

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

**CHALLENGES FACING RURAL DEVELOPMENT
IN UBUHLEBEZWE MUNICIPALITY, SOUTH AFRICA**

BY

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ABSTRACT

This study focuses on the challenges facing rural development in the Ubuhlebezwe Municipality. The introduction of rural development was the first progressive step taken by the South African government to address socioeconomic development problems and challenges faced by rural people in South Africa. The majority of people living in rural areas in South Africa live below the poverty line including youth, children, women and the elderly. Rural development thus involves helping the poorest among those who seek a livelihood in the rural areas to demand and control more of the benefits of development. Rural development is defined as the improvement of the spatial and socioeconomic environment of rural space, which leads to the enhancement of the individual's ability to care for and sustain his/her well-being. The main aim of this study was to determine the challenges facing rural development in the Ubuhlebezwe Municipality. A qualitative research approach was utilised for this study, with purposive sampling being used. Interviews were conducted with 15 respondents. Data were collected by means of face-to-face interviews, before being thematically analysed to interpret the findings. The findings revealed that Ubuhlebezwe Municipality faces numerous challenges, including a lack of resources to improve service delivery to the community; skills shortages; inadequate revenues; insufficiency of financial resources; low agriculture production; a high unemployment rate; a funding shortfall from government; weak intergovernmental relations with the district, provincial and national government; and poor engagements with, and involvement of stakeholders in municipal rural development programmes. The key recommendation of the study is that various stakeholders should provide support to the municipality to help them develop their capacity to manage rural development programmes and projects. The study makes recommendations on options the municipality could consider to improve service delivery, as well as options for future research. Creating job opportunities across the agricultural sector will improve economic growth, promote infrastructure development and enhance service delivery.

LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

- CRDP Comprehensive Rural Development Programme
- COGTA Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs
- DMP Drought Management Plan
- FAO Food and Agriculture Organization
- GDP Gross Domestic Product
- HGDM Harry Gwala District Municipality
- HIV Human Immunodeficiency Virus
- IDT Independent Development Trust
- IDP Integrated Development Plan
- IFSS Integrated Food Security Strategy for South Africa
- IRDP Integrated Rural Development Programme
- KZN KwaZulu-Natal
- REID Rural Enterprise and Industry Development
- NARYSEC National Rural Youth Service Corps
- OECD Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
- RDP Reconstruction and Development Programme
- RID Rural Infrastructure Development
- SETA Sector Education and Training Authority
- SA South Africa
- SPSSA Strategic Plan for South African Agriculture
- SSA Sub-Saharan Africa
- TB Tuberculosis
- ULM Ubuhlebezwe Local Municipality
- UKZN University of KwaZulu-Natal
- WSP Workplace Skills Plan

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH

1.1 Introduction

Rural societies in South Africa remain the most disadvantaged segment of the country; there is still a huge service delivery gap that differentiates South African rural communities from their urban counterparts. The South African government took the initiative to try to reduce poverty, improve the standard of living and improve service delivery to the rural communities by introducing rural development policies and programmes such as the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), Rural Infrastructure Development (RID), Local Economic Development (LED) and the Comprehensive Rural Development Programme (CRDP). The rural communities of Ubhlebezwe Municipality are currently facing challenges of poverty and poor service delivery, which includes poor infrastructure for electricity distribution, inadequate road networks, water scarcity, and poor communication networks. This study thus examines challenges of rural development facing the community of Ubhlebezwe Municipality, and provides a recommendation to improve living standards.

In his address to commemorate the launch of the first pilot project of the CRDP at Muyexe village, the then South African President, Jacob Zuma, stated that, the government had prioritised rural development and land reform as one of its key priorities, and that it was determined to change the face of rural areas (Department of Rural and Land Reform, 2009). The President also explained that the Comprehensive Rural Development Programme is a collective national approach to fight against poverty, unemployment and poor service delivery in rural areas (Department of Rural and Land Reform, 2009). This address by the President provided huge hope to the people of rural areas, who believed that poor service delivery, unemployment and poverty would become a thing of the past.

