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**The role of public participation in the integrated development plan: A case study of
Mandeni Local Municipality, KwaZulu-Natal**

By

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**School of Management, Information
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DECLARATION

I, Mvuselelo Pardon Nzuzo declare that:

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Pardon Nzuzo

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The participants who were involved in my research study contributed with insight and information. I refer to the residents of Mandeni Local Municipality, councillors, ward committees, community development workers, *izinduna*, traditional council representatives, business forum representatives and many other Mandeni Local Municipality officials.

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my beautiful wife, Mrs Fezile Samukelisiwe Nzuza, my father, Arron Mgezeni Nzuza and my late mother, Them bani Annah Nzuza.

ABSTRACT

Public participation is a fundamental pillar of governance for all democratic states worldwide. In South Africa, the government has passed several statutes that ensure and guarantee public participation in local government affairs. These statutes include, amongst others, the Municipal Structures Act (MSA) of 1998, the Municipal Systems Act (MSA) of 2000 and the Municipal Finance Management Act (MFMA) of 2003. Various sections of MFMA accentuate the need for the provision of clear information and public consultations on matters of municipal finances. Public participation is important in the local government sector as it promotes good governance and a responsive local government. This current study explored the role of public participation in the integrated development planning of the Mandeni Local Municipality. The study found that public participation is key in transforming and democratising local government. Though the laws of South Africa provide for public participation in local government, more should be done to encourage members of the public to be involved. This study results from qualitative data collected in the Mandeni Local Municipality through participant interviews (15) and focus group discussions. Participants were drawn from councillors, *izinduna*, ward committee members, community members, community development workers, traditional council representatives, business forum representatives and representatives for disabled people. Face-to-face interviews were organised and done by the researcher.

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

BP	Batho Pele
CDW	Community Development Worker
CP	Citizen Participation
CP	Community Participation
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
IDP	Integrated Development Planning
KPA	Key Performance Areas
KZN	KwaZulu-Natal
LG	Local Government
LED	Local Economic Development
MFMA	Municipal Finance Management Act
MSA	Municipal Structures Act
MSA	Municipal Systems Act
NCP	National Council of Provinces
OSS	Operation Sukuma Sakhe
PD	Participatory Democracy
PMS	Performance Management Systems
PP	Public Participation
RSA	Republic of South Africa
UK	United Kingdom
US	United States

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Public participation is a cornerstone of South's democracy as enunciated by the country's Constitution (1996) and the White Paper on local government (1998). Local participation through local government is the closest structure to the people. The Constitution of South Africa mandates that local municipalities be responsible for providing infrastructure and services that constitute a vital part of people's lives. The services include water, sanitation, roads, storm-water drainage, refuse collection and electricity. To successfully deliver these services, citizens should participate in the decision-making process. This study sought to assess the role of public participation in developing the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) of Mandeni Local Municipality.

Cloete and De Coning (2005) and Rafique et al. (2023) assert that public participation is a constitutional prerequisite for law formulation or amendment. It is also crucial for democratic sustainability and promoting good local governance and administration. For local government to be sustainable and to ensure accountability, equity, transparency, responsiveness, efficiency and effectiveness, public participation should be part of the decision-making process (Rijal 2023). Furthermore, public participation is an active process in which participants take the initiative and action stimulated by their thinking and deliberation over which they can exert effective control. Therefore, public participation encourages a bottom-up approach to public policymaking and policy implementation (Homsy et al. 2019; Max and Stephan 2022). Masango (2001), indicated that public participation is built into public administration and is the key to developing communities. Public participation in the Mandeni Local Municipality is important for improved service delivery. The study assessed and evaluated the state of public participation in the IDP process and how this has affected local services in the municipality. The goal was to contribute to the body of knowledge on participative processes in local municipality governance. Essentially, this study analysed the role of public participation in enabling the IDP process and how this has affected services in service delivery in the Mandeni Local Municipality. The study investigated how public participation in IDP and, by extension, service delivery can be strengthened in local municipalities, as well as the level of knowledge regarding legislation, institutions and processes of public interaction with the legislative and IDP implementation.

Public participation is an accessible, responsible process through which groups and individuals within typical geographical areas exchange views on matters of common interest. Similarly, it can be

viewed as a public-based process that allows community participation in their affairs (Matemilola and Sijuade 2021). In 1996, South Africa introduced the Integrated Development Planning (IDP) concept in the local government sector. It is regarded as the main instrument that informs and guides all planning and decision-making for the municipalities in the country. The IDP holds characteristics of local agenda 21 in terms of underlying philosophical principles and processes. It is, therefore, a main tool for local government to achieve its good governance requirements (Molaba 2016). This study explored public participation, its principles, and aims in local government. The study also interrogated the types of public participation and its advantages and disadvantages.

1.2 Background of the Study

Mandeni local municipality is located along the northern coast of KwaZulu-Natal. It is approximately 100km north of eThekweni metro and 80 kilometres south of Umhlathuze municipality. It lies along the N2 national and provincial corridor and the north-south rail link connecting the economic hubs of Durban and Richards Bay. As such, the municipality is strategically located to provide services to and derive economic benefits from these economic hubs. Mandeni local municipality is one of the four municipalities that make up the iLembe district, and the other local municipalities are KwaDukuza, Maphumulo, and Ndwedwe. The Mandeni municipality covers approximately 545.48 km and comprises 18 electoral wards. The municipality is predominantly rural, with Ingonyama Trust Lands accounting for most of its landmass. Mandeni has a shortage of infrastructure, including clinics, community halls, tarred roads, and sports facilities. Like many municipalities in South Africa, many residents of Mandeni local municipality are not employed.

South Africa's constitution allows the public to participate in policy formulation at the local municipality level. Local spheres provide an opportunity for the government to interface with citizens. Local municipalities are expected by law to create a conducive environment that allows the local population to participate in municipal affairs (Mguni 2018). To this end, the Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000 and the Municipal Structures Act 117 of 1998 oblige all authorities to design IDP in consultation with the local citizens. The acts clearly state that people must actively and fully participate in the process of integrated development planning. The main aim of the IDP is to address poor planning and ensure that there is sustainable development. It is a requirement for the local municipalities to ensure the adequate and effective participation of residents in the IDP process (Molaba 2016).

For public participation to succeed, it must be managed and monitored correctly. If properly implanted, public participation invokes a spirit of belonging and identity within the community. This prevents the (us) communities and (them) government officials from sometimes resulting in an exclusive government. This has resulted in citizens vandalising schools, libraries, and other infrastructure during protests for service delivery. This comes from the perception that public infrastructure belongs to the government, not the local community because they were never part of the planning process (Mguni 2018). Therefore, IDP in local municipalities provides an environment for cross-pollination of ideas between local authorities and community members (Mathebula et al. 2016). The IDP is designed to promote active participation in the planning and implementation of projects. Therefore, IDP is an outcome of consultation between municipal officials and community members. The Municipal Act 32 of 2000 regards the community as a key player in the IDP process.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

In many municipalities, the idea of public participation in the IDP process remains fragmented, resulting in inefficiencies, poor resource allocation and failure of council programmes. Over the years, the Integrated Development Plan programs have been part of local government governance in the Mandeni Local Municipality. The municipality has been inviting the public to partake in all these programmes. However, despite the public's involvement in the IDP process, the results have not been as expected. According to Masango (2001), the interaction between the public, political, and administrative institutions in South African democracy takes a multiplicity of forms and aspects, which is, in principle, complicated. Notwithstanding, public participation offers a channel through which the public can give inputs into decision-making regarding making and implementing policy. Often, the democratic institutions of government and their concomitant processes and rules, which aim to bring communities closer, appear distant, alien, and perplexing to them.

One of the significant shortcomings across municipalities in South Africa is the lack of public participation in municipal affairs. A lack of understanding of the local government process and the importance of the community's role contributes to the clashes between communities and their municipalities (Turok 2014). South Africa is a country marred by protests against poor service delivery as communities regard it as the only way of getting the attention of those in authority. Often, service delivery failures result from the breakdown of the relationship between citizens, policymakers and service providers. Thus, continuous protest reports raised questions about

public participation in decision-making on issues affecting communities in local municipalities. The lack of necessary information, expertise, knowledge, and capacity are obstacles that lead to the community's minimum involvement in the decision-making processes of municipalities. Most programmes fail because municipality officials do not involve community members during the planning phase. This is a phase that is critical to the success of projects. This study argues that full utilisation of IDP for community participation would reduce unemployment and crime. The current study aimed to determine the role of public participation in the IDP process of Mandeni Local Municipality. This study investigates the current state of the IDP process in the Mandeni Local Municipality, focusing on the barriers to successful IDP implementation and the impact of public participation. The goal is to identify the key obstacles that hinder the effective integration of the planning process and offer recommendations for improving the IDP framework in municipal governance. The study will explore how the Mandeni Local Municipality can better its IDP implementation with local needs and sustainable practices to enhance service delivery and quality of life for residents. By addressing this, the study aims to contribute to the knowledge of integrated development planning, offering insights that can guide municipalities in creating more coherent, inclusive and sustainable development strategies.

1.4 Aim of the Study

The primary aim of this study is to examine the role and effectiveness of public participation in the formulation and implementation of the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) within the Mandeni Local Municipality in KwaZulu-Natal. Furthermore, the study aims to assess the extent to which community members are involved in the decision-making processes, evaluate the mechanisms used to facilitate participation, and identify the challenges and opportunities that influence meaningful engagement.

1.5 Research Questions

The following questions guided the current study:

- i. To what extent has the community of Mandeni Local Municipality participated in the IDP process?
- ii. What has been the impact of public participation in the IDP process in the Mandeni Local Municipality?
- iii. How can the Mandeni Local Municipality improve its public participation in the IDP process?
- iv. What challenges hinder the Mandeni community from participating in the Integrated Development Plan (IDP)?

1.6 Research Objectives

The objectives of the study were to:

- i. Assess the degree of participation by the local community of Mandeni Local Municipality in the IDP process.
- ii. Explore the impact of public participation in the IDP process in the Mandeni Local Municipality.
- iii. Explore ways through which the Mandeni Local Municipality can improve public participation in the IDP process.
- iv To investigate the challenges the Mandeni community experienced in its participation in the Integrated Development Plan (IDP).

1.7 Significance of the Study

This study holds significant value for stakeholders, including policymakers, local government practitioners, civil society organizations, and the academic community. Public participation is a cornerstone of democratic governance, particularly in local government contexts. This study provides insights into how participatory mechanisms in the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) process empower citizens to influence decision-making in Mandeni Local Municipality. Understanding the effectiveness and challenges of these mechanisms can help improve the inclusiveness and transparency of governance structures, fostering trust between the government and its citizens.

Mandeni Local Municipality, like many others in KwaZulu-Natal and South Africa, faces socio-economic and developmental challenges. By examining public participation in the IDP process, this research highlights how inclusive planning can lead to more responsive and sustainable development outcomes. It underscores the importance of community input in addressing local needs and priorities. The findings of this study can guide policymakers and municipal officials in refining public participation strategies. Identifying barriers to participation, such as socio-economic inequalities, lack of access to information, or institutional inefficiencies, enables the development of targeted interventions that enhance citizen engagement in the IDP process.

This research adds to the growing body of literature on participatory governance, particularly in the South African context. It provides a case-specific analysis that can serve as a comparative reference for other municipalities within and beyond KwaZulu-Natal. The study also identifies theoretical and

practical lessons that can inform future research on local governance and participatory development. By shedding light on the mechanisms, successes, and challenges of public participation, this research empowers communities with knowledge about their rights and avenues for engagement. It also encourages dialogue between residents and municipal authorities.

1.8 Outline of Chapters

Chapter 1- provides the background to the study. It explains the research problem and why this study is important to be undertaken. The chapter also provides the research questions and objectives that guide this study.

Chapter 2- This chapter provides the literature review and the theoretical framework underpinning the study. The literature review provides what is already known about the study and outlines what the study intends to do differently.

Chapter 3- is the research methodology chapter that outlines how the study was done. This chapter gives a step-by-step outline of how the study was carried out. It provides how data was collected from whom and how it was analysed. The chapter also explains the challenges that were experienced during data collection.

Chapter 4- presents the data that was gathered and interprets that data. It is a chapter that gives meaning to the data.

Chapter 5- provides a summary of the study and the recommendations. It also gives areas for further study.

1.9 Chapter Summary

This current chapter introduces the study and provides the background. The chapter also elaborated on the focus of the study. This study focused on the lack of public participation in municipal affairs in Mandeni Local Municipality in the KwaZulu-Natal Province. This is not a problem peculiar to the Mandeni Local Municipality but common in many municipalities across South Africa. This chapter also outlined the research objectives and questions guiding this study. The following chapter (Chapter 2) provides a discussion of related literature. This situated the study in what is already known.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the literature review and theoretical framework underpinning this study. The reviewed literature considered all literature that focused on the participation of local communities in municipal affairs and local government. It also focused on how public participation in the integrated development planning (IDP) process affects service delivery. The chapter further conceptualises public participation and discusses its role in service delivery. In addition, it examines the possible impact of public involvement on service delivery and any interrelated factors hindering public participation. The chapter further conceptualises public participation and discusses the role of public participation in integrated development planning, the level of public participation, and the impact of public participation on policy development in local municipalities. Moreover, the chapter examines the constitutional and legal frameworks of public participation. It then reviews the literature on public participation and IDP, particularly regarding South Africa's local government governance.

2.2 Legislative Framework for South African Public Participation

The constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) and other pieces of legislation, such as the White Paper on Local Government (1998), the Municipal Structures Act (1998) and the Municipal Systems Act (2000), provide the legal framework for the participation of citizens in the affairs of their governance (Department of Provincial and Local Government 2005:11). The Constitution, through sections 59 and 72, provides room for public participation in all issues that affect the public. This was operationalised by promulgating the Public Participation Framework for the South African Legislature Sector (2013). This legal framework is cited in this study to provide a contextual understanding. However, its scope does not include local government or provincial and national departments.

