings when the municipality seeks the public's views on development initiatives to be implemented in their areas. The literature indicated that due to patriarchal practices in some rural areas, women views tend to be suppressed at times.

Do you think your inputs in meetings inform decision making process

33%

67%

■ Not sure

■ Yes
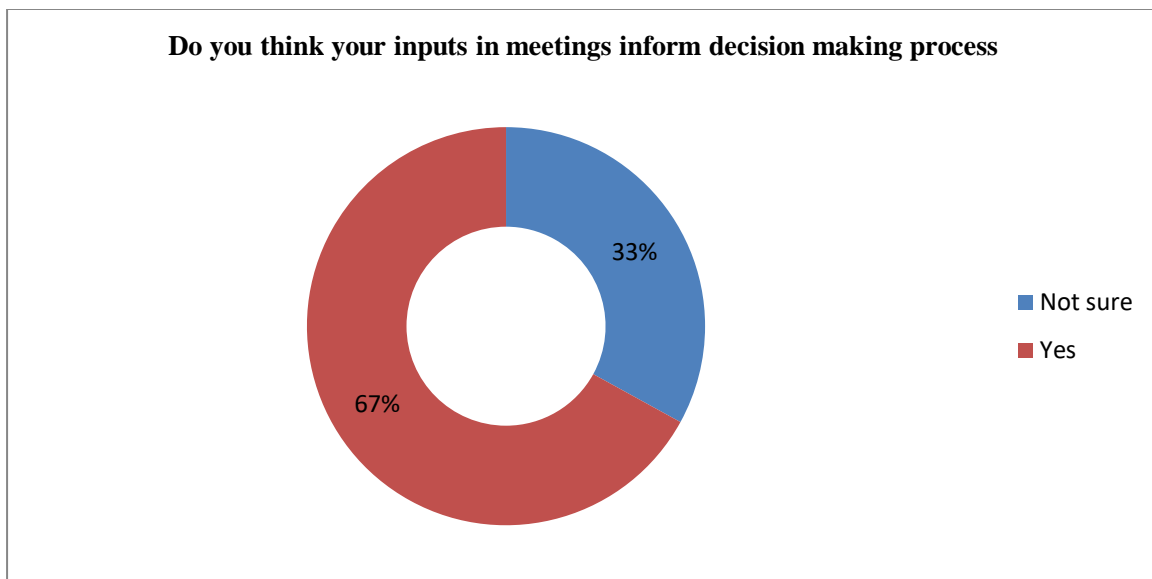
Figure 20: Involvement in decision-making

Figure 20 shows that very few (33%) participants indicated that even though they often express their views and make contributions during community meetings, they were not sure of the decision making process or if their inputs were integrated to the final decisions taken pertaining to development initiatives. However, the majority (67%) were adamant that their inputs and other women's inputs informed decision-making. This was informed by follow-up questions and sparked debates in some instances when women made inputs during community meetings. A detailed response from one of the participants was as follows:

'I believe my views, or any other women inputs, are taken seriously. I once raised a point in one of the meetings about the location of the crèche that was built for our community. The location was not central to all community members and that sparked a debate. I know that my input did influence a decision as the location of the proposed crèche was changed to where it was going to be accessibly fair for all community members. I have also witnessed other instances where women raise valid points and are taken into consideration.'

The above insert shows that even though some participants were not certain if their views as women are always taken into consideration to inform decisions pertaining to development projects, the meeting facilitators do not or hardly demonstrate any signs of bias during discussions. This is further supported by the researcher's observations when attending a community meeting in one of the wards at Okhahlamba Municipality. Interactions during the meeting did not suggest any form of disregard for women's inputs.

4.3.4.2. Equality and freedom of expression in community meetings

In addition to whether participants' views as women in the community do or do not inform decision-making, it is equally important to assess if they are afforded an equal opportunity as men to participate whenever there are development initiatives taking place. All the participants in this regard acknowledged the fact that all the community members are always invited to attend community meetings so that they can make inputs, as far as development is concerned, as such they are all partly afforded an equal opportunity to participate. A woman from Dukuza ward clearly pointed that:

'The fact that we are all invited to attend the meeting means that we are all given an opportunity. There is a difference between being afforded an opportunity and actually utilising that opportunity. I believe as women we are given an opportunity but whether we use that opportunity or not is another question.'