This chapter is structured as follows: The next section provides the background of the study which introduces the topic and provides a synopsis of the literature review about the problem. The focus of the study is also provided in this chapter. The statement about what are the gaps or what is not known about the topic is explained by the problem statement. The purpose of the study, research question, research methodology, limitation of the study is discussed in this chapter. This chapter ends with the structure of dissertation.

1.2 Study Settings

The Ubuhlebezwe Municipality is located in the city of Ixopo, which lies within the Harry Gwala District Municipality in the province of KwaZulu Natal. Ixopo is the main administrative centre of this municipality and is located at about 85km south east of Pietermaritzburg, the capital city of KwaZulu-Natal (Ubuhlebezwe Municipality, 2017). The municipal area covers approximately 1,604 km², with a total population of 118,346 spread throughout the municipality. The majority of people reside in the rural areas (Ubuhlebezwe Municipality, 2017). Figure 1.1 below shows the location of the Ubuhlebezwe Municipality, as well as its neighbouring local municipalities within the Harry Gwala District Municipality.

Figure 1.1: Spatial location of Ubuhlebezwe Municipality



(Source: Ubuhlebezwe Municipality 2017/2018 IDP, 2017: 8)

The municipality consist of 12 wards, with the population being distributed as per Figure 1.2 below.

Figure 1.2: Population distribution per wards



(Source: Ubhlebezwe Municipality 2017/2018 IDP, 2017:10)

1.3 Motivation for the Study

This section of the study explains the benefits of this research for the people living in rural areas as well as other related stakeholders. According to Fobosi (2013), South African rural communities are facing major challenges today, which have arisen in part from aging road, electricity and water supply infrastructure. Fobosi (2013) further stated that in South Africa approximately 3.5 million people lack safe drinking water at home and 16 million lack safe sanitation, most of whom live in rural areas. This study thus aimed to identify the challenges facing rural development, and provides some recommendations in order to improve service delivery to the rural community of Ubhlebezwe Municipality

According to the Ubhlebezwe Municipal IDP Report (2017), there are 23,487 households in the municipality with an average of 4.1 persons per household. The report further explained that 30.3% of households are living in formal dwellings, approximately 63.8% of residences are owned and fully paid off, and 12.4% of households have access to piped water from either inside the dwelling, inside the yard, or water on a community stand. Access to proper sanitation is very poor, with just 12% having access to a flush toilet connected to the sewerage system (Ubhlebezwe Municipality IDP, 2017). According to Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) (2011), the literacy level within Ubhlebezwe municipal area decreased from 29.2% in 2001 to 15.8% in 2011. The Ubhlebezwe Municipal IDP calculated that

children between the ages of 0-14 make up 37.4% of the total population, elderly people over 65 contribute 5.3%, and the observable dependence ratio of people below 15 and above 64 is 74.3%. This percentage is too high and contributes to uncontrollable levels of poverty in this municipality.

According to Lehohla (2016), unemployment is considered a major reason for poverty. The unemployment rate in Ubuhlebezwe is 25% percent, and contributes 21% of the total unemployment rate of the Harry Gwala District Municipality (Ubuhlebezwe Municipality IDP, 2017). This municipality is classified as a category B4 municipality. As stated by the Municipal Capacity Assessment Report (2011), category B4 municipalities are local municipalities which are mainly rural with communal tenure and with, at most, one or two small towns in their area. Of the municipality's total income, 81% comes from government grants, and the poverty headcount is sitting at 15.1% (Ubuhlebezwe Municipality IDP, 2017). It is clear that poverty is a major challenge facing this community, which is why this study suggests possible ways to mitigate these problems. Rural development is a dynamic process, which is mainly concerned with agricultural growth, the development of economic and social infrastructure, fair wages, housing and house sites for the landless, village planning, public health, education and functional literacy, and communication (Madumo, 2015).