2.2.1 The White Paper on Local Government (1998)

The White Paper on Local Government mandates local municipalities to promote local democracy by developing strategies and mechanisms that ensure sustainable engagement with citizens, businesses, and community groups (Department of Provincial and Local Government 2005). The White Paper on Local Government requires active participation by citizens in four spheres of governance:

- i. Voters

- ii. Consumers and service users
- iii. Participants in the policy process
- iv. Partners in resource mobilisation (White Paper on Local Government 1998:33)

Other than this, the White Paper instructs municipalities to promote the active participation of citizens. This means that councillors should promote the involvement of citizens and community groups when designing and delivering municipal programmes. This means that municipalities should devise ways to promote community participation by removing all impediments to participation. Participation should not exclude marginalised groups such as women and minority groups. So, the White Paper places the responsibility of working with communities in the hands of the municipalities.

2.2.2 Municipal Structures Act 117 of 1998

The Municipal Structures Act obligates municipal councils to develop mechanisms that facilitate the consultation of community organisations in performing their functions. The Act instructs the municipal council to review the community's needs and ways to involve the community in decision-making processes. Part four of the Municipal Structures Act (1998) provides for establishing ward committees, which ensures local participatory democracy. The Act apportions the ward councillor to be the chairperson of the ward. It instructs the municipal council to develop the rules that will be followed when the section of the ward committee is conducted.

2.2.3 Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000

The Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000 is another piece of legislation that provides the rights for community members to contribute to the decision-making processes of their municipalities. The contribution includes consultation with community members on developing municipal needs and priorities and drafting the Integrated Development Plan (IDP). Section 5 of the Act calls for community members to be informed of any municipality decision affecting their property rights. The Act is a manual for municipal officials to ensure community members' rights. This is because participation in a democracy is regarded as critical for the development of local authorities (Department of Provincial and Local Government 2005).

2.2.4 The National Policy Framework on Public Participation

The National Policy Framework on Public Participation (2007) outlines the following principles of community participation in governance affairs:

1. Embracing all views and opinions in the process of community participation.
2. Understanding diversity, including race, gender, religion, ethnicity, language, age,

- a. economic status and sexual orientation.
3. Building community participation is possible through empowering role players to understand the objectives of community participation.
4. Promote transparency through openness, sincerity and honesty among all the role players in the participation process.
5. Provide accessibility to ensure that participants in a community participation process fully and clearly understand the aim, objectives, and methodologies and are empowered to participate effectively.
6. All the participants should take full responsibility for their actions and conduct their commitment to implement, abide by, and communicate the decisions taken throughout the participation process.
7. The community participation process should be part of the mainstream policies and services, such as the IDP processes and service planning.

2.3 Public Participation as the Cornerstone of Democracy in South Africa

In a democratic dispensation, public participation in governance is critical in deepening democracy. The involvement of citizens in the processes of affairs that affect them is a pillar of democracy. Given the apartheid history of South Africa, citizens' engagement with the government was not practised. Government programmes were dictated from above and imposed on the citizens. Owing to this background, the government, upon independence in 1994, ensured public participation was a key constitutional principle. Section 195 (1e) of the South African Constitution states that “people’s needs must be responded to, and the public must be encouraged to participate in policy-making”. The government developed White papers in the first four years of independence to operationalise this constitutional requirement. The White Papers clearly articulated the government's stance on ensuring extensive consultation and public participation. In South Africa, public participation is an open and accountable process through which individuals and groups within selected communities exchange views and influence decision-making processes (Masuku and Jili 2019). This definition is in sync with the Constitution's statement that people’s needs must be responded to and that the public must be encouraged to participate in policy-making. The dominating theme in all the definitions of public participation is that citizens are seen as key, and the emphasis is on the active participation of citizens in the developmental matters that affect them.

According to Nzimakwe (2010), citizens in South Africa participate in governance through a range of political rights, such as the right to vote and to be represented in all spheres of governance. Citizens, through their work as employers, taxpayers, residents and consumers, play several roles in the governance of their local areas. In many democratic societies, citizens' voices are heard through their elected representatives. However, public participation should be underpinned by access to high-quality information so that it can form an important element of checks and balances (Pollit and Levy 2007). According to Geldenhuys and Knipe (2000), every citizen has a democratic right to participate in public decision-making on all issues that affect their lives, including local government matters.

Moreover, according to Pollit and Levy (2007), public participation is the most active relationship between those who govern and those who are governed. This two-way process aims to influence the agenda and ensure the power-sharing between the local authority and the citizens in that jurisdiction. It is important to note that public participation is fundamental to sustaining democracy and promoting good governance. Widespread public participation helps public institutions to be accountable to the people and is viewed as a way to prevent politicians from making policies that serve their interests. In other words, public participation is crucial in ensuring that the voices of the people are heard in issues of public interest.

According to Mubangizi and Dassah (2014), participation is a popular word in the development discourse. In the 1980s, participation was perceived as engaging the intended beneficiaries of development projects in cost-sharing and consultation without involving them in defining their development. This is the community or social form of participation bent on diffusing resentment against international financial institutions' reform initiatives. However, Cornwall and Gaventa (2000) posit that participation in development has shifted to political and rights-based participation as citizens have moved from users or choosers of public services to makers and shapers of the policies. Given the above assertions, the concept of public participation has evolved over the years. It is an old concept which has evolved to be what it is understood currently. Molepo et al. (2015) state that public participation is encouraged in South Africa through various policy initiatives such as the Constitution of the Republic, which states that the National Assembly must facilitate public involvement in the legislative process and other committees of the National Assembly. In a similar vein, municipalities are entrusted with the responsibility of ensuring that political, social and economic exclusions created during the apartheid era are eradicated in the new democratic dispensation.

2.3.1 Public Participation

Public participation is regarded as a “buzzword” in most developing countries. It embraces various possible meanings (Meso 2021). According to Dywili (2017: 17), “Public participation is a two-way interaction and communication process, with the overall goal of better decisions supported by the public”. Public participation in the integrated development planning process is considered a critical cornerstone of sustainable democracy. Many theorists also perceive it as having a significant contribution towards enhancing democracy at the grassroots level (Sibanda and Lues 2019). According to Zwane (2020), the word participation has several meanings. Most individuals consider it synonymous with public information programmes. In addition, the word is often used to describe public hearings at which public members comment about a particular issue. However, for purposes of this study, there are four major categories of public participation, as shown in Figure 2.1.

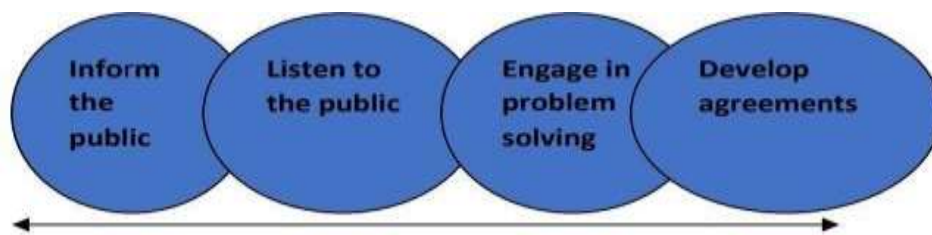


Figure 2.1: Continuum of Public Participation

Source: (Zwane 2020: 40)

2.3.2 History of Public Participation

2.3.2.1 Global Context

Public participation began in the early 1960’s as part of government policy. It was related to urban renewal projects in the United States and the United Kingdom. It has come of age in recent decades, appearing in many countries with different planning and design contexts (Churchman 2016). Public participation can be found in spatial architectural design and spatial planning processes in many countries worldwide. Some countries, interestingly, would not be considered democratic, although they conduct elections, and their citizens have every right to vote (Churchman 2016).

2.3.2.2 African Context

The Constitutions of Tunisia, South Africa, Zimbabwe, and Kenya have different forms of local government with specific commitments to strengthening public participation in local governance. Oliver (2015) summarises that implementing these constitutional guarantees will

reveal the extent to which they positively impact the lives of local communities. In Africa, the turbulent ambition of the 1960s was the initial postcolonial state formation, in which public participation in constitution-making was underdeveloped. Zimbabwe is a typical example of a country that lacks public participation. Though the constitution guarantees that the public should participate in public processes, public participation is often choreographed by the elite, especially the politicians. This results in decisions being made from the top and imposed on the structures below.

2.3.2.3 South African Context

South African history from the apartheid period has little or no evidence of community participation. In essence, citizens were given little or no opportunity to participate during the apartheid era. The reason was that political rights were afforded to selected individuals based on race, resulting in many people not having rights until 1994 (Mehlape 2022). Chapter 3 of the constitution of South Africa states that all spheres of government are obliged to observe the cooperative government principle to give effect to the basic rights of all citizens, especially black people who were historically excluded and still form many of those citizens who are unemployed and homeless. The Constitution entrenched the right for people to participate in local government affairs (Williams 2006).

2.3.3 The Principle of Participation

The principle of public participation holds that those affected by a decision have the right to be involved in the making of this decision. Public participation implies that the public's contribution will influence the decision-making, which is part of democratic governance. This allows the population to participate in decision-making and is part of democratic governance (Fridah and Omwenga 2020). Government agencies and municipal officials encourage the community to participate in the formulation, development and execution of projects. The community ought to understand the benefits of their involvement in local government affairs; a lack of participation by the local community results in a lack of affinity for development results and efforts by the local population. The right to participate gives the local population a sense of ownership of programmes.

It is crucial to have a citizen participation process, and what it seeks to achieve must be clearly defined from the beginning. For the process to succeed, it should have a genuine outcome. At all times, citizens should be encouraged to set the agenda and propose issues to be addressed by the participatory processes. A participatory process should have a clear link to decision-making, and

participants should be able to perceive their impact on public decisions (Bidwell and Schweizer 2020). The municipal authorities should know the expected results of the process to manage participants' expectations. For the process to have meaning, there should be a public commitment to consider participants' recommendations and promptly follow up on their input. Public authorities should inform participants and the broader public about using the input they receive (Webler and Tuler 2021). The participation process should be announced publicly before it begins. Following the participation process, any applicable decision-making process should be fully transparent. How the citizens will participate, the tools for participation, and relevant information should be available early in the process. The results of their input and that of the public should be made public as soon as the process is complete. A communication strategy to give feedback should be implemented for this to be successful. Public communication platforms such as radio, television, and social media can be used to reach out to participants and beyond.

The process should allow all community members to participate without restriction and reflect the community's diversity. In other words, the methods adopted for public participation should be relevant for the intended participants, and all barriers to participation must be removed. Deliberate action should be taken to make sure that the invisible members of the community (people living with disabilities, the underprivileged, the poor and others) are involved. Incentives can be used to encourage participation. These incentives can include remuneration (allowances), reimbursing incurred expenses such as food and transport, and paying for elderly care, among others. The process must have an honest intention. A board should monitor large processes, and a coordinating committee can be mandated to run the participation process. The coordinating committee should be different from the commissioning authority. Efforts should be made to avoid capture of the process for private ends by specific groups to protect the credibility of the process.

Participation in sensitive issues and participants' privacy becomes paramount; their privacy should be respected, and consent from participants should be sought before they are involved and their input made public. All participants' personal information and data should be treated in compliance with international good practices, such as the European Union's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and considering legal and ethical issues surrounding data collection and sharing, copyright, and intellectual property. Participation processes should be evaluated and documented to create an opportunity to learn and improve. Evaluation strengthens the trust of policymakers, the public, and stakeholders. The participants should anonymously evaluate the process based on objective criteria, and the coordination team should conduct an

internal evaluation. The evaluation should be done by an independent team to avoid bias, especially for the participation processes that take significant time.

2.3.4 Aims of Public Participation

Public participation aims to introduce citizens to the governance processes and allow them to be involved as stakeholders. Participation in the governance of public affairs affords citizens the right to exercise their rights (Mnguni 2018). Another aim is to decentralise the decision-making processes and to democratise local government. The conceptual article by Stuurman (2019) argues that public participation is essential for democracy and is a pivotal process for effective service delivery.

2.3.5 Benefits of Public Participation

Public participation is essential to promote good governance and advances the acceptability of decisions taken by officials regarding programmes that affect public life. It reduces conflict and divisions between citizens and those responsible for public programmes. Citizens can develop valuable skills through public participation, such as creativity and problem-solving, which can help them. According to Unathi (2020), decisions that affect public life should not be made without due participation and input from the public about the outcomes and outputs of development. Public participation is not about telling people and spreading information about what is being done but is a two-way process between stakeholders and decision-makers. It is important to note that public participation empowers the public with information about technical knowledge and how decisions in local government are made and implemented (Unathi 2020).

Moreover, Gouwe (2019) summarises that public participation is essential for the success of the operations of public institutions such as municipalities because it allows people to participate in the decision-making processes. Gouwe (2019) further argues that public participation is a fundamental right that is guaranteed in the process of democracy. In this regard, operations are performed accountably and transparently when the public participates in the municipality's activities. When public participation succeeds at any governmental sector and level, sustainability is guaranteed, resulting in good governance (Gouwe 2019). According to Zwane (2020), the public's involvement in the municipalities' decision-making processes improves the provision of public goods such as water, electricity, refuse collection and other services. It also deepens development and enhances democratic governance. The purpose of participation has shifted from merely providing accountability to growing policy transparency. The IDP participation is expected to boost legitimacy, deepen local democracy, strengthen developmental

initiatives, and enhance long-term planning (Zwane 2020).

2.3.6 Levels of Public Participation During the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) Process

2.3.6.1 Public hearings and Izimbizo(s)

Imbizo is a Xhosa word that means a public gathering to share knowledge. *Izimbizo(s)* found its way into government as a vehicle that allowed communities to express their say on matters related to public service delivery. Regardless of their positions, the communities raise interests or concerns that affect them. At a national level, the government in South Africa functions through the National Council of Provinces and National Assembly. These national institutions can call for public hearings when public views are needed to be part of the law-making process or when additional information is required to make informed proposals to Parliament (Zwane 2020). This process usually takes longer, sometimes weeks or even months.

2.3.6.2 Referendum

In a referendum, the citizens are expected to vote on a matter of national importance. This might include changing a constitutional clause or a foreign policy position. This form of participation can be taken to the local government level, where community members are to vote on one or two issues. The results of a referendum are binding to the public authorities and should be implemented (Kwaza 2018).