This view was shared by the majority of participants in this instance. However, it remains questionable if a mere invitation to participate in a meeting without the availability of the necessary resources, such as transport, to enable them to attend the meeting is sufficient for rural women, who are known to be burdened by domestic chores and suffer from elderly related sicknesses. This was identified as a gap amongst some participants responses as they pointed out that even though they are all invited to meetings, there is normally a lower turnout of women, as they are often held back home by other responsibilities. Furthermore, this results in women's voice being limited in these settings, as they are not fairly represented. Three participants from Emnceleni ward stated that men's inputs tend to be more dominating, not because women are threatened not to talk, but due to the meeting being mostly dominated by men. We can deduce that while the community is always invited holistically to participate and make inputs in development interventions in their wards, the municipality fails to provide women with support mechanisms required or resources needed in order to enable them to make meaningful contribution in these initiatives as well.

This study further aimed to establish if there is any freedom of expression during community meetings to enable women to contribute meaningfully towards development at Okhahlamba Local Municipality. Women collectively expressed their shared views on freedom of expression during meetings, as they stated that even in instances where they do not actively participate during discussions, it is not due to threats from other fellow community members. This was further established when the researcher attended one of the community meetings, the meeting facilitator demonstrated fairness in the way he allowed community members to make inputs and encouraged collective participation throughout the meeting. This minimised any potential of intimidation, fear or prejudice amongst community members.

Findings under this theme suggest that the set objective was partially met. The findings revealed that women are afforded the platform to make inputs towards decision-making during community meetings where development planning takes place. However, one element that GAD could not offer is an instrument to be used to ensure that inputs made by women during development planning process does in fact inform decision-making. While some women speculate that their inputs indeed did inform decisions taken towards development, some still cannot ascertain that this happened due to a of lack of transparency and accountability from the municipality. Moreover, as indicated within the previous theme, there

were women who participated minimally in the development planning process as they believed they had nothing valuable to contribute. This consequently minimised the women's voice in these important platforms.

Additionally, findings revealed equality and freedom of expression during community meetings, however, hindrances and challenges highlighted under Theme B suggested that women might still not be able to fully enjoy the benefits of such equality. GAD theory emphasises the role of the state, or municipality in this case, in ensuring that women are afforded a fair chance to participate in development. This includes the role to be played by the municipality in ensuring that transport is available to and from community meetings, and that meeting venues are at the convenience to women to accommodate their other household duties.

4.4. Summary
This chapter presented the findings of this study which was conducted within three wards of Okhahlamba Local Municipality in Bergville, a rural area in Kwa-Zulu Natal province. The study primarily aimed to assess the role played by rural women in the participatory democracy through their involvement in development initiatives in their areas. Data was gathered from women in the three wards, municipal officials who are tasked with public participation duties and ward committee members as important agents in effective public participation.

Demographics presented as part of profiling the participants provided deeper insights and explanations behind some of the factors that emanated from findings. Even though the municipal officials demonstrated a deeper understanding of concepts; public participation and rural development, there was no coherent understanding of such concepts in reference to women. Variations in their understanding of concepts was observed, based on their levels of education, age and marital status. This affects their overall participation in community meetings, coupled with other hindering factors mentioned, such as household chores and elderly sicknesses. However, while findings showed that women participation in development activities outside their homes is rather inconsistent due to mentioned hindering factors, it is not totally ineffective. On the other hand, the municipality appears to be slow in acting on any of these challenges, as it is under the impression that the it is performing exceptionally well in facilitating public participation due to proper functioning of ward committees.

However, this study found that there are gaps that Okhahlamba Local Municipality should address in ensuring that women's voice in the development agenda at the rural areas of Bergville is maximised. The next chapter provides a summary of the study, recommendations and concluding remarks.

CHAPTER 5

Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1. Introduction

The importance of community participation in ensuring that rural development responds directly to the needs of rural women has been overly emphasised throughout this study. Central to this is awareness amongst women on their role, functioning ward committees as communicating agents between the community and government and the role of local government in the mobilization of resources to ensure that public participation does take place. Chapter Four presented findings which emanated in the quest to respond to research questions crafted and outlined in Chapter One. In essence, the study was conducted to assess the level of public participation amongst rural women at Okhahlamba Local Municipality in the midst of said dysfunctionality of ward committees. To focus this research question, the study responded to the following primary questions:

a) What are the perceptions and understanding of women, as the majority in the community, regarding the concept of 'community participation' in the context of development at Okhahlamba Local Municipality?

b) What is the nature and extent of women participation in community development projects at Okhahlamba Municipality amidst 'dysfunctionality of ward committees'?

c) What are participatory opportunities and challenges confronting women at Okhahlamba Local Municipality as far as development is concerned?

d) What measures are put in place by the municipality in ensuring that women participation in development interventions is maximised?