According to the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform (2009a), in 2009 the South African government introduced the CRDP with the intention of mobilising and empowering rural communities with initiatives that would enable them to take control of their own destinies with the support of government. The programme consists of the following sub-programmes:

- Rural Infrastructure Development
- Rural Enterprise and Industry Development
- National Rural Youth Service Corps

The main objectives of these sub-programmes are to initiate, facilitate, coordinate and catalyse the implementation of the CRDP, resulting in sustainable, equitable and vibrant rural communities. The strategic objectives of these sub-programmes are to support rural communities to produce their own food in all rural districts, to provide quality infrastructure, and to facilitate the development of rural enterprises and industries (Department of Rural Development and Land Reform, 2009b).

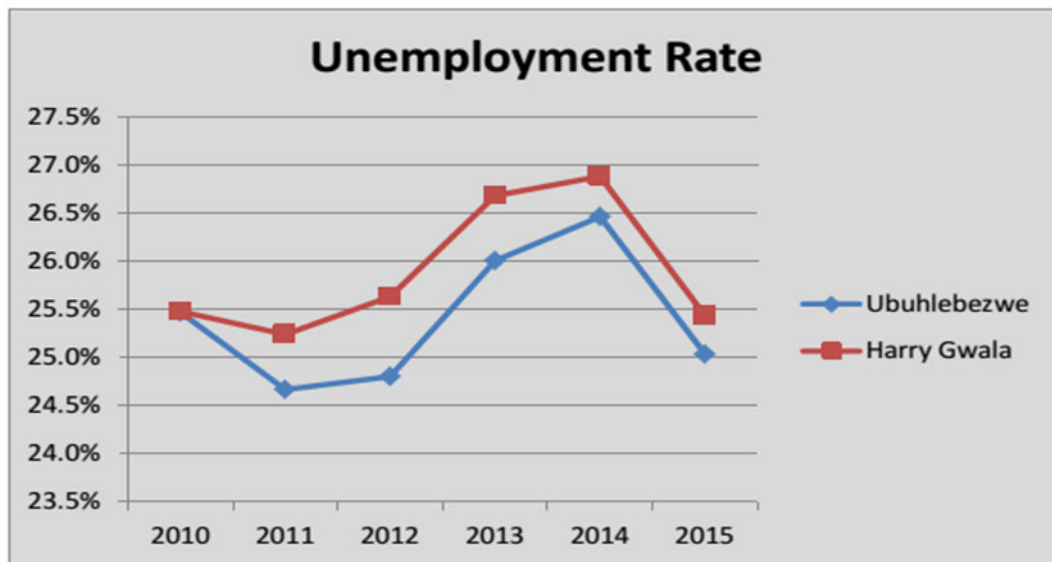
1.4 Focus of the Study

The focus of the study was to determine what challenges stand in the way of rural development in the Ubuhlebezwe Municipality, and to suggest possible ways to mitigate these. The study focused on the progress done so far and makes some recommendations to improve the pace of rural development in this municipality.

1.5 Problem Statement

Rural municipalities in South Africa are inundated with a variety of challenges, including the inability to facilitate and enhance development (Madumo, 2015). According to the Budget Review Report (2017), the unemployment rate in South Africa is 26.5%, with the major contributor to this being people living in rural areas. The report further stated that the challenges of poverty and unemployment are compounded by limited access to basic municipal services such as water, sanitation and electricity, as well as a lack of good quality social services (education, health and ambulances) and transport services (roads and buses). As with unemployment, the majority of people facing these challenges are living in rural areas. Figure 1.3 below shows the unemployment rate at Ubuhlebezwe Municipality.