2.3.6.3 Public opinion

Under this method of participation, questionnaires or telephonic surveys are done with a large population sample, for example, 100 or 1000. These questionnaires or telephone interviews are used to gather information about a given subject. The information gathered is considered a form of public participation (Kwaza 2018).

2.3.6.4 Negotiated rulemaking

This method of participation involves a limited number of stakeholders and representatives. A committee that is established works with representatives from the stakeholders and has a set of questions that should be answered. Given the numbers involved, this form of public participation allows for engagement between stockholders and local community representatives (Kwaza 2018).

2.3.6.5 Consensus conference

This form of public participation involves a small group (15 to 20 people) of public representatives who the working committees elect. An independent successor, a questioning expert whom stakeholders chose as a witness on the panel, is used in this method of participation (Kwaza 2018).

2.3.7 Types of Public Participation

According to Mguni (2018), six typologies demonstrate the different concepts of public participation. These six typologies are:

2.3.7.1 Passive participation

People participate by being told what has already happened or what will happen. It is a top-down announcement by the project manager or authority (Mnguni 2018). Public members are informed about unilateral information in this type of participation but are not allowed to give their views about the project. This form of participation is not credible and leads to failure; it shows the public's lack of active participation in community activities results in the lack of organisation, planning and coordination for the execution of the community development activities (Meso 2021). Thus, the public passively participates as they are not involved in making decisions. In this form of public participation, the public does not have power in the decision-making process, and their participation is dictated by the municipal officials (Meso 2021).

2.3.7.2 Participation by providing information

People participate by answering questions posed in telephone interviews or questionnaires (Mnguni 2018). This is an exchange of information between the citizens and those who govern them; it is a feature of public participation that is important in developing a service plan. Unfortunately, the information shared between the government and the public belongs only to external professionals. The public responds to questions posed in a questionnaire or interview guide; here, participation is pre-planned, and public participants have no opportunity to influence the proceedings. Moreover, research findings are not disclosed or shared with the public to check accuracy.

2.3.7.3 Participation by consultation

Public consultation is a tool that seeks to improve the transparency, effectiveness, and efficiency of Integrated Development Planning. Here, the public is consulted and sometimes represented in development projects. Therefore, officials take ideas from the public representatives and define solutions. Through consultation, the public participates in meetings and forums to share their views. Feedback or information about the outcomes might be given to the public, and their ideas might even have to be solicited again without guaranteeing their opinions or ideas will be considered (Meso 2021).

2.3.7.4 Participation in material incentives

Citizens participate by providing resources such as labour and cash in exchange for other material incentives or food (Mnguni 2018). Why this is called public participation is quite surprising. The public does not have the leverage to continue with the activities once the incentives stop (Meso 2021).

2.3.7.5 Interactive participation

People participate in situational joint analysis, developing capacity building and action plans. In this context, participation is not just to achieve the project's goals but is seen as right (Mnguni 2018). It seeks to adopt interdisciplinary approaches that recognise limited views and use structured and systematic gaining of knowledge. What is important is that decisions are made by the local groups, which means the public has the power to influence the structures and is involved in community development activities. This feeling of ownership is important as it helps the community to have a sense of belonging. It helps collect information about the community's situation and plan the projects. People collectively participate in the analysis, action Plan improvement, and impact monitoring. Participation is structured and interactive, which allows groups to be involved in decision-making and resource management (Meso 2021).

2.3.7.6 Self-mobilisation

People participate in changing systems by taking initiatives independent of external institutions (Mnguni 2018). Under this system, the public initiates self-governing to transform systems. The interactions with external institutions on guidance are established with the availability of resources and technical advice required when resources are used. Such self-initiated collective action and mobilisation may or may not challenge existing inequitable distributions of power and wealth. Personal initiatives of communities are planned and executed independently of mobilisation from exterior institutions. The only difficulty is the economic resource gap, the development burden and the extent to which donors may also be given a role of "hands-off" (Meso 2021).

2.3.7.7 Rights-based participation

In this type of participation, the public declares and works on how decisions are made on all the challenges affecting them. The arena and approaches for participation can be created and managed from inside the country. The resident groups may also embark on their creativities, either entirely of their own accord or alongside an illustration with the help of different institutions. Exercising and claiming positive powers is usually viewed as the hold of the state, and rights-based participation addresses enduring disapproval of mainstream types of public

participation, which is that they eventually leave the status quo untouched (Meso 2021).

2.3.7.8 Izimbizo

Izimbizo is a form of public consultation common in South Africa and a tool for enhancing democracy. This traditional way of managing community affairs found its way into the government lexicon. Within government structures, the *Imbizo* concept is meant to ensure interaction among the three government spheres: national, provincial, and local. This also involves how these government institutions relate to the members of the public. Hence, *izimbizo* is an important concept enabling the government to receive public feedback about service delivery issues (Meso 2021).

2.3.8 Advantages of Public Participation

Public participation has several advantages, and these are worth mentioning. According to Molaba (2016: 67), the following are some of the advantages of public participation:

- a) The community understands the value of their contribution to the governance of public affairs.
- b) Participation builds the skill set of the community by monitoring and evaluating projections during the participation phase and imparting skills to the community members.
- c) Community participation in projects fosters community cohesion and enhances stakeholder relationships.
- d) There is equity in the decision-making process, increased ownership of the solution, and mobilisation of resources through community participation.
- e) Community ideas are shared and exchanged. Active community involvement in planning and decision-making is encouraged, and barriers limiting participation are removed.

2.3.9 Disadvantages of Public Participation

It should be noted that though public participation has several advantages, it has its share of challenges. Molaba (2016) argues that the public participation process requires money to be formulated and implemented. Sometimes, the impact of public participation is not known; hence, results can be different from what was expected. Communities may not agree on what they think is good for them, which may result in conflict, and some projects may be stalled because of the conflict.

The Integrated Development Plan (IDP) has been criticised for its technocratic and materialist tendencies and South African civil society demobilisation because it has mainly been perspective and state-led. IDP has been criticised as a tool for promoting political and bureaucratic control

and viewed as a tool for marketisation rather than democracy promotion. The government has acknowledged that public participation and consultation are sometimes uneven (Dlamini and Reddy 2018).

2.3.10 Challenges to Public Participation

The participation method replicated in the government's decision-making is influenced highly by several factors ranging from contradictions to conflicts and struggles. These can be associated with the economic and ideological apparatus at the local level, not just the political relation of power. Endless rhetoric and platitudes have resulted in decreased community participation in cumbersome rituals. This situation reflects the complications that revolve around the relationship between the government and the public in general. Poor participation is believed to arise from 2 sources: cumbersome bureaucracy and unfulfilled promises in the participation process. Community members consider the IDPs to be pre-designed, and the public is only being approached to endorse the programme (Gouwe 2019).

2.3.10.1 Factors that impact negatively on public participation

Participation by the public in public affairs has been affected by several factors. These factors include lack of transparency, poor communication, conflicts and unhealthy relationships. The latent underlying factors, impeding and facilitating, determine the municipal service delivery level, which is the dependent variable (Selepe 2023).

Transparency is about being open, easy to understand and honest in all transitions, communications, and operations. Meanwhile, accountability implies that citizens have a right to hold the local government accountable and that the local government should explain its actions. Transparency and accountability are related as these two ensure the proper and transparent ways of conducting operations (Selepe 2023).

2.3.10.2 Conflicting factors for effective public participation in local government

One contributing factor hindering public participation is resistance to change. Although government institutions facilitate public participation, local government still resists change. Many government institutions use public participation as a tick box rather than improving service delivery (Magxotwa 2022).

According to Leach (2000:84), project implementation will be faster if there are more intense public participation processes in local government. Communities are not happy at all with public

participation engagements in their municipalities. The positive feedback reports on project implementation are very slim, especially those listed in the IDP (Magxotwa 2022).

Public participation practices want citizens to show a certain level of interest in improving their living conditions. Participating in municipal affairs is the only way to assist community members. There is a lack of desire for change among the officials working in the public participation unit and a lack of desire to change the lives of the citizens they serve. Local governments also lack the desire to improve things, which makes public participation seem like a surface-level intervention (Magxotwa 2022).

Public participation in municipal offices needs a large budget. In local government, funding is a major crisis that reduces public participation initiatives. Local and District Municipalities (LMs) that respect community participation ensures their budget aligns with the necessary activities. Advertisement of the IDP Representative Forum is required in various media platforms to secure the participation of all relevant stakeholders. An insufficient budget could result in a major crisis because other stakeholders will not be reached (Magxotwa 2022). The lack of reporting on service delivery implementation can assist in strengthening community involvement. However, feedback is often not provided to the public. Feedback on community matters is critical in ensuring local governments are accountable and transparent (Magxotwa 2022).

2.3.11 Community Participation Mechanisms that Contribute Towards the Successful Implementation of the IDP

Municipalities are implored to put in place processes, structures, and applicable mechanisms that would facilitate the participation of communities in their jurisdiction in public affairs. These mechanisms are outlined below:

2.3.11.1 Regular public meetings

The public often participates in municipal affairs at public meetings. This fulfils the basic principle of participatory democracy, allowing community members to participate in meetings on matters of public concern. Public meetings, also known as *imbizo*, are derived from the Zulu language and means ‘a convene or gather.’ At an *Imbizo*, community members’ feelings and views concerning projects and services that affect them are listened to. Public meetings allow municipal officials to receive information from the community about projects which affect them. Public meetings are usually held in the locality to enhance community participation, and community members are encouraged to participate. The municipalities use public meetings to prepare and formulate the Integrated Development Plan, where communities identify their issues

and needs.

2.3.11.2 Regular public hearings

Public hearings are forums or structures where stakeholders make formal statements concerning issues (Boer, 2023). They traditionally seek public views on matters where citizens will come, debate, and share their views. During public hearings, there will be oral statements, sometimes accompanied by written reports, where community members express their views concerning issues affecting their community. During public hearings, community members identify the challenges affecting them and how they would want them resolved (Hassan et al. 2023). Public hearings should be held in a neutral space instead of city halls as a traditional method of community participation so that everyone can attend. Public hearings were initiated to ensure that people form part of the decision-making at the grassroots on issues that affect them.

2.3.11.3 The role of the ward committee

The Ward Committee is also called a residential association or developmental forum in South Africa. At the ward level, ward committees are important structures that facilitate community participation in the local government sector. These have direct contact with community members and are empowered to facilitate public participation in municipal affairs. Their proximity to the community members allows them to assess community needs, disseminate information, and identify the challenges that grip the communities. Ward committees were introduced to local government to operate as a structure representing community members (Selepe 2023).

2.4 Integrated Development Plan

Integrated Development Planning (IDP) involves citizens in decision-making to help municipalities find sustainable solutions to development issues. In this regard, it is a participative and cohesive process that is aimed at institutionalising community participation to find lasting solutions to local development challenges (Meso 2021). Municipalities have prepared a strategic development plan through the IDP for some time. IDP guides all local government plans and is supposed to be a participatory and collaborative process that requires stakeholder engagement. It is a crucial transformation process to establish viable municipalities that enable local government to realise its development role and address communities' economic and social needs (Unathi 2020).

The integrated development plan (IDP) is the municipality's principal five-year strategic plan that deals with the development needs of the municipal area that are too critical and the organisation's most critical governance needs (Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs 2020/21). It is an instrument that provides guidance on the decision-making

process and budgeting of municipalities. It is a type of business plan because it is an umbrella plan for specific municipalities and the areas falling within the municipality's borders related to development. (The Practice Group 2017). It is also a management tool used to align scarce resources with defined policy priorities/objectives in the framework. In addition, it ensures integration and coordination, which is broader than other spheres of government, and active engagement of the citizens. It emerged in 1996 as a coordinating tool. (Dlamini and Reddy 2018).

Integrated Development Planning is a decision-making process involving citizens and municipalities in finding a suitable and acceptable solution or strategy to achieve a decent long-term development objective. It can also be defined as the participative and cohesive process aimed at institutions, integrating social, sectoral, environmental, economic, spatial, and fiscal strategies to sustain the ideal resource allocation within the local government (Meso 2021).

In the Integrated Development Plan (IDP), municipalities make strategic development plans that extend over five years. IDP is the principal strategic planning instrument that informs and guides all municipal planning, budgeting, decision-making, and management. It allows the municipality and community to interact and deliberate on local government issues. IDP includes five phases: local needs analysis, priorities processes are established, local vision is defined, and project design is used to meet the needs and integrate these projects with other programs. Finally, the IDP is used (Dywili 2017). Because of IDP's poor implementation, Councillors and Ward Committees are not effectively engaging the public in the participation process; the public seems to be leaving forums for the “invited” spaces of public participation. Suppose structures of public participation such as IDP fail. In that case, angry citizens will likely engage in protests because they view them as a tool that can open doors for public participation (Unathi 2020).

Integrated development planning (IDP) is an important principle of integration, which was required by law and envisioned by the Intergovernmental Relations Framework Act 13 of 2005. The act provided for government spheres to collaborate to address issues such as underdevelopment and poverty, and the participation of communities was crucial for this process. As a policy document, the IDP also needed to conform to the South African Constitution, paying close attention to section 26 about housing rights. Projects were planned based on the planners' and beneficiaries' inputs, ensuring they were planned with people (Xhakaza 2019).

Municipalities have recently adopted integrated development planning (IDP) as a vital planning tool for planning and development and to ensure that available resources are used optimally to

promote sustainable social and economic development. The value of the IDP is embedded in the formulation of focused plans based on developmental priorities. This approach assists with breaking perpetual past spending and curbing wasteful expenditure (Naidoo and Rampal 2018).

2.4.1 The Integrated Development Planning (IDP) Process

The IDP is a management tool municipalities use daily to manage the IDP process. The process plan should fulfil the function of an operational plan or a business plan for the IDP process. It should state the manner transparently and simply what must happen, where, when, and by whom, and the cost of the estimate should be included. The document should be of a high standard and provide an accessible overview through formats. According to the IDP guide pack, the process plan should contain roles and responsibilities, a schedule for the planning process, an approach to public participation, how the process will be monitored, and institutional structures to be established to manage the process (Kwaza 2018).