This chapter presents the summary of findings, conclusions and recommendations on strategies to be implemented in ensuring that participation of rural women in development is maximised.

5.2. Summary of key findings

To enable rural women to participate meaningfully in development, they must fully understand what public participation entails within the context of rural development and its importance for their own empowerment. In Chapter Two, scholars have unanimously described public participation as a process involving the public in the design, implementation of development and other operations that affect their lives, in order to afford them an opportunity for input in creating solutions. Amongst the participants, only a minority demonstrated this level of understanding regarding the concept of public participation, while the majority's understanding was vague. An identified pattern was that understanding of concepts was influenced by the level of education. The minority (33%) were amongst those who indicated to have attained post-matric qualifications or bachelor's degrees, and these participants described public participation as a process of involving the public in the decision-making process in order to gather their inputs on how development can best address their challenges. They further stated that it is equally the responsibility of the community to be proactive to request meetings with local government authorities through ward committees.

The participants with education levels below matric (67%) demonstrated that their understanding of the concept was limited, as it mostly referred to attendance of community meetings without elaborating much on the role that should be played by the community in those meetings. This type of participation is what Sebola (2017: 25) referred to as malicious or tokenism participation which does not allow the community ownership over decision-making or the final product and services upon completion of the project.

While the majority of participants did not understand public participation and its importance in the context of development, the municipal officials had a thorough understanding of this concept and why it is so important for the community to be actively involved in development processes. This understanding allowed for an extension of their definitions to include if there are barriers preventing the public from participating, it then becomes the responsibility of the local government to remove those. However, this did not reflect in actuality of the society they serve, as the majority of the community did not understand what is entailed in public participation and indicated that there were never any initiatives by the municipality aimed at enhancing their participation, therefore, it is likely the community will not meaningfully participate to ensure that it respond to their needs.

From the researcher's observation, the municipality's assumption is because women in the area make an effort to attend community meetings and participate in development initiatives, they fully understand the concept 'public participation', this is misleading. It is misleading, firstly, to the municipalities for reporting purposes. They assume that the concept and its importance is understood amongst community members, although they have not conducted workshops or campaigns to ensure that is universally understood. It appears that this allows the municipality to further take advantage of the community, without the accountability and transparency required as per principles of democracy.

The findings on Theme B provided a comparison of the three sampled projects, with specific responses as far as participants involvement from conceptualization up to completion. It was uncovered that if the project need was identified by the community itself, the community was then more satisfied with the end results and empowered, as illustrated by the case study of the housing project. Where participants were either not sure or confused about who was the project initiator, such as in the road construction and community hall projects, there were high levels of dissatisfaction regarding the end product. Confusion regarding the project initiator amongst women was mostly sparked by their inconsistency in attending community meetings, as they demonstrated, and their limited understanding of what encapsulates public participation. Between rural women's conflicting duties; household chores and attending or participating in community meetings, they would prefer to take care of their household duties, as they cannot *'let things fall apart at their homes while attending community meetings'.* This is partly attributed to by the fact that they do not fully understand the importance of public participation in the context of development and do not see how it would benefit them in the long term. These are women who have never been inducted into the public participation processes; they merely attend community meetings with no understanding of what is the expected outcome from these platforms.

Moreover, the researcher observed that rural women in this study regard their household chores and roles as highly important. They are not willing to compromise these tasks in favor of participating in development. Even though they have evolved with the times and always attempt to integrate them with other activities taking place outside their homes, the majority is still a generation which strongly believes in socialized gender roles and the importance of their household roles.

Kehler (2010: 46) states that involvement of rural women from planning up to completion of the project in the decision making process is a crucial aspect of rural development, as they are the ones who suffer the consequences when such initiatives do not respond to their needs. Involving communities in this manner ensures that development respond to their needs and empowers the community upon its completion. Participants from the housing project, where the majority indicated that they were involved from the planning stage of the project and identified the need for implementation, concurred with this notion. It is important to note that participants from the road construction were not deliberately excluded from participating, as they cited 'other commitments' as contributory factors to them being inconsistent in attending community meetings where development proposals are thoroughly discussed. However, these findings confirm sentiments shared in Chapter Two which stipulated that involving rural women in the entire project cycle increases chances of public satisfaction and empowerment.