Figure 1.3: Unemployment rate of Ubuhlebezwe Municipality vs Harry Gwala District Municipality



(Source: Ubuhlebezwe Municipality 2017/2018 IDP, 2017: 47)

According to Lehohla's (2016) community survey report, the majority of people living in the Ubuhlebezwe Municipality are black, and most live in the traditional rural areas where the rates of unemployment and poverty are high. The estimated population living in this municipality is 118,346, as indicated in the Community Survey Report of 2016. The majority of people do not have a formal education, and the highest education attained is Grade 12. The survey further stated that this municipality is currently also facing other challenges, such as a huge infrastructure backlog, skills shortages, a lack of proper infrastructure planning, a lack of management capacity, a lack of proper housing, the slow rate of agricultural growth, and poor governance. The Ubuhlebezwe municipal IDP (2017) indicated that the majority of inhabitants do not have access to clean piped water and continue to fetch water from the river for drinking, cooking, washing and bathing. The IDP further indicated that most of the people in this municipality still do not have access to electricity and use candles for lighting. The shortage of education and health institutions is other problem facing this community, as they are key for human development and health; children still have to walk long distances to their schools and clinics.

The roads within this area are also in a very poor condition, which limits investment opportunities that might grow the local economy (Community Survey, 2016), thus the majority of people living in this municipality depend on agriculture. The following is summary of the other challenges facing the municipality, as mentioned in Ubuhlebezwe Municipality's IDP report (2017):

- Lack of a landfill site.
- Lack of land
- Lack of expertise from service providers.
- Lack of access to finance and credit.
- Low agricultural production.

Given the challenges mentioned above, it is clear that the question of rural development in the Ubuhlebezwe Municipality still needs to be investigated further.

1.6 Aim and Objectives of the Research

The aim of the study was to determine the challenges facing rural development in the Ubuhlebezwe, and to suggest possible ways to mitigate these problems.

The objectives of this study were:

- To determine the challenges facing rural development in Ubuhlebezwe Municipality.
- To identify government interventions which are in place to reduce poverty in Ubuhlebezwe Municipality.
- To determine the role that the agricultural industry plays in rural development in Ubuhlebezwe Municipality.
- To develop strategies to facilitate rural development in Ubuhlebezwe Municipality.

1.7 Research Questions

For the purpose of this study, the following questions were addressed:

- What are the challenges facing rural development in the Ubuhlebezwe Municipality?
- What government interventions are in place to reduce poverty in the Ubuhlebezwe Municipality?
- What strategies can be developed to facilitate rural development in the Ubuhlebezwe Municipality?
- What role does the agricultural industry play in rural development in the Ubuhlebezwe Municipality?

1.8 Research Methodology

The research methodology used in this study was qualitative in nature. This methodology was chosen based on the appropriateness for this type of research given the purpose of the study and research questions. The qualitative research approach aims to understand the people's experiences, different perspectives and attitudes of the community involved in the study (Alshenqeetil, 2014).

Purposive sampling was employed in this study as it was considered the most appropriate technique. According to Teddlie and Yu (2007), purposive sampling techniques are primarily used in qualitative studies and may be defined as selecting units (e.g. individuals, groups of individuals, institutions) based on specific purposes associated with answering a research study's questions.

The questions asked by the researcher were best answered through interviews, and were developed in a rigorous way to ensure the trustworthiness of the data. According to Alshenqeetil (2014), qualitative data are most often collected by researchers through interviews, as interviews compared to questionnaires are more powerful in eliciting narrative data that allow researchers to investigate people's views in greater depth. Face-to-face

interviews were utilised in this study and were conducted at the Ubuhlebezwe municipal offices in Ixopo.

The data and content analysis was based on the interpretative philosophy. Deductive approach and sorting of data were employed. The following steps or process of data analysis were used:

1. Organised the data.
2. Identified a framework.
3. Sorted data into the framework.
4. Used the framework for descriptive analysis.
5. Undertook a second order analysis.

1.9 Limitations of the Study

Due to the larger size of rural areas in South Africa, this study was limited to only Ubuhlebezwe Municipality. Therefore it was difficult to include other rural areas.

1.10 Structure of the Dissertation

This study is presented in six chapters in order to address the research questions, and is structured as follows:

1.10.1 Chapter 1: Introduction to the Research

This chapter introduced the topic of the study; outlined the expectations for the research; and highlighted the key content of each section. The purpose of the study and the methodology used were also briefly discussed.

1.10.2 Chapter 2: Literature Review

Chapter Two contains the theoretical framework of the study and reviews the literature related to the research topic. The relevant theories that support the study questions are also discussed in this chapter.