2.4.2 Procedures for Public Participation in the IDP Process

The involvement of stakeholder organisations and the community is one of the main features of the integrated development planning process. Participation of interested and affected parties ensures that all the IDP addresses the issues the municipality citizens experience. The proposed process of public participation is as follows:

- a) The proposal for strategy is formulated by the IDP steering committee, considering the need to comply with any relevant legislation, e.g. IDP regulations and the Municipal Systems Act.
- b) For approval and consideration, the proposal is submitted to the council.
- c) Once the council approves the strategy, the IDP steering committee will be responsible for implementing it.
- d) In the first meeting of the IDP representative forum, the IDP steering committee presents the strategy. (Dywili 2017)

2.4.3 Key Stakeholders Involved in the Integrated Development Planning Process

The Integrated Development Planning process is complicated and requires various stakeholders to be involved. Planning is participatory and integrative and requires input from different stakeholders throughout the process. Notably, the successful implementation and formulation of Integrated Development Planning depends on community participation and extensive stakeholders (Selepe 2023).

The municipality, communities, councillors from provincial and national departments, chiefs,

community leaders, and developers are the main stakeholders in the IDP. The IDP is a guidance plan for the municipality; councillors are provided with a framework for making decisions. It encourages developers and businesses to participate in the implementation process based on the community's needs. Government departments, such as clinics, schools and police stations, are encouraged to participate by the IDP in allocating resources where local needs are addressed (The Practise Group 2017).

2.4.4 The Importance of an Integrated Development Plan

The IDP assists municipalities in using their resources effectively. The municipalities focus on the most important needs of local communities, using resources available at the local level. The city then finds cost-effective ways to provide services; money will be spent on the causes of difficulties in their areas. It assists in speeding up service delivery by identifying the most impoverished areas as the least serviced and points to where municipal funds should be spent. The stakeholders are part of the process, which makes the implementation easy. IDP provides deadlock-breaking mechanisms for effectively implementing programmes and projects (Nonyukela 2018).

The Integrated Development Plan also assists with attracting additional funds because private sectors and government departments are willing to invest where municipalities have clear development plans and shortfalls. During the IDP processes, decisions are made transparently and democratically due to the active participation of the stakeholders; IDP strengthens democracy. It also assists in abolishing the apartheid legacy and allows the municipality's resources to be used to extend services to people experiencing poverty. It also provides coordination between the national, provincial, and local spheres of government. These different spheres of government tackle the development needs in a coordinated manner in a local area (Nonyukela 2018).

The IDP provides a formal framework for development and decision-making because it has a five-year lifespan. It provides a timeframe for meeting the service goals and delivery of products, and it provides realistic timeframes for the project development proposal. The municipality can attract investments more quickly if the IDP is in place. Participation of stakeholders is encouraged, and a democratic element of the decision-making process regarding the development is provided. Further, the IDP encourages collaboration between provincial, local, and national government departments and agencies (The Practise Group 2017).

2.5 Theoretical Framework

This study adopted Arnstein's ladder of citizen participation as its theoretical framework. This segment locates the topic of the study in a theoretical framework to provide a conceptual platform from which to launch the empirical fieldwork. The latest developments in the literature, including types of public participation, approaches, and comparisons, are deliberated and recognised. Sherry Arnstein's 1969 ladder of citizen participation provides a foundational framework for understanding the dynamics and degrees of citizen involvement in decision-making processes. The model conceptualises participation as a hierarchy of eight rungs, grouped into three broad categories: non-participation, degrees of tokenism, and degrees of citizen power.

This framework serves as a critical lens through which the participatory process can be analysed, particularly in assessing the extent to which citizens genuinely influence outcomes versus being merely informed. At the lowest level is the manipulation and therapy, where participation is essentially symbolic, with authorities using engagement mechanisms to educate or cure citizens without granting any actual influence. These forms are categorized as non-participation, as they serve more to reinforce the power of decision makers than to involve citizens meaningfully. The middle rungs are informing, consultation and placation that represent degrees of tokenism. While citizens may be heard or consulted, the decision-making power remains with the authorities. This reflects a surface-level engagement where input may be solicited but not necessarily acted upon. The top rungs are partnership, delegated power, and citizen control reflect increasing levels of citizen power and control. In these forms of participation, citizens are not merely heard but are directly involved in shaping decisions, setting agendas, and holding institutional power.

By employing Arnstein's ladder as a theoretical framework, this study evaluated the quality and depth of participatory processes, moving beyond superficial measures of inclusion. It allowed for a critical assessment of whether initiatives foster authentic citizen empowerment or merely simulate participation to legitimise predetermined decisions. The ladder thus offers a nuanced approach to examining the distribution of power within participatory governance, emphasising that true participation must be judged not by the presence of public engagement mechanisms alone, but by the degree of influence granted to citizens.

Designing and implementing public participation is a matter of extreme complexity in theory and practice. Practitioners and scholars are not unanimous in defining public participation's objectives, scope, and meaning (Arnstein 1969). Despite various understandings, most of the literature agrees

that the influence of the concept is the key to understanding public participation (Mnguni 2018).

Public participation can be understood as a process that enables the public to make an influential decision affecting their life. The public can get involved when environmental impact assessment is structured based on a normative rationale. Many scholars in the social science discipline have documented the decline of public engagement and participation. For organisations and companies whose existence primarily relies on public participation, like Wikipedia and Facebook, contributions from the public are indispensable in creating loyalty in the organisation (Mnguni 2018).

Public participation implies the involvement of citizens in a wide range of activities for policy making, which includes the determination of spheres of services, the acceptability and budget priorities of physical construction projects to orient programs of the government towards building public support, community needs, and encourage a sense within the neighbourhoods' sense of cohesiveness. Nonetheless, limited empirical evidence can be found to support the argument that people may participate as much for reasons other than monetary incentives (Mnguni 2018).

The constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Section Sections 152 and 195, states that municipalities are obliged to encourage community organisations and communities to be involved in the affairs of the municipalities. The needs of the people must be responded to, and the public must be encouraged to participate in making policies. The white paper on local government (1998) pronounced the developmental local government as a "local government that is committed to working with groups and citizens within the community to find ways that are sustainable to meet their economic, social, and material needs and improve the quality of their life (Mnguni 2018).

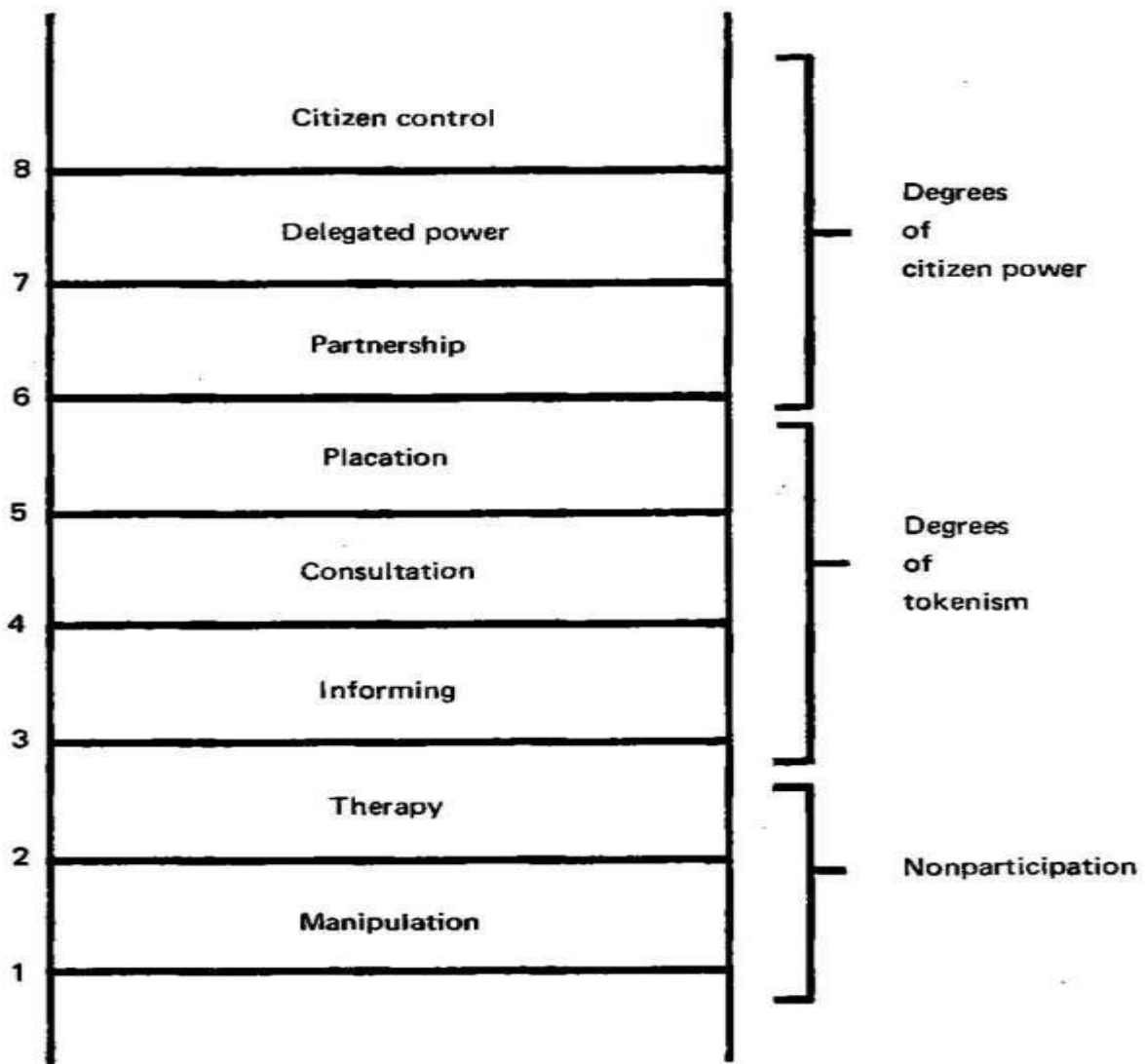


Figure 2.2: The Ladder of Citizen Participation

Source: Arnstein (1969: 123)

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, Sherry Arnstein pioneered a theory of public participation. The particular importance of Arnstein's work comes from acknowledging that there are different spheres of participation, from manipulation or therapy of citizens through consultation to what we might now view as genuine participation, that is, the spheres of partnership and citizen control. The precincts of Arnstein's framework emphasise the involvement of communities in government affairs and allow the public to have power or control in governance by ensuring that they are involved in making decisions and responding to their needs. Each step represents a vast category, within which there is likely to be a wide range of experiences. For example, at the level of informing, there could be significant differences in the quality and type of information being conveyed. It also emphasises giving relevant information that will uplift the lives of the community. Perhaps the most important

theoretical work on community participation was by Arnstein (Mnguni 2018).

Realistically, spheres of participation are likely to reflect a more complex continuum than a simple series of steps. Using a ladder also implies that more control is always better than less control. However, the community may not always desire increased control, and this increased control may fail without the necessary support (Mnguni 2018). Therefore, this study assesses if Mandeni local municipality practices steps stipulated by Arnstein's theory concerning involving the community.

2.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter outlined the related literature on the IDP process. The chapter explained the IDP process in local authorities and how it is conducted. The chapter also explained the challenges and opportunities the public participation process presents. Public participation is key to the development of democratic processes in governance, and it improves the execution of programmes of public goods. The chapter also outlined the theoretical framework adopted to guide this study. Arnstein's ladder of citizen participation was adopted as the underpinning theoretical framework.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a discussion of the research methodology used in the study. Magxotwa (2022) asserts that research methodology is an approach that is used to collect, analyse, and interpret data. Mnguni (2018) states that research methodology refers to the choices researchers make about the data collection methods, appropriate models, and forms of data analysis. Bouchrika (2024) defines research methodology as a systematic method where research problems are resolved by gathering data using various techniques, and conclusions are drawn from the data. This study applied a qualitative research method to assess public participation in integrated development planning. This section explains the research methodology, including data collection tools and how the data was analysed.

3.2 Research Design

The research design specifies a procedural way to gather the required data, the approaches used, and how they were used to answer the research questions (Shandu 2023). The research design is a set of procedures to collect, analyse, interpret, and report on the data in research (Shandu 2023). The research design helps the researcher find the direction in investigating a problem. It is a detailed strategy that is used in the research process. A poor research design may collapse the entire research project in terms of resources, feasibility and time. A research design assists the researcher to make correct decisions and identify what needs to be done. It provides details of the research process at each step and helps the researcher frame the objectives of the research work.

This study adopted a case study design, a qualitative research method involving an in-depth and detailed examination of a specific study. The study focused on the case of Mandeni Local Municipality and its implementation of the IDP process. It is a descriptive case study that describes the phenomenon in detail. A descriptive case study aims to define, observe and analyse a particular phenomenon in depth. This study sought to provide a comprehensive, detailed account of the implementation of the IDP process in the decision-making process of the Mandeni Municipality; the study adopted qualitative data collection methods such as interviews and observations to achieve this. The findings are often presented as a narrative highlighting key themes, patterns, and insights without generalising to a broader population.

3.3 Qualitative method

Qualitative research allows the researcher to select contexts and activities that provide an opportunity to understand how things work (Xhakaza 2019). The qualitative method is regarded as a method that develops explanations of social phenomena. It is said to be more associated with the opinions, feelings, and experiences of the individuals producing subjective data (Xhakaza 2019). This current study adopted the qualitative approach to collect and analyse data. The qualitative method provides the researcher with an understanding of the phenomenon by interacting with and observing the study's contributors (Shandu 2023). Qualitative researchers are primarily interested in clarifying and investigating the phenomena that occur in natural conditions. They investigate phenomena in ordinary settings, seeking to interpret or make sense of the phenomena in terms of the significance that people assign them. (Shandu 2023).