The level of empowerment and willingness to be actively involved in development projects was further influenced by the distribution of benefits amongst participants once the project is complete, whether the benefit is for the collective community or individual families. The findings of this study indicated that those who benefitted from the housing project were more actively involved in the project processes, as compared to those from the road construction and the community hall. In the case of the housing project, participants were more willing to attend meetings because they were aware how housing would benefit their individual families, and no one wanted to be excluded. In the community hall and road construction case, whether one attends meetings or not, they still get to utilize the end product. This again, is partly due to participants' limited understanding and awareness of the essence of public participation. The needs and challenges which development responds to can be, either, for a collective community or individual families; but maximum public participation is equally important in all of them.

General challenges in public participation echoed by participants did not differ much from what was discussed in Chapter Two as general experiences of rural women. Chapter Three emphasised similar sentiments in a sense that gender roles and traditional male authority emerged as major factors which tend to negatively affect public participation amongst rural women. The study revealed that these were amongst the factors limiting women participation in development, as well as low self-esteem amongst women who identify themselves as having nothing of value to contribute in community meetings. Further challenges emanated regarding the municipality where participants identified lack of support resources, such as

transport to enable them to attend community meetings and late notice of meetings. In addition to these, the municipality does not have measures in place aimed at enhancing women participation in development. Even though dysfunctional ward committees were not found to be a challenge affecting public participation as initially considered, there were other challenges that emerged.

Despite minimal participation or involvement in development demonstrated amongst women, findings showed that the few women who attend meetings make meaningful inputs which inform decision-making. Furthermore, there was no sign of intimidation or suppression during meetings which threatened women to form part of discussions during community meetings, as scholars in Chapter Two argued was the case for rural women. This presents an opportunity to enhance the participation of women who did show low self-esteem as a factor which makes them to be reluctant to participate. A fair chance to participate appeared to have been compromised for women in the municipality, as non-availability of support resources for their convenience was stated as one of the challenges. This meant that, in the absence of these resources, women have a lesser chance of participating in development, in comparison to men.

The study established that functioning of ward committees was not a challenge within the sampled wards. What emerged as one of the motivating factors for ward committees' commitment to their duties was the monthly stipend of R1000. In addition to this, ward committees were relatively popular amongst participants, as at least 58% indicated to have known about their existence and duties in facilitating communication between the municipality and the community. However, this was not sufficient, as they are meant to serve the entire community and therefore, should be popular amongst all community members.

5.3. Conclusion

Community participation remains an integral part of any kind of sustainable development to materialize and bring much needed change or transformation in the rural areas. Women as the majority in these areas, their opinions and views on what should be done to address their challenges become the foundation for the success of these initiatives. However, if rural women lack balanced knowledge of what sustainable development and public participation stand for, such initiatives are set for failure (Agnes and Princewell, 2015: 258). This was the case within this study, women did not understand what these concepts stood for and,

therefore, that poses a huge risk development failure at Okhahlamba Local Municipality. The Municipality should not take this for granted or be misled by women's 'high turnover' in community meetings as it certainly does not translate to them being champions of development in the area. It is the municipality's duty to ensure that all community members clearly understand what the concepts are, while being able to put these concepts into practice for their own benefit.

The oppression and marginalization of women in South Africa dates back to the colonial era, as Huston (2007: 83) states that gender discrimination in South Africa is deeply rooted in the ethnic traditions of the multi-cultural communities, as well as by the compliance of women themselves. Such conditions are mostly popular in rural areas where most cultural values perceive women as inferior to men who cannot make important decisions because of their roles as mothers and homemakers. In Okhahlamba Local Municipality, it was found that there are still instances where the responsibility of attending community meetings is solely the responsibility of the husband, as women have household chores to take care of. Such practices have silenced women's voice from the development agenda while entrusting the men to represent her interests.