1.10.3 Chapter 3: Research Methodology

This chapter discusses the research methodology employed, explains the sampling technique used, and describes how the data were collected and analysed. The ethical considerations and how they were managed are also assessed, before a discussion on the research quality criteria employed in this research is undertaken.

1.10.4 Chapter 4: Results

The fourth chapter presents the findings of the study, with the results of the face-to-face interviews being discussed in detail. These results are presented in the form of themes to give the reader a better understanding of the research problem.

1.10.5 Chapter 5: Discussion

This chapter provides a discussion of the results obtained from this study, which are then interpreted and explained in comparison to the findings of prior research.

1.10.6 Chapter 6: Conclusions and Recommendations

In this chapter, the implications of the study, limitation of the study and recommendations to solve the problem are discussed.

1.11 Chapter Summary

Rural dwellers in the Ubuhlebezwe municipal area are still facing challenges of poor service delivery, such as no access to safe drinking water, an aging infrastructure, poor access to health facilities, low incomes, and a lack of quality education. Rural development policies and programmes have been developed to address these problems, but implementing them is still a challenge in these municipalities. This chapter provided a brief explanation of these challenges; the focus of, and motivation for, the study were discussed; and the problem statement, objectives and research questions were highlighted.

The next chapter focuses on the literature review related to this study topic.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The objective of this research was to determine what challenges are limiting rural development in the Ubuhlebezwe Municipality in South Africa, and what interventions the government has undertaken to address these problems. This chapter reviews the various contributions from the literature on the subject of rural development.

It is important for a researcher to familiarise himself with previous studies by other researchers in order to develop an argument related to the same topic (Ibietan, 2010). As explained by Fobosi (2013), a literature review is a vital component of the research process, as it assists the researcher to conceptualise the problem and interpret the findings based on previous research and theories.

A number of authors on this subject indicated that there is a steady progress with regards to the improvement of quality service delivery to the rural communities through rural development programmes. Furthermore, the literature described various government interventions or methods to improve service delivery in rural areas, thus government strategies, policies, programmes and projects to facilitate rural development are discussed. Moreover, this chapter will explain the role and the constitutional mandate of local government on rural development.

This chapter further explains the role that the agricultural industry plays in rural development to ensure that rural communities are benefiting from the natural resources. A number of researchers have suggested that an increase in agricultural research studies can make a significant contribution to agriculture development and poverty reduction in rural areas. The agricultural sector has also been seen by other researchers as a way to improve the growth rate of countries' economies, reduce unemployment rates and improve income for rural communities.

Furthermore, the literature review established that unemployment, a lack of quality education, poor infrastructure, inadequate communication networks and a lack of required skills in the private and public sectors continue to be the major challenges facing rural communities.

2.2 Definition of Rural Development

Most countries use the definition of “rural area” for statistical purposes and classify rural areas accordingly in order to allocate funds to their rural development programmes (Surchev, 2010). According to Surchev, each country has established its own meaning of the concept “rural area”, and in western literature a rural area is regarded as a distinct territorial community with villages and small towns of up to 30,000 inhabitants. Fobosi (2013), meanwhile, defined rural areas as those areas that lack public services delivery, such as electrical supply, water and sanitation, adding that these areas are characterised by poor infrastructure, low income, poor access to health care and education, inadequate water availability and poor site conditions.

According to Ngomane (2012), a rural area is a sparsely populated area in which people farm or depend on natural resources, including the villages and small towns dispersed throughout these areas. The author explained that rurality refers to a way of life, a state of mind, and a culture which revolves around land, livestock, cropping, the use of natural resources and community. In addition, rural areas include the large settlements in the former homelands created by the apartheid removals, in which rural people depend for their survival on agriculture (Fobosi, 2013). According to Surchev (2010), the characteristics of rural areas are that they are poorly developed areas that are isolated from major cities, have a low level of infrastructure development, and have a low population density. The author suggested that the problem of distances can be resolved by improving the transport infrastructure.