The advantage of the qualitative method is its capacity to describe participants rich in thought processes and focus on why a particular phenomenon occurred (Shandu 2023). The term qualitative data refers to data that are not in numbers. In other words, the data cannot be measured with complex statistics, mathematics, or a fixed scale (Shandu 2023). In this study, Interviews were conducted with the IDP manager and public participation officials of Mandeni Municipality, ward councillors, *izinduna*, disabled representatives, and business forum representatives.

3.4 Study Area

The study was conducted in Mandeni Local Municipality, under the Ilembe district. Mandeni Local Municipality is located along the North Coast of KwaZulu-Natal. It is approximately 100km North of eThekweni Metro and 80km South of Mhlathuze Municipality. The municipality is strategically located to provide services and derive economic benefits from these economic hubs. Mandeni Local Municipality is one of the four municipalities that comprise the iLembe District. Mandeni Local Municipality comprises eight (8) electoral wards and covers approximately 545.48 km² (Mandeni Local Municipality IDP 2022/23).



Figure 3.1: Area of Study

Source: Mandeni Local Municipality (2022: 23)

There are informal settlements with limited infrastructure or services in the Mandeni local municipality. Development is less in the periphery of the well-established Mathonsi Traditional Council and Sundumbili Township. The iSithebe Industrial Estate is one of the main industrial areas within the iLembe District, offering cost-effective production space with import and export commodities. The iSithebe Industrial Estate (iSithebe) and SAPPI Tugela Mill provide opportunities to grow and attract large-scale manufacturing and heavy industry to Mandeni Municipality (Mandeni Local Municipality 2022/23).

3.5 Targeted Population

According to Gouwe (2019), a population consists of individuals or all the items about whom or which the researcher wants to conclude. A sample is selected from the target population for analysis. For the current study, the researcher selected a sample from the target population instead of conducting a census of the entire population (Gouwe 2019). The targeted population of the study was the public participation staff, IDP staff, members of the community, ward committees, *izinduna*, councillors, business forum representatives, people with disabilities representatives, and traditional council representatives under Mandeni local municipality. Participants were interviewed to get their perspectives and views regarding the public participation role in the

Integrated Development Plan (IDP). The target population for this study is the Mandeni Local Municipality. The reason why the study targeted this population is because they were responsible for IDP in the municipality. All officials that were interviewed are above the age of 18. A descriptive sample of the population was drawn from all levels of the municipality.

3.6 Sampling

A sample is regarded as a set of elements selected from a population to get consistent estimations of the population being researched (Unathi 2020). It is the population subset whose characteristics will be generalised to the larger population (Unathi 2020). In other words, it is a unique subset of the population that must have characteristics of the population to represent the whole (Unathi 2020). Mehlaphe (2022) posits that there are two types of sampling: probability and non-probability sampling. In qualitative research, sampling is not simple but a challenging and contentious process. Because the sampling methods under qualitative research lack representativeness, they have been criticised as subjective.

The sampling techniques under the qualitative design are classified as non-probability, meaning the “samples are gathered in a process that does not give all the participants or units in the population equal chances of being included” (Etikan et al. 2016: 98). In other words, in non-probability sampling, randomisation is unimportant in selecting a sample from the population of interest. Instead, subjectivity is employed to decide on elements of inclusion and exclusion in the sample. This study used purposive sampling, which Marshall (1996: 523) calls ‘judgemental’ sampling, to select respondents. The purposive sampling technique is the deliberate choice of participants due to the qualities the participants possess. Yin (2011: 43) provides a very salient definition of purposive sampling, which he calls ‘purposeful’ sampling. He defines purposeful sampling as “the selection of participants or data sources to be used in a study based on their anticipated richness and relevance of the information they provide”. It is a non-probability sampling technique common with a qualitative design that does not need a set number of participants. Simply put, the researcher has the discretion to decide who should participate as respondents, provided they have the requisite knowledge and experience (Etikan et al. 2016). The underlying factor in the choice of the participants through purposive sampling is the identification and selection of information-rich participants.

This study did not need to be generalised to the whole population, so a non-probability sampling technique was adopted. Therefore, judgemental sampling allowed the researcher to purposefully select officials in the IDP and public participation department. The study identified 15

participants who were purposefully selected for their knowledge and expertise in IDP. These included the IDP manager, public participation officials, ward councillors, ward committees, community members, *izinduna*, representatives for people with disabilities, representatives for traditional council, and business representatives. Not everyone has knowledge and expertise on public participation, especially the IDP process. Therefore, the researcher had to identify participants that would provide the needed data.

This study employed purposive sampling to select participants who possess specific characteristics and knowledge relevant to the research objectives. Purposive sampling technique is particularly appropriate when the aim is to gain in-depth insights from individuals who are especially knowledgeable about or experienced in the subject matter under investigation. The subject of public participation is not a subject that is familiar to all community members. Not all community members understand the nuances of public participation in municipal affairs. For this reason, purposive sampling was applied to select the fifteen participants who were knowledgeable about the subject of public participation. The nature of this study required the inclusion of participants who met the predefined criteria, such as their professional roles, lived experiences or involvement in a specific activity. So, purposive sampling ensured that the data collected were meaningful and directly aligned with the focus of the study. Moreover, purposive sampling allows the researcher to focus on information-rich cases that can illuminate the phenomenon of interest. Rather than seeking generalisability, the study emphasised depth over breadth, which is consistent with qualitative research approaches or studies aimed to explore complex, contextual, or nuanced issues.

Table 3 1: Sample Population

NO	Institution	Role	Number of participants
1	Community members for Mandeni municipality	To ensure that they are involved in projects planning	2
2	Mandeni Municipality (IDP)	IDP Manager providing support to the community	1
3	Mandeni Municipality (Public Participation)	Public Participation Officer responsible for community participation.	2

4	Ward committees	Representing people in the ward	2
5	Ward councillors	Representing municipality and community	2
6	Izinduna	Representing traditional council	2
7	Business Forum representatives	Representing businesses in Mandeni	2
8	People with disability representative	Representing people with disability	1
9	Tribal/traditional council representative	Representing tribal council	1
	Total		15 participants

3.7 Data collection methods

3.7.1 Focus Group Discussion

A focus group discussion is a system whereby a researcher gathers a group of individuals to talk about a particular issue to obtain the participants' views, personal involvement, approaches, and observations. Focus groups are commonly directed in groups; they are one-on-one interviews on a specific topic piloted by a trained researcher. The focus group's purpose is to contribute valuable information on the topic.

The researcher took great care in choosing the tools to collect data for this current study. Focus group interviews were conducted to get in-depth data about public participation and Integrated Development Planning (IDP). The participants shared their experiences, feelings, and opinions about the process of IDP. The researcher put participants in groups to discuss public participation in municipal affairs. This subject generated much interest from the participants, especially community members. Though the researcher controlled the direction of the conversation, participants in the focus group discussion were free to express their views on the matter under discussion. The researcher made sure bias was avoided by involving members who were passive and not focusing on members that are active alone. Group discussions are effective and best when diverse people are mustered to deliberate on the question and raise ideas and opinions. A group situation often provides a more relaxed platform and allows for open discussion among all participants. Group participants serve as stimulants of the brain to each other, allowing for a much

more intense argument and discussion of concerns (Dyum 2020). Therefore, group discussion is an effective way of collecting valuable information. The recruitment of participants using this technique is very important (Dyum 2020).

Focus Group Discussions were employed for data collection in this current study due to their ability to generate rich, detailed insights through interactive dialogue. This was a study that sought to get the views of community members on public participation, hence, focus group discussions. Focus Group Discussions leverage on group dynamics to get a range of perspectives and enable participants to build upon each other's responses. Responses that could have gone unnoticed came out through focus group discussions. This study sought to understand the collective experiences of community members on public participation, so focus group discussions were ideal. Focus Group Discussions are valuable for identifying not only what people think, but how and why they think that way. So group interaction often reveals underlying values, beliefs and assumptions that might not emerge in one-on-one interviews. Since this study wanted to get the views of the community, focus group discussions allowed data collection from multiple participants simultaneously. With the company of other participants, participants felt comfortable and confident to express their views.

3.7.2 Interviews

Interviews are regarded as the most popular system of collecting data and are the method that is most suitable when individuals want to collect structured information (Shandu 2023). An interview is loosely defined as the exchange of information between the interviewer and the interviewee in a formal engagement. In research, conversations are a vital method to collect data so that researchers gain knowledge about a given phenomenon (Alvesson and Kärreman 2011).

Interviews constitute an important form of data collection in qualitative research. According to Walliman (2011), an interview is a very flexible tool to gather data in qualitative research. The flexibility of the data collection instruments was necessary for this study as it allowed the researcher to pose relevant questions to every participant without sticking to a script. Several interviews can be used in qualitative research to gather data. These include structured interviews, semi-structured interviews, and unstructured interviews. For this study, the interviews were conducted using a semi-structured interview schedule; this was decided on the basis that semi-structured interviews are systematic and keep the interview focused. Fifteen participants were interviewed separately using the semi-structured interview schedule. The interviews took a maximum of an hour each.

The interviews were selected as a data collection tool for this study due to their effectiveness in capturing in-depth insights, personal experiences, and subjective perceptions that are not easily accessible through other methods. Interviews provide the flexibility to explore complex issues, probe deeper into responses, and clarify ambiguities in time. This is particularly valuable given the aims of this current study, as it sought to understand the motivations and nuanced dynamics of public participation. Moreover, interviews were well suited for this study because it was an interpretive study whose goal was to get contextual understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. The interviews allowed the participants to express their views in their own words, and this enabled the researcher to gather detailed narratives, which enhanced the depth and quality of the data. Through the interviews, the researcher was able to build rapport and trust with the participants, which encouraged more candid and authentic responses.

3.7.3 Observation

Another tool that was used to gather data was observation. Observation was used as a data collection tool to observe research subjects as they go about their daily lives; it involves taking in-depth notes and recording material (Shandu 2023). Observation in research is important as it helps add depth to the phenomenon under investigation. The observation was made possible because the researcher stayed in the area where data was collected. The purpose of observation in the study was to enable the researcher to understand the socio-political dynamics and assess the behaviour of the dominant groups (Dyum 2022).

3.8 Data Quality Control

Data trustworthiness is essential in research. The trustworthiness of the collected data was ensured by checking the consistency of the emerging themes in the data. It was ensured that the research was impartial and did not have biases emanating from the sampling, researcher, and data collection. To ensure that personal biases did not get in the way, the researcher kept detailed and accurate documentation to ensure that themes were represented authentically and reflected the data collected.

A well-structured interview was conducted, during which the researcher witnessed and identified what transpired. This validation gave the researcher a better understanding of the municipal officials, community members, people with disabilities representatives, business forum representatives, and traditional council representatives. In this study, the researcher ensured that adaptability, consistency, and credibility were applied throughout the research process.

3.9 Data Analysis

According to Mbelengwa (2016), data analysis is the opportunity to make sense of the data by reducing, consolidating, and giving it meaning. Mbelengwa (2016) further indicates that the structure, order, and meaning of the data collected can be accomplished through data analysis. Furthermore, he indicates that the final steps in data analysis involve data interpretation, which means attaching meaning to the data. The researcher was circumspect in making sense of the captured data and moved from raw data, reducing and consolidating this data into evidence-based interpretations.

There are several systems for analysing qualitative data. The data collected through focus group discussions, interviews, and observations were recorded and transcribed accurately. This was done to avoid data loss (Shandu 2023). Recording is regarded as an enormous and effective method for piloting focus groups and interviews. It gives freedom to the respondents to respond openly and is the best way to analyse data and gather feedback (Shandu 2023). With the prior consent of the participants, the focus group discussions and interviews were recorded. However, some participants did not want to speak on camera. Their objections were noted, and the researcher used a notebook to write down the views of these participants. Ethical considerations are quite important during data collection. The researcher ensured every participant knew the data collection process was being recorded. Those who did not wish to be recorded were allowed to express their objections.

The study adopted thematic analysis, which is a qualitative analytic method for identifying, analysing, and interpreting patterns of meaning (themes) within textual data. It provides a flexible and accessible approach to analysing qualitative data, particularly suited for examining participants' perspectives, experiences, and viewpoints. Thematic analysis typically follows a systematic process, as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006), which includes six key phases: (i) familiarisation with data, (ii) Generating initial codes, (iii) searching for themes, (iv) reviewing themes, (v) defining and naming themes, and (vi) producing the final report. This method allowed the researcher to move beyond individual statements and uncover broader insights that emerge across a dataset. One of the strengths of thematic analysis is its theoretical freedom- it can be applied within a range of epistemological and ontological frameworks, from realist to constructionist paradigms. It is particularly effective in exploring complex and nuanced data, making it a valuable tool in fields such as psychology, sociology, education and health research.

The first step the analysis took was for the researcher to familiarise themselves with the data through reading and re-reading the transcribed data. This helped the researcher to gain a deep understanding of the content and note recurring ideas. The audio interviews were transcribed verbatim. Once the researcher had familiarised themselves with the data, texts that were aligned to the research questions were identified. These texts were given labels (codes) that describe the importance of the excerpt. This was done manually. The coded texts were grouped into themes, which were broader patterns that capture the importance of the excerpt in relation to the research questions. Related themes were grouped to explore how these themes relate to each other. The themes are reviewed and refined to ensure that they accurately represented the data set as a whole. This involved checking if the data within the themes cohered meaningfully. Some themes were combined, broken down, and some were discarded.

3.10 Ethical Considerations

The researcher received an ethical clearance certificate from the University of KwaZulu Natal for conducting the research. Furthermore, a gatekeeper's letter from the Mandeni Local Municipality was provided to the researcher to conduct research within the municipality. The municipality issued a permission letter to conduct the research with relevant municipal officials. Consent forms were presented to participants indicating the risks of participating or being involved in the study, should there be any. Respondents read the consent forms given to them and signed to participate in the study willingly. Participation was voluntary, and the participants were assured anonymity and confidentiality as they were not required to provide or write out their names and contact details.

3.11 Chapter Summary

Research methodology is as significant as ontology and epistemology when embarking on the scientific enquiry. Lucid accounts of how the research procedures were followed in the study were discussed in this chapter. The chapter elaborated on the research design, sampling design, data collection and analysis process. Both qualitative and quantitative quality control were justified. The researcher provided an account of how the research participants were protected against any possible harm.

CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter discussed the research approach employed to gather data for this current study. The preceding chapter also outlined how the data was analysed. This chapter presents data from the interviews, focus group discussions, and observations. The data is presented considering the emerging themes aligned with the research questions and objectives. The interpretation of the research findings follows the data presentation. These attach meaning to the data.

4.2 Respondents' Demographics

The first phase of data presentation is the respondents' demographics. The following sections provide a summary of the respondents' demographic details.

4.2.1 The Gender of Respondents

The study initially targeted 22 participants to take part in the study. Of the 22 targeted participants, 15 agreed to participate in the study. This represents a response rate of 68%, which is sufficient if the waiver analysis is considered. The waiver analysis considers what is at hand rather than the expected sample (Creswell 2014). The current study attempted to balance gender by having equal representation of both males and females. Though deliberate efforts were made to have gender balance, male participants dominated the study. Nine male participants participated in the study, representing 60% of all the participants. This is against four females who participated in the study, constituting 26.6% of the participants in the study. The other two participants did not want to be identified as either male or female, representing 13.3%. The attempt to have a balanced distribution of gender among the participants was a deliberate action by the researcher. This was conducted to get the views of both males and females in public participation. However, not enough females were available to participate in the study, so the dominant percentage of males was absent. Figure 4.1 presents the gender patterns of respondents.

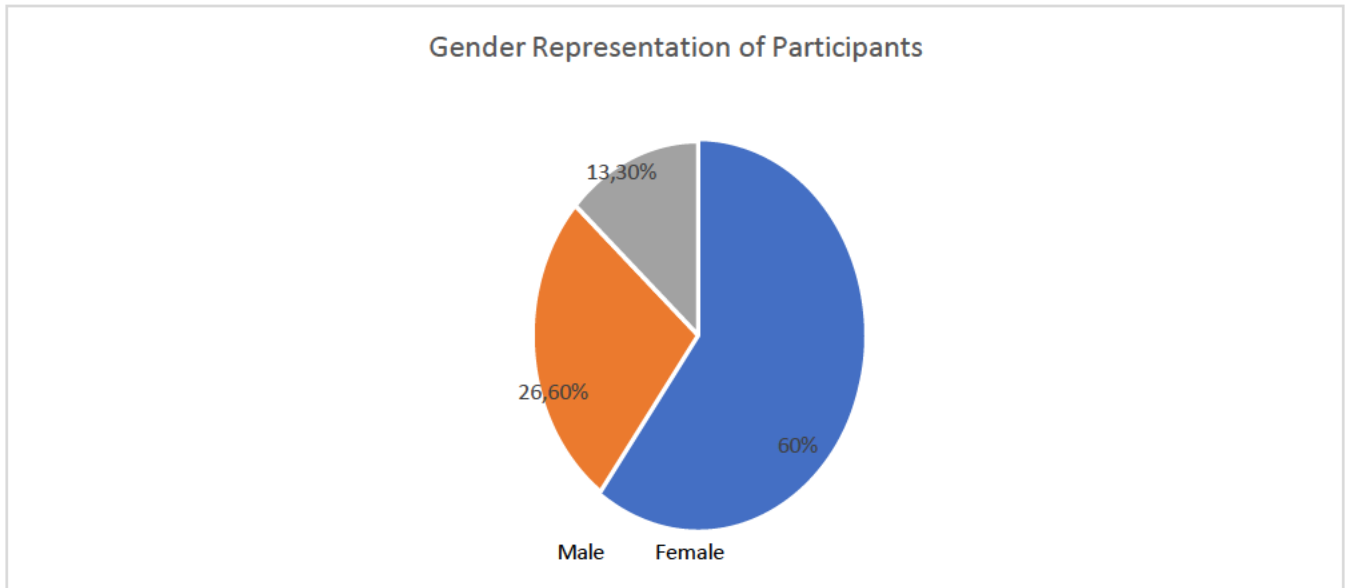


Figure 4.1: Gender Representation of Participants

4.2.2 Age of Respondents

The age of respondents was to be determined to ensure that no people under 18 took part in the focus group discussions and interviews. The respondents were divided into age groups (18-35 years, 36-45 years, 46-55 years, and 56 years and above). The ages of the respondents are presented in Figure 4.2.

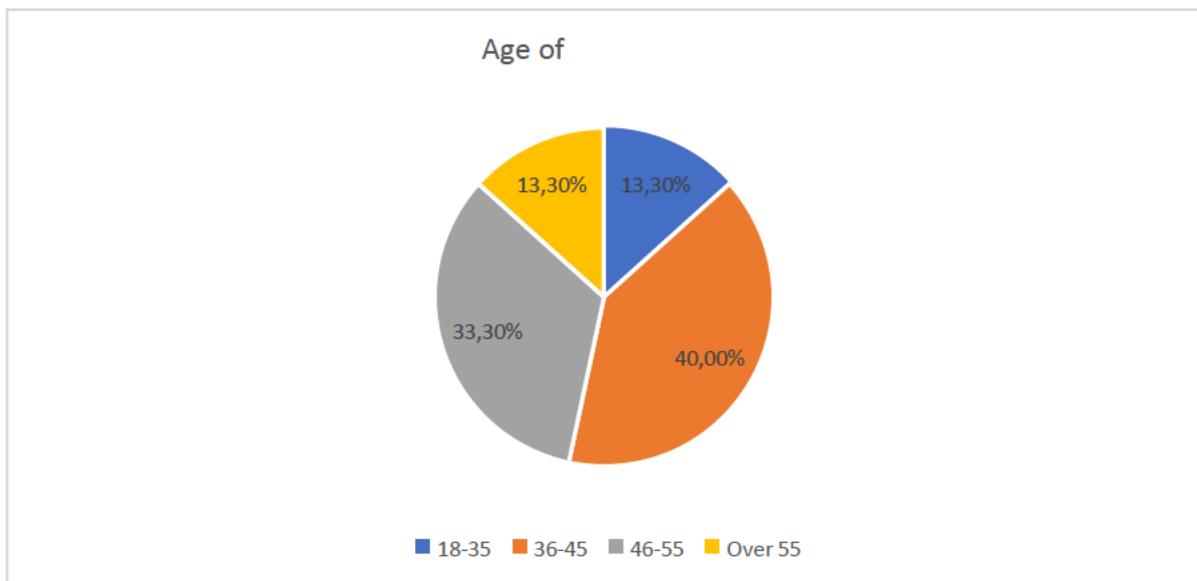


Figure 4.2: Age of Respondents

4.2.3 Racial Representatives

The KwaZulu-Natal province and the Mandeni local municipality are racially diverse. However, the province's population is predominantly black African. This is also reflected in the participants

who took part in the study. Ten black Africans participated in the study, constituting 66.6% of the total participants. This is followed by two Indians (13.3%), two Colored (13.2%), and one white participant (6.6%). The racial composition of respondents is provided in Figure 4.3.

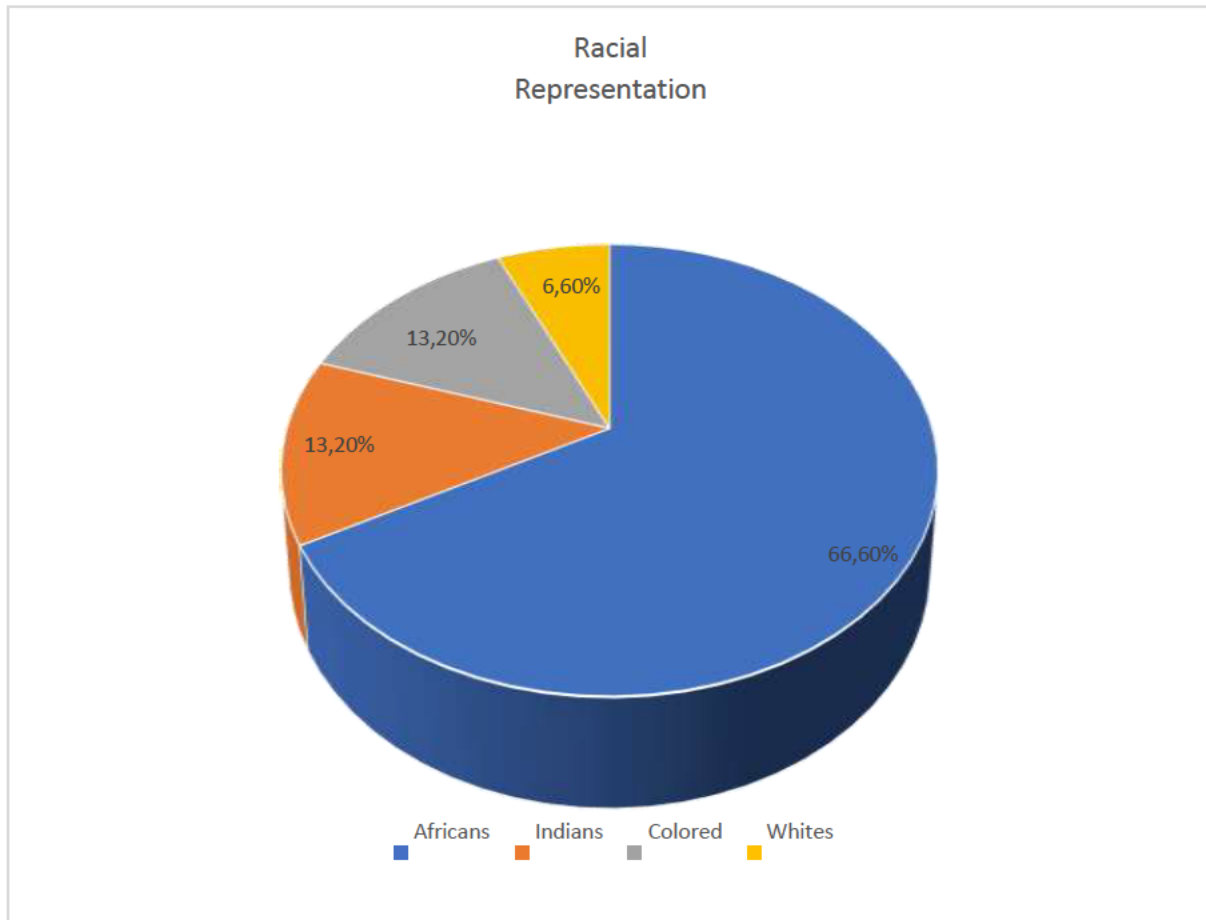


Figure 4.3: Racial Representation

4.3 Data Presentation and Analysis

The IDP process embraces the "leaving no one behind" principle in the form of public participation to ensure that different stakeholders participate in municipal affairs to determine their desired services and aspirations without discrimination. The data was generated from interviews, focus group discussions, and observations. It was grouped into themes to create a narrative and sequence in the presentation. The first theme that emerged from the data was the mechanisms and platforms of public participation in communities. From the data, it was evident that participants agreed unanimously that the attendance of community members at IDP was not good. This lack of community participation in IDPs was a result of the mechanisms and platforms which were available for public participation. This observation was in line with Mamokhere (2022), who posits

that despite the IDP process in many municipalities embracing the ‘leaving no one behind’ principle, the participation of community members in the IDP process was not pleasing.

This reality is in line with the first two levels of Arnstein’s ladder of participation. The first two levels of Arnstein’s ladder of public participation describe participation at these levels as manipulation and therapy. At this stage, public participation is only symbolic. This is confirmed by the respondents who articulated that they had a vague understanding of IDPs and public participation in general. In addition, some participants mentioned that the rate of public participation in the IDP is 40 per cent because the IDP process is not organised in time, and it happens during the week while other people are at work. This had to do with the mechanics of public participation. However, some participants indicated that attendance could improve if the IDP occurs during the weekends. One participant (F) posited:

“Some of the community members, CDWs, and ward committees suggested that the wards must not cluster wards during the IDP since they pose challenges in terms of transportation. Moreover, the IDP processes should take place on weekends to improve attendance. During the week, people are occupied with work commitments.”

The above assertion aligns with Martin's findings (2020), which indicated that public meetings are usually not well planned, advertised, and attended unless a contentious concern that affects most people needs to be discussed.

Another important theme from the data was the types of public participation. This had to do with the issue of platforms of public participation. The data revealed that some of the participants were aware of the platforms of public participation that are used in the IDP process in the Mandeni Municipality. They identified the platforms of public involvement used in Mandeni Municipality, such as *Izimbizo*, Facebook, radio stations, Farmers’ associations, and newspapers. This showed that some participants were aware of the forms of public participation. Since Mandeni Municipality is in the rural area people have not access to the network and to social media platform and makes them disadvantaged. One participant (B) in the focus group discussions indicated that:

One participant (B) in the focus group discussions indicated that:

“They use the IDP representative forum, farmers association, izimbizo, Facebook, radio stations, and newspapers. It will undoubtedly motivate and improve [the] morale of

public participation because fewer people will be unaware of an IDP because it is widely spread on all platforms but there is a challenge with network in most of the areas since they are staying in deep rural areas.”

Another participant (A) added:

“The municipality uses izimbizo, Facebook newspapers, radio stations, community meetings, SMSs, and calls to encourage people to attend IDPs. The municipality must include SMSs and calls to encourage people to attend IDPs.”

Izimbizo, community meetings, newspapers, and radio stations are the best platforms of public participation that Mandeni Local Municipality uses. It will positively impact and motivate most participants to believe in these types of public participation used in the Mandeni Local Municipality. The views shared above by participants are in sync with the findings of Meso (2021), who posits that *Izimbizo* is regarded as a very useful weapon in South Africa for strengthening democracy as a form of public forum. Though *Imbizo* is critical in fostering community engagement on matters of public interest, it is not appropriately utilised. This is a traditional mode of engagement and public participation in matters of public interest that has infiltrated modern governance. The government has adopted *Izimbizo* to facilitate regular interaction and discourse between the three spheres of government (national, provincial, and local spheres) and public members. *Izimbizo* was conceptualised within all levels of government as a means of transmitting the objectives of the ordinary masses to levels of decision-making. Hence, *izimbizo* is considered a key tool available to the government to deal with all the concerns about service delivery.