This further highlights a need for empowerment and educational workshops or seminars which could facilitate the community regarding public participation and its importance for rural women to be champions in public participation in development as a majority within these areas. Rural women are independent beings who are also capable of deciding their own destinies amidst their traditional roles of being homemakers. Huston (2007: 84) warns that if the needs and interests of rural women are not addressed on the foundation level, oppression towards women will continue in the post-apartheid South Africa despite the change in government and existence of several legislative frameworks aimed at gender equality. Constitutional rights are useless if those who need to exercise them are not empowered to utilize them for their benefit and advancement.

Effective and meaningful participation manifests itself through the public's understanding that growth and transformation of their community does not lie in the hands of the municipality or anybody else, but themselves. Moreover, meeting attendances should not be merely about marking the register, hearing what the meeting convener has to say and for reporting purposes by the municipality, but about deliberations on challenges facing the community and allowing them to craft a way forward. Opportunities for democratic

participation can be created in which citizens, not only air their preferences, but take part in a collective process of discovering their interests and of deliberating about the best means to secure those interests (Nel & van Wyk, 2003: 66). In Okhahlamba Local Municipality, it was discovered that the majority of women did not recall how the projects were conceptualized because they were either never part of the meetings or even if they were involved, they could not follow discussions and as a result, they only observed a discussion between the municipality and community members. This is another factor behind a dire need for workshops and seminars with the community on public participation.

There are existing challenges, specific to women, in terms of public participation which the municipality or ward committees is not aware of. These are some of the factors that can be revealed if there is open public participation and a working relationship between the community, ward committees and the municipality. If ward committees work closely with the communities they serve and are popular amongst community members, it may be easier for women to raise such matters with the committee. Alternatively, ward committees can pick specific trends around women participation in the context of development. The fact that the municipal officials and ward committees were not aware of any challenges experienced by women in the area when it comes to public participation, yet women fervently expressed their frustrations, is an indication that there is a break in communication between the three parties. Less than half of participants were not aware who their ward committees were, nor their responsibilities. In order to prioritize community needs, ward committees and their functions must be popularized amongst community members. Mukwevho and Nkuna (2018: 195) warns against government officials who neglect challenges faced by the community as this often result in public unrest that spread across the country.

5.4. Recommendations

The findings outlined above suggest that participation in development projects amongst women in Okhahlamba Local Municipality is not satisfactory and the responsible municipal authorities are unaware. The findings highlight some of the challenges that rural women in Okhahlamba Local Municipality encounter, with regards to public participation, recommendations in line with assisting the municipality to improve public participation of women in its development projects are made below.

5.4.1. Need for seminars or workshops on public participation

There is a need for seminars or workshops to educate and train the community, while raising awareness for the essence and importance of public participation in the context of development. This study revealed that the majority of participants could not clearly articulate what this concept entails and why it is important that they become actively involved in development matters. This expansion of understanding will ensure that, regardless of education, age or any other variable, all women within the municipality understand the concept, their role in putting it into practice and are empowered to participate meaningfully in transforming their living conditions. Such seminars should also be extended to male members of the community, so that they can understand that attending community meetings for input in development matters is not their sole responsibility, but the responsibility of all members of society as change or transformation affects all members equally, regardless of their gender. Women's voices matter outside their home and do not need representatives to be speaking on their behalf.

5.4.2. Resource allocation

The study found that gender roles are still much in existence in Okhahlamba Local Municipality and women are very much invested in fulfilling their household duties. This leaves them with less time to invest in any activities that are taking place outside the home, in such a manner that they choose to stay at home to ensure that things do not fall apart in their absence. Findings further reveal that the municipality is also largely characterized by elderly women who suffer from different illnesses which hinder them from walking long distances. There is a need for resource allocation, such as transport to and from community meetings, for convenience and to put women at ease that attending such meetings will not compromise their duties at home. The absence of enabling resources results in women not being part of the decision-making process, lacking ownership of such projects and can cause hostile reactions from the community.

5.4.3. Public Participation strategy

The municipality should develop its own public participation strategy which will further guard against non-participation. This strategy should be drafted in line with the COGTA guidelines on public participation. It will assist in addressing the municipality's distinct challenges as communities are characterized by different factors and, therefore, may face different challenges that require different strategies to address.

5.4.4. Timely distribution of meeting notices

The municipality develops and finalizes community meetings schedules at the beginning of each financial year, yet findings still revealed that notices of meetings do not reach the community on time. Such short notice prevents women from participating in the planning of development projects effectively as, at times, they already have commitments on announced dates. Okhahlamba Local Municipality should work with ward committees in finding a suitable way in which these schedules can be shared with the communities in all wards. This can include posters at local shops and distribution of pamphlets at schools where learners can take home the pamphlets for the elders' attention. This technique will ensure that the community is aware of planned meetings and announcements, though loud hails can be used as reminders closer to the day of each meeting.