According to the OECD (2014), a rural area is defined as an area with a population density of less than 150 inhabitants per square kilometre, while Eurostat’s (2015) definition is for a density below 100 inhabitants per square kilometre. The South African Statistics Census (2001) classified urban areas as main places and sub-places that have a population density of more than 500 people per square kilometre; if an area does not qualify for this category, it is then classified as a rural area. Ixopo is a small city located in the Ubuhlebezwe Municipality; according to Census SA (2001) it was classified as an urban area, but did not meet the density criterion of urban area. According to the Ubuhlebezwe Municipality’s IDP report (2017), the population density of the municipality is 63 inhabitants per square kilometre, which qualifies it as a rural area.

The term “development”, as explained by Surchev (2010), includes social and economic characteristics such as life expectancy, literacy rates and income distribution. The Ubuhlebezwe IDP (2017) report showed that the quality of life in this area is poor, that the literacy rate has decreased, and that people are still earning a low income compared to the urban areas, i.e. the municipality is an underdeveloped rural area.

The definition of the concept “rural development”, as per Montaldo (2013), is an improvement in rural conditions that can be facilitated by progressive conscious efforts of the state or government to improve the conditions of those residents in the rural areas. Montaldo went further to describe “rural development” as an improvement in the living standard of the low income population residing in rural areas, and making the process of their development self-sustaining. Surchev (2010), meanwhile, defined rural development as a change that not only improves certain economic indicators, but also increases the welfare of the rural population so as to solve their basic problems and enable them to exploit opportunities for economic growth. His definition was supported by Anriquez and Stamoulis (2007), who described rural development as one that benefits rural populations and where development is understood as the sustained improvement of the population’s standards of living or welfare.

Based on the above definitions, it can be concluded that rural development is an initiative taken by government to improve people’s standard of living, encourage economic growth, improve service delivery, develop infrastructure, alleviate poverty, improve income distribution and provide employment. The next section of this chapter discusses the conceptual framework of rural development and gives a clear understanding of the theories and reasons for why rural development is an important initiative to mitigate the challenges facing rural communities.

2.3 Theoretical and Conceptual Framework of Rural Development

This section of this chapter covers the theoretical and conceptual frameworks of rural development as sourced from various authors. The development of social science theories and in the practices and rural development policies make it possible to outline the theory of rural development (van der Ploeg, Schneider, and Ye, 2012).

The concept of rural development is considered by some to be a response by governments to the outside pressure from rural communities as they demand better service delivery such as clean water, a quality education, improved road networks and communications, and comprehensive health care services (van der Ploeg et al., 2012). The main focus of rural

development is the development and transformation of the social, mental, economic, institutional and environmental conditions of low income rural dwellers through the mobilisation and rational utilisation of their human, natural and institutional resources, aimed at enhancing their capacities to cope with the daily tasks of life and the demands of contemporary times (Ibietan, 2010).

According to Montaldo (2013), a theoretical framework for rural development includes the identifiable methods that can be followed to improve the standard of living of rural people. These theoretical and conceptual frameworks were identified by Montaldo during his research on rural development in Nigeria, and include the following:

- The basic resources approach.
- The basic needs approach.
- The integrated rural development approach.

The basic resource approach was the first theory adopted by the Nigerian government for rural development. This approach, as explained by Montaldo (2013), is based on the premise that rural development depends on the existence, magnitude and quality of basic natural resources. The availability of these natural resources attracts large volumes of investments, which in turn increases economic activities and thereby improves income and employment in rural areas. Surchev (2010) supported this approach, stating that rural society, with its natural, financial, and human and management resources are the object of rural development. This approach received much criticism from many researchers, however, who claimed that this approach would not work in the absence of attractive natural resources.

The second approach adopted by the Nigerian government was the basic needs approach. This theory is premised on the idea that the development of human wealth involves the provision of health services, education, housing, sanitation, water and adequate nutrition Montaldo (2013). This approach has been supported by many researchers despite its shortcomings, i.e. it is