Community meetings such as *izimbizo* play a critical role in public engagement and are situated at various rungs of Arnstein’s ladder of public participation. Community meetings often fall within the middle rungs- consultation or placation- especially when they are used to gather feedback without guaranteeing that community input will influence decisions. This is what is happening in the Mandeni local municipality. Despite the municipality conducting *izimbizo* community meetings, there is no guarantee that feedback from the community will influence decisions. Often, *izimbizo* community meetings were held to simply inform the public about a given issue, and this is aligned with tokenistic involvement.

However, not all participants understood the mechanisms and platforms that were available for public participation. Some participants were unaware of the formal processes through which they could influence decisions that are taken at council meetings. The mechanisms of public

participation in the Mandeni local municipality were not as simple as some thought. Public platforms such as imbizo, stakeholder consultations, and some digital platforms such as Facebook and Radio stations appeared not to be accessible to all members of the public. One participant(C) opined that:

I do not know how I can participate in a radio conversation because I do not own a radio myself. Worse for digital platforms like Facebook, I cannot access such platforms because I do not have a smartphone. Though I had a smartphone, accessing Facebook was expensive due to the data. I can only participate in physical meetings, which I sometimes miss.

It is clear from the above excerpt that the lack of awareness of the members of the community about the platforms and mechanisms of public participation is compounded by unfamiliarity with institutional structures and the tools that are needed to make their voices heard. Moreover, digital platforms designed to facilitate public input into municipal issues that affect community members are sometimes underutilised due to a lack of digital literacy and insufficient knowledge about the presence of such facilities. As a result, participation tends to be dominated by a small, informed segment of the population, leading to skewed representation and further marginalisation of underrepresented groups.

4.3.1 Barriers to Effective Public Participation.

Another theme that emerged from the data was the barriers to effective public participation. This idea generated intense discussion in the focus group sessions. Participants indicated that IDP faces a number of challenges that include an unconducive environment for public participation. To be successful, the municipality should create an environment that enables public participation. An enabling environment is the legal, institutional, political, and socio-economic conditions that facilitate active and meaningful participation. When such an environment is lacking, several obstacles emerge. This appeared to be the case in the Mandeni local municipality. There are no legal protections and mechanisms that guarantee the right to participate, and many citizens are excluded from the process. There was also poor coordination among municipal officers, and this hindered and discouraged citizens from contributing their voices to issues that affected them. In most cases, public participation is treated as a procedural formality rather than a substantive democratic process.

This shows that local authorities, including Mandeni Local Authority, struggle to move beyond the lower rungs of Arnstein's ladder, particularly tokenism. At this level, public input is solicited

but rarely results in significant influence over decision-making. Challenges such as bureaucratic inertia, limited political will, and distrust frequently result in participation practices that are more symbolic than substantive. For example, public consultations may be conducted without integrating feedback into final decisions, reflecting the placation level of Arnstein's ladder. This is what is happening in the Mandeni Local Municipality, where public consultations are conducted, but nothing is seen in the influence of these public consultations on the decisions that are taken. Moreover, marginalised groups frequently experience exclusion or underrepresentation, which aligns with Arnstein's critique that power imbalances undermine meaningful participation.

One of the major shortcomings across municipalities in South Africa is the lack of public participation in the Integrated Development Plan (IDP). Lack of necessary information, expertise, knowledge, and capacity leads to minimal participation by the community in the IDP process, especially in the decision-making phase. Government departments, legal and political structures, and development practitioners do not inspire participation in the government's IDP. Most of the programs fail, and municipality officials do not involve the community in the planning phase; they involve them at the implementation level (Molaba 2016). Participants revealed that IDP consultation meetings are not conducted, and many community members do not understand what IDP is. People come to the IDP with issues that are not related. Political issues are the challenges that are affecting the IDP meetings. To confirm this, one participant (D) said:

“The challenge that we are facing is that when the municipality planned for IDP, they cluster the wards trying to save the budget. In that regard, not enough consultation and public education is done.”

Mzelemu (2019) mentions that the Traditional council is mandated to guide, assist, and support customary leaders in performing the duties assigned to them. They are responsible for managing the affairs of the customary community, supporting the municipality in identifying the community's needs, simplifying the role of traditional communities in development and growth, and amending the Integrated Development Plan (IDP). In line with this view, another participant (B) added:

“As an induna, I have not been invited to attend the IDPs. If the municipality can invite indunas, the attendance for IDP can improve because we are the ones that are closer to

the people, and we can play a huge role in improving the attendance of the IDPs.”

According to Mzelemu (2019), traditional leadership performs its duties in line with the White Paper on Local Government, which allows them to engage traditional communities through meetings (*izimbizo*). Traditional leadership also maintains order and law and presides over customary courts. They play a huge role in engaging people to attend IDP and any local meeting. For IDP to be successful, traditional leaders should be involved.

One participant who works for the Department of Cooperative Governance revealed that the municipality does not fully involve stakeholders such as the Community Development Workers (CDWs) when planning for the IDP, which results in poor community participation. CDWs work very closely with the stakeholders at the ward level, but they are not informed or invited to take part in the IDP. Community Development Workers (CDWs) are community-based resource persons who help community members with local activities. In 2003, during the State of the Nation address, former president Thabo Mbeki initiated the CDWs. He stated that the government would create multi-skilled CWP's who would keep direct contact with community members where they lived, especially in rural areas (Maphazi et al. 2013).

The primary function of CDW is to assist in meeting the community's needs, help them maintain their well-being and help them realise their aspirations. CDWs are expected to explain government policy to citizens in a language they can understand. CDWs are knowledgeable and multi-skilled in all government services because their work cuts across a broad spectrum of government services. They are expected to have good facilitation and listening skills, as they often work as mediators when problems arise in the community. They play a major role in spreading the message to the stakeholders and community (Maphazi et al. 2013).

4.4 Impact of Public Participation on Service Delivery

To assess the citizens' awareness of the impact of public participation in the IDP process on service delivery. Respondents were asked about their knowledge of the impact of public participation in the IDP process on service delivery. Many respondents displayed ignorance of the impact their participation in the IDP process would have on improving their lives and the services they get from the municipality. One participant (A) said:

“What change will my participation have on what the municipality wants to do? They can do as they have planned; my participation in the IDP process will not change things.”

The quality and success of participation and its impact depend on citizens' knowledge of municipality operations. A study by Renald (2007) found that IDP in The UMhlatuze Local Municipality was a community 'wish list' which was never part of the functional/departmental strategic plans. Data from the Mandeni Local Municipality show that the community members lack knowledge of the municipality's operations. These results reveal that not all citizens know their democratic rights towards local government public participation mechanisms. According to Thebe (2016:719), "It is clear that a lack of public participation has resulted in the community being disillusioned and dissatisfied with what the government provides regarding basic and pertinent needs".

The Local Government Municipal System Act and Regulations 32 of 2000, chapter 4, stated that a municipality must establish appropriate mechanisms of processes and procedures to enable the local community to participate in the affairs of the municipality and must, for this purpose, provide for public meetings and hearings by the municipal council and other political structures and political office bearers of the city, when appropriate, the proper implementation of the IDP process, and community ownership of the municipal programmes. IDP promotes a sense of belonging and patriotism in the local community, which may ensure that local people participate positively and contribute towards peace and stability. IDP participation may help eliminate violent protests and build community peace. Like many municipalities across South Africa, the Mandeni Local Municipality is inundated by service delivery protests, some of which are violent. The data revealed a need to ensure that people participated in creating the best conditions for service delivery in the Mandeni municipality. Arnstein's theory also acknowledged that there are different spheres of participation, from manipulation or therapy of citizens to consultation and what we might now view as genuine participation, i.e. the spheres of partnership and citizen control.

Despite the ignorance of the community members of the IDP process, they expressed willingness to support the public participation process. With proper education, they expressed their desire to take part in the process of IDP. However, they expressed concern that the municipality would not take them seriously. This is confirmed by a study by Silima (2013), which revealed that community members, although supportive of the idea of participation, expressed feelings of being tired of being used as 'rubber stamps' of the municipality without any real power. Their public participation experience was almost entirely limited to public gatherings (*izimbizo*).

The Local Government Municipal System Act and Regulations 32 of 2000, chapter 4, community participation, and they stipulate that a municipality must develop a culture of municipal governance that complements formal representative government with a participatory governance system.



4.5 Summary of themes

A) The first theme that emerged from the data was the mechanisms and platforms of public participation in communities. From the data, it was evident that participants agreed unanimously that the attendance of community members at IDP was not good. One participant (F) posited:

“Some of the community members, CDWs, and ward committees suggested that the wards must not be clustered during the IDP since they pose challenges in terms of transportation. Moreover, the IDP processes should take place on weekends to improve attendance. During the week, people are occupied with work commitments.”

According to the findings from the participant F community members are having a challenge to attend IDP when wards are clustered and they take place during the day where most of the people are at work.

B) The second theme from the data was the types of public participation. This had to do with the issue of platforms of public participation. The data revealed that some of the participants were aware of the platforms of public participation that are used in the IDP process in the Mandeni Municipality. They identified the platforms of public involvement used in Mandeni Municipality, such as *Izimbizo*, Facebook, radio stations, Farmers’ associations, and newspapers. This showed that some participants were aware of the forms of public participation. Since Mandeni Municipality is in the rural area people have not access to the network and to social media platform and makes them disadvantaged. One participant (B) in the focus group discussions indicated that:

One participant (B) in the focus group discussions indicated that:

“They use the IDP representative forum, farmers association, izimbizo, Facebook, radio stations, and newspapers. It will undoubtedly motivate and improve [the] morale of public participation because fewer people will be unaware of an IDP because it is widely spread on all platforms but there is a challenge with network in most of the areas since

it they are staying in deep rural areas.”

Another participant (A) added:

“The municipality uses izimbizo, Facebook newspapers, radio stations, community meetings, SMSs, and calls to encourage people to attend IDPs. The municipality must include SMSs and calls to encourage people to attend IDPs.”

C)The third theme that emerged from the data was the barriers to effective public participation. This idea generated intense discussion in the focus group sessions. Participants indicated that IDP faces a number of challenges that include an uncondusive environment for public participation. To be successful, the municipality should create an environment that enables public participation. Participants revealed that IDP consultation meetings are not conducted, and many community members do not understand what IDP is. People come to the IDP with issues that are not related. Political issues are the challenges that are affecting the IDP meetings. To confirm this, one participant (D) said:

“The challenge that we are facing is that when the municipality planned for IDP, they cluster the wards trying to save the budget. In that regard, not enough consultation consultation and public education is done.”

In line with this view, another participant

(B) added:

“As an induna, I have not been invited to attend the IDPs. If the municipality can invite indunas, the attendance for IDP can improve because we are the ones that are closer to the people, and we can play a huge role in improving the attendance of the IDPs.”

4.6 Chapter Summary

The interaction with different municipal employees of different ranks, which includes ward councillors and ward committees, the interaction with *izinduna*, tribal council representatives and the community members, as well as CDWs from the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs uncovered an overview that is broad of their judgement, unveiling findings and an analysis that was examined and investigated. According to the findings, the call for a flexible strategy that can assist in improving the rate of public participation in the IDP is required.

CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

This section presents a summary, recommendations, and conclusion of the study. The study focused on public participation in the Integrated Development Plan in Mandeni local municipality. It sought to answer the following questions: Does the community of Mandeni municipality participate in the IDP? What are the different types of public participation that Mandeni Local Municipality uses in the IDP process? What are the roles of the Mandeni Municipality community in the IDP process? The study adopted a qualitative approach to gather and analyse the data to answer these questions. Interviews, focus group discussions, and observations were adopted as the data collection tools. The data that was collected through these tools was subjected to thematic analysis.

5.2 Summary and Recommendations

From the study's literature review and results, it can be inferred that community participation is a multifaceted and critical aspect of public governance. Cognisant of this agency of community participation, community members are considered indispensable stakeholders in public governance. Hence, this study offered a litany of recommendations for the Mandeni municipality to consider in their IDP programmes. The following are recommendations proffered in this study:

1. The study found that though the community members were aware of the IDP process, their participation was not as expected. There is limited participation of community members in the IDP in Mandeni Local Municipality. For this reason, the study recommends that members of the community should participate actively and take shared responsibility for the IDP process. The study suggests that the Mandeni Local Municipality embark on a program to raise funds from the private sector and other government departments to promote public participation in the IDP processes. Community participation in the IDP process must be enhanced by ensuring that resources are central to municipal administration.
2. Moreover, the conception of the IDP process is critical and should be inclusive. The study found that community members are excluded from the conception of the IDP process, making the process exclusionary at some stage. The study, therefore, recommends that traditional leaders, including community members, in the conception of the IDP process. *Izinduna* should be invited to the planning meeting for IDP so that they will be actively

involved in community participation in the IDP process. Traditional leaders play a huge role in local communities regarding service delivery issues in their communities. The study recommends that the officials working for the municipality should try to encourage community members to participate in the IDP process.

3. The study recommends that the municipality honour IDP agreements and attend to the community members' complaints. The study found that the Mandeni municipality, in some cases, renege on its IDP commitments. The researcher recommends that political leaders stop misusing powers by using platforms created to engage municipalities and communities to promote the agendas of politics. The study recommends that the Mandeni local municipality do enough to share the necessary information with its communities.
4. The study found that community members were unaware of the different types of participation available to engage the municipality. This has resulted in a lack of participation in the IDP processes. Therefore, the study recommends that members be well- informed about different types of participation in the IDP process. The municipality is responsible for informing community members about different types of public participation that they can use to participate in the IDP process. The research study recommends that Mandeni Local Municipality have different types of participation to allow active participation of the community in the IDP process. Using different types of participation will allow community members to participate in the IDP process through the type that suits them.
5. The study recommends the *Imbizo* as a type of public participation that the Mandeni Local Municipality can use. This is a traditional method that is familiar to community members. Community members need not be educated on how the *Imbizo* operates. This method can work together with the Traditional Leader Forum. These methods can increase community members' participation in the municipality's IDP programmes.
6. The study found a lack of communication and dissemination of information about IDP programs. For this reason, there is poor attendance of the IDP programs by community members. The study recommends that the municipality of Mandeni invite all stakeholders to attend IDP preparation meetings to improve attendance. If all stakeholders are invited, the attendance of community members in the IDP process can improve. The Mandeni municipality should organise the IDP process in time for effective community participation. The municipality must ensure that ward councillors and ward committees know their role

during the IDP processes and that they mobilise the community members to attend IDP processes.