5.4.5. Popularize ward committees

There is a need for the municipality to popularize ward committees and their respective duties to the community. This will set out their role facilitating public participation to community members as others indicated not knowing about their existence.

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APPENDICES

Questionnaire guides

Appendix A: Questionnaire guide for community members

SECTION A: Demographic information

1. Age

18-25 Years	26-35 Years	36-45 Years	46 Years and above

2. Marital Status

Single	**Married**	**Divorced**

3. Level of education

No formal education	
Some primary school education	
Some high school education (Grade 8 -10)	
Post matric diploma or certificate	
Baccalaureate degree (s) & above	

4. Employment status

Employed	
Unemployed	

SECTION B: Community participation

5.   Have you lived in your community for at least five years?

YES	NO

6.   Please provide a brief background on what you understand about community participation.

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7.   What do you understand about rural development?

----

8.   In which project have you participated in amongst the following:

Housing and toilets development project (Dukuza Housing project 2014/15 financial year)	
Road infrastructural development (Mnceleni Housing project 2016/17 financial year)	
Improvement of community facilities (Rookdale Community Hall 2015/16 financial year)	

9.   Was the need to implement the project identified by the Municipality or the community members?

----

10.   Did you participate in the project from the planning stage until completion?

YES	NO

If NO, please explain why

----

11. Please specify other reasons that have hindered your attendance and consequently your participation in any other community meetings in relation to development project in this area?

----

12. What initiatives you know of as been put in place by the Municipality in addressing some of the factors hindering women from effectively participating in development initiatives?

----

13. Do you think that the project that you have participated in and have been implemented in your community has empowered you?

YES	NO

If yes, then how did it empower you?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

If no, please explain why not

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

14.   Upon completion of the project, did you get feedback either from the ward committee
       or the Municipality?

----

15.   How you are normally informed of community meetings due to take place that require
       your participation?

----

16.   Do you believe that as community members you were robustly informed to participate
       in development projects regarding? Please motivate your answer
----

----

17. Do you think as women in the area you are afforded an equal opportunity as men to participate whenever there are development initiatives taking place in your community?

YES	NO

Please motivate your answer

----

18. Are you able to freely express your views in these meetings without any fear, prejudice or intimidation?

----

19. Do you think your views as a woman or other women's views are taken into consideration to inform decision-making whenever there are consultation meetings regarding development in the area? Elaborate

----

----

20. Do you consider development initiatives implemented in the area to be generally responding to the needs of women as community members? Please elaborate

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21.   Are you aware of any existence of a ward committee in this community?

YES	NO

If YES, please provide a brief description according to your knowledge on their roles and responsibilities?

----

22.   In your own opinion how do you think that all the challenges with regard to women participation in development within your ward can be overcome or addressed?

Appendix B: Questionnaire guide for Municipal employees

1.   Gender

Male	Female

2.   What is your job title or designation?

_____
_____
_____

3.   Have you been involved in facilitating community participation at Okhahlamba Municipality in the last 5 years?

YES	NO

4.   In which project were you actively involved in facilitating community participation amongst the following in the past five years:

Housing and toilets development project (Dukuza Housing project 2014/15 financial year)	
Road infrastructural development (Mnceleni Housing project 2016/17 financial year)	
Improvement of community facilities (Rookdale Community Hall 2015/16 financial year)	

5.   What do you understand by community participation in development projects?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

6.   Were the local community members involved from the planning, implementation or management of the projects?

YES	NO

If you have answered NO in the previous question, please motivate why it did not happen

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

7.   From your experience in working with the community of Okhahlamba Municipality, do
        you think the community members have thorough understanding on the importance of
        their participation in development projects in their areas?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

8.   Do you have policy guidelines as to how to involve the rural community members in
        development processes within their areas?

YES	NO

9.   From your own experience, are these policy guidelines useful and relevant in their
        implementation to encourage women participation in development interventions taking
        place in their communities?