5.3 Conclusion

This study demonstrated the importance of community members in the local government and the need for the community to plan and execute plans in municipalities such as the IDP. The study demonstrated various possible mechanisms that Mandeni local municipality could use to enhance community involvement. The study focused on the role of public participation in the integrated development plan in Mandeni local municipality and found out whether the community of Mandeni local municipality attends IDP. The study was based on the types of public participation used by the Mandeni local municipality in IDP, the role of the Mandeni local municipality in the IDP, and the challenges experienced by the Mandeni community during IDP. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act No. 108 of 1996) mandates the local government to encourage community involvement and community organisations in local government matters.

The study found that most community members do not participate in the IDP process, and some still do not see the importance of participation. The study's findings confirm that some community members in Mandeni Local Municipality do not feel included in local government matters. Public participation is a complex process that faces many challenges in rural communities. For this reason, challenges could be most effectively addressed by bringing community members and municipalities together in the conception of public participation processes.

The findings of this study suggest that there must be a good relationship between the community members and the municipality so that there will be a share of responsibilities to improve public participation in the integrated development plan. The community is regarded as the primary stakeholder of the municipality, and the municipality will be dysfunctional without the community's involvement. The municipality must put more effort in ensuring that the community is actively involved in municipal affairs and attends to the Integrated development plan. The role players in the integrated development planning were discussed. Communities should actively participate in local government matters and not only be consulted. Officials and councillors must take responsibility and have a moral duty to involve communities in decision-making. An administration and political will is recommended to improve public participation.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I: Gatekeeper Letter



Office of the Municipal Manager

Tel 032 456 8200
Fax 032 456 2804 / [REDACTED]
Email oeo@mandeni.gov.za

2 Kingfisher Road, Mandeni, KwaZulu Natal, 4490, South Africa
PO Box 144, Mandeni, 4490

www.mandeni.gov.za

04 April 2023

Mr. Mvuselelo Pardon Nzuzo (20025869)
Master of Public Administration Candidate
P.O Box 317
Nyoni
3802

e-mail: [REDACTED]

Dear Mr. Mvuselelo Nzuzo

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN MANDENI LOCAL MUNICIPALITY STAFF, WARD COUNCILLORS, WARD COMMITTEES AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS.

Please note that permission is hereby granted for you to conduct your research on the following subject: "Public participation in Integrated Development Plan (IDP): A case study of Mandeni Municipality" towards your master's degree in public administration with the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN).

It is further noted that your research will be conducted by means questionnaires directed to officials, ward councillors, ward committee and community members.

Please ensure that the following accompany your questionnaire;

- Research title and details of the research, the researcher and supervisor
- Consent form is attached to the notice/questionnaire & to be signed by the user before he/she fills in the questionnaire.
- Gatekeepers approval by the Municipal Manager.

Please liaise with Ms. Lindiwe Mtenga from the Office of the Speaker and Mrs. Nombulelo Sibiyi from the Communications & Public Participation office in regards to Ward Councillors and Ward Committees; [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] respectively. Data collected must be treated with due confidentiality and anonymity.

Yours sincerely,

[REDACTED]

MANDENI MUNICIPALITY

Executive Committee

Cllr. TP Mdlalose (Mayor) | Cllr. BL Magwaza (Deputy Mayor) | Cllr. PM Stehl (Speaker) | Ex Officio Mr S Khuzwayo (Municipal Manager)
Cllr. ST Magwaza | Cllr. ZS Mdlalose | Cllr. MS Mdunge | Cllr. M Shelembe | Cllr. M Mthembu

Appendix II: Ethical Clearance



31 March 2025

Mvuselelo Pardon Nzuza (220025869)
School of Man Info Tech & Gov
Westville Campus

Dear MP Nzuza,

Protocol reference number: HSSREC/00006080/2023
Project title: Public participation in the integrated development plan: A case study of Mandeni Local Municipality, KwaZulu-Natal
Amended title: The role of public participation in the integrated development plan: A case study of Mandeni Local Municipality, KwaZulu Natal.
Degree: Masters

Approval Notification – Amendment Application

This letter serves to notify you that your application and request for an amendment received on 31 March 2025 has now been approved as follows:

- Change in title

Any alterations to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form; Title of the Project, Location of the Study must be reviewed and approved through an amendment /modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number.

PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

HSSREC is registered with the South African National Health Research Ethics Council (REC-040414-040).

Best wishes for the successful completion of your research protocol.

Yours faithfully



.....
Professor Dipane Hlalele (Chair)
/nng

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee
UKZN Research Ethics Office Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building
Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban 4000
Tel: +27 31 260 8350 / 4557 / 3587

Website: <http://research.ukzn.ac.za/Research-Ethics/>
Founding Campuses: Edgewood Howard College Medical School Pietermaritzburg Westville

INSPIRING GREATNESS

Appendix III: Interview Questions

QUESTIONS PER THE OBJECTIVE

Questions for the Public participation and IDP officials.

1. To assess the degree of participation by local communities of Mandeni Municipality in the IDP.

- 1.1 What is the level of participation by the community members of Mandeni municipality? In the IDP?
- 1.2 What tool do you use to rate the level of community participation the IDP process?
- 1.3 Does Mandeni Municipality provide transport to community members to attend IDP?

2. To Explore the impact of public participation in the IDP processes in the Mandeni local Municipality.

- 2.1. Do you know types of public participation that are used in the IDP processes in Mandeni Municipality?
- 2.2. Do you think these types of public participation assist in improving rate of participation in the IDP?
- 2.3. What other types of public participation do you think can be used in the IDP processes in Mandeni municipality.

3. To explore ways through which the Mandeni Local Municipality can improve public participation in the IDP processes.

- 3.1. What role does your office play in the IDP public participation process?
- 3.2. How does the municipality conduct its IDP? Please give examples.
- 3.4. Does the Mandeni local municipality have any policy document on public participation?
- 3.5 How do you understand the process of public participation in the IDP processes by the Mandeni municipality?

4. To investigate the challenges the Mandeni community experienced in its participation in the Integrated Development plan (IDP).

4.1 What are the challenges that you face when planning for the IDP?

4.2 What are the challenges you experience during the IDP?

4.3 How do think these challenges can be addressed?

QUESTIONS PER THE OBJECTIVE

Questions tribal council representative

1. To assess the degree of participation by local communities of Mandeni Municipality in the IDP.

1.1 Do you know what is IDP?

1.2 Do you attend IDP? If no, why?

1.3 How do you ensure that tribal council and people in your area attend IDP?

1.4 Do you know your impact of tribal council in the IDP processes?

2. To Explore the impact of public participation in the IDP processes in the Mandeni local Municipality.

2.1 Do you know and understand different types of public participation in the IDP?

2.2 Do you think these types of public participation can improve the attendance of community in the IDP processes.

3. To investigate the challenges the Mandeni community experienced in its participation in the Integrated Development plan (IDP).

3.1 What challenges do you face as business people when coming to participate in the IDP?

3.2 Do you think these challenges can be addressed? If yes how?

QUESTIONS PER THE OBJECTIVE

Questions for councilors, ward committee and Community development workers.

1. To assess the degree of participation by local communities of Mandeni Municipality in the IDP.

1.1. What do you understand by community participation in the IDP processes?

1.2. Do you think people know about the IDP and its impact?

1.3 Do you mobilise people to attend IDP? If yes how?

1.4 Do you understand your roles and responsibilities in the IDP process?

1.5 What do you believe participating in the IDP processes empowers the community?

2. To explore ways through which the Mandeni Local Municipality can improve public participation in the IDP processes.

2.1 Do you know types of public participation that are used in the IDP processes

2.2 Do you think these types of public participation assist in improving rate of participation in the IDP.

3. To Explore the impact of public participation in the IDP processes in the Mandeni local Municipality.

3.1 Do you know your role in the IDP process?

3.2 How do you ensure that your role in the IDP have an impact to the community?

4. To investigate the challenges the Mandeni community experienced in its participation in the Integrated Development plan (IDP).

4.1 What do you think are the challenges that are experienced by the community during the IDP process?

4.2 How can these challenges be resolved

QUESTIONS PER THE OBJECTIVE

Questions for community members

1. To assess the degree of participation by local communities of Mandeni Municipality in the IDP.

1.1 Do you know what is IDP?

1.2 Do you attend IDP? If no, why?

1.3 Do you see impact of IDP as a community member?

2. To explore ways through which the Mandeni Local Municipality can improve public participation in the IDP processes

2.1 Do you know and understand different types of public participation in the IDP

2.2 Do you think these types of public participation can improve the attendance of community

in the IDP processes?

3. To explore ways through which the Mandeni Local Municipality can improve public participation in the IDP processes

3.1 Do you know your role in the IDP process?

3.2 How do you ensure that your role in the IDP have an impact to the community?

4 To investigate the challenges that are experienced by Mandeni community during their participation in the Integrated Development plan (IDP).

4.1 What do you think are the challenges that are experienced by the community during the IDP process?

4.2 How can these challenges be resolved?

Appendix IV: Informed Consent



Date: 14 November 2023

Greetings Mr/Ms/Mrs

My name is Mvuselelo Pardon Nzuza a Master of Public Administration Student, at the University of KwaZulu Natal School of IT, Management and Governance, my contact number is [REDACTED] and my email address is 220025869@stu.ukzn.ac.za

You are being invited to consider participating in a study that involves research of **The role of public participation in the integrated development plan: A case study of Mandeni local Municipality, KwaZulu Natal)**". The aim and purpose of this research is to assess the degree of participation by local community of Mandeni Municipality in the Integrated Development Plan (IDP), to identify different types of public participation that are used in the IDP process in Mandeni Municipality, to identify roles of Mandeni Municipality in the IDP process and to investigate challenges experienced by Mandeni local municipality during their participation in the IDP. The study is expected to enroll 15 participants. The study is based on a case study of Mandeni Local Municipality. Data collection of the study will be through one-on-one interviews where questionnaire will be administered. If you choose to enroll and remain in the study, the duration of your participation in interviews is estimated to be about 3 hours per interview and the study is expected to be completed in six months.

The study will not involve any risks and/or discomforts as it will be information on the work the participants do for the Department of Public Works. We hope that the study will contribute to the body of knowledge required by the relevant stakeholders responsible for the Integrated Development Plan in Mandeni Local Municipality and bring about the improvement of public participation.

This study has been ethically reviewed and approved by the UKZN Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee.

In the event of any problems or concerns/questions you may contact the researcher at [REDACTED] or 20025869@stu.ukzn.ac.za or the UKZN Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee, contact details as follows:

It will involve the following procedures (describe). The duration of your participation if you choose to enroll and remain in the study is expected to be 1 week.

The study involves the audio recording of your interview with the researcher. Neither your name nor any other identifying information will be associated with the audio recording or the transcript. Only the researcher will be able to listen to the recordings.

This study has been ethically reviewed and approved by the UKZN Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (approval number HSSREC/00006080/2023).

In the event of any problems or concerns/questions you may contact the researcher at (provide contact details) or the UKZN Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee, contact details as follows:

HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION

Research Office, Westville Campus

Govan Mbeki Building

Private Bag X 54001

Durban

4000

KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA

Tel: 27 31 2604557- Fax: 27 31 2604609

Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

Participation in this research is voluntary and participants may withdraw participation at any point. In the event of refusal/withdrawal of participation the participants will not incur penalty or loss of treatment or other benefit to which they are normally entitled to.

Necessary steps will be taken to protect confidentiality of personal information. Research information will be kept in a secure file with password.

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CONSENT

I have been informed about the study entitled The role of public participation in the integrated development planning: A case study of Mandeni Local Municipality, KwaZulu Natal. The aim and purpose of this research is to assess the degree of participation by local by Mvuselelo Pardon Nzuza.

I understand the purpose and procedures of the study to identify different types of public participation that are used in the IDP process in Mandeni Local Municipality, to identify roles of Mandeni Municipality in the IDP process and to investigate challenges experienced by Mandeni local municipality during their participation in the IDP.

I have been given an opportunity to answer questions about the study and have had answers to my satisfaction.

I declare that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time without affecting any of the benefits that I usually am entitled to.

I have been informed about any available compensation or medical treatment if injury occurs to me as a result of study-related procedures.

If I have any further questions/concerns or queries related to the study, I understand that I may contact the researcher at [REDACTED] or 220025869@stu.ukzn.ac.za

If I have any questions or concerns about my rights as a study participant, or if I am concerned about an aspect of the study or the researchers then I may contact:

HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION

Research Office, Westville Campus

Govan Mbeki Building

Private Bag X 54001

Durban

4000

KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA

Tel: 27 31 2604557 - Fax: 27 31 2604609

Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

I hereby provide consent to:

Audio-record my interview / focus group discussion	YES / NO
Video-record my interview / focus group discussion	YES / NO
Use of my photographs for research purposes	YES / NO

Signature of Participant

Date

Signature of Witness
(Where applicable)

Date

Signature of Translator
(Where applicable)

Date

Appendix VI: Editor's Letter



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Meade Pietermaritzburg, 3201
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29 November 2024

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This is to confirm that the dissertation written by Mr. Mvuselelo Pardon Nzuzo, Student No. 220025869, titled: "Public Participation in the Integrated Development Plan: A Case Study of Mandeni Local Municipality, KwaZulu-Natal", was edited for language, tone, consistency, punctuation, references and was subsequently proofread. Additional recommendations were also proposed.



Mrs. Barbara L. Mutula-Kabange, *BEd (UBotswana), BSc Hon. MEd (UKZN)*
Language and Technical Editor
Professional Editors' Guild – Associate member
Membership number: MUT001

Research Spot Consultancy CIPC REG No. 2023/641144/07

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