YES	NO

Please motivate your answer

_____
_____
_____
_____

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

10. Do you have any other mechanisms in place in ensuring that women as the previously disadvantage and vulnerable group in society are afforded an equal participation in development initiatives taking place at Okhahlamba Municipality?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

11. Are women in the communities you have worked with enthusiastic about participating in the planning, implementation and management phase of the projects?

YES	NO

12. When women do take part at any stage in the development process, are they given the voice of reason with their inputs taken into consideration to inform decision-making?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

13. Are there projects that have failed or did not address the entire community needs partly due to women not being involved for any particular reason?

YES	NO

Please elaborate

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

14. Would you attribute the success or failure of any of these projects to the participation of the community members?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

15. What are the challenges you are normally confronted with in facilitating community participation?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
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_____

16. What factors, in your experience, hinder greater participation by the community?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
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_____
_____

17. Do you have any mechanisms in place in ensuring that women as the previously disadvantage and vulnerable group in society are afforded an equal participation in development initiatives taking place at Okhahlamba Municipality?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

18.   Do you have effectively functioning ward committees in communities?

YES	NO

Are they clear on their role in facilitating community participation?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

19.   Is there effective working relationship between ward committees and your office in
       ensuring that communities participate meaningfully in the development agenda?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

20.   What do you think leads to ward committee members not being committed to their
       duties sometimes?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
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_____

21.   What do you think can be done to encourage and ensure that women's voice is heard
       and find a space in the development agenda at Okhahlamba Municipality?

_____
_____
_____
_____
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_____

Appendix C: Questionnaire guide for Ward Committee Members

1.   Gender

Female	Male

2.   Have you been a member of the ward committee for the five (05) years?

YES	NO

3.   Briefly explain the establishment of the ward committee in your community and how you were elected?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

4.   Were your duties and responsibilities clearly outlined to you as a ward committee member?

_____
_____
_____
_____
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_____
_____

5.   Has the Local Municipality adopted a policy on the functioning of ward committees?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

6.   What do you understand about public participation in the context of Okhahlamba Municipality?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
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_____
_____

7. What do you perceive to be your role in facilitating public participation within your ward? Please outline…

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

8. Do you have mechanisms in place to ensure effective and meaningful participation in development by women? Please elaborate

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

9. How often do you meet as ward committee members?

_____
_____
_____

10. Do you always attend these meetings?

YES	NO

If not, what are the reasons behind your non-attendance?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

_____
_____

11. How does non-attendance of ward committee meetings affect public participation in development interventions in your ward?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

12. What kind of training or capacity building have you received as a ward committee member since your appointment in order to assist you in executing your duties?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

13. In your view, has this training assisted you in promoting public participation in development?

_____
_____
_____
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_____

14. In your view, do you think the Municipality is doing enough to support you as ward committees in order to successfully deliver to your mandate of facilitating community participation?

_____
_____
_____
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_____
_____
_____

15. What other challenges do you face in facilitating community participation?

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_____
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16. What can be done to improve community participation in development initiatives
within the Municipality?

_____
_____
_____
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_____

Appendix D: Consent Form

Title of the study: Women participation in rural development projects: A case study of Okhahlamba Local Municipality

Researcher:	Ms Hlengiwe Shelembe
Supervisor:	Dr Moipone Rakolojane
Program:	Master's in Development Studies
Institution:	University of South Africa (UNISA)

Dear Participant,

You are kindly invited to participate in a research study on the effectiveness of women participation in rural development projects, with Okhahlamba Local Municipality being the research area. The rationale for the study emanated from the Municipality's 2017/18 IDP under the strategic framework which stipulates that an indicator for effective public participation is 'functional ward committees' whilst the same document further explains that one challenge currently facing the Municipality with regard to public participation is firstly 'dysfunctionality of ward committees' which are meant to be functioning as communicating agents between the community and the Municipality. The study primarily aims to assess the effectiveness of women (as the majority in the community) participation in rural development and whether or not their participation is affected by functionality of ward committees.

You are then expected to answer questions on this research topic. Findings from this study will be purely used for academic purposes and might assist the Municipality and you as a public participation practitioner to improve your community participation strategy. You are identified as a relevant participant in the study because as a Municipal employee who is responsible for facilitation of community participation, you are in a better position to provide relevant information that will enrich the findings of the study.

To protect your name and identity, you do not need to write your name on the questionnaire. All information provided will be solely used for the purposes of the study.

Should you need further information on this research project, please feel free to contact the Researcher.

Your contribution will be highly appreciated,

Thank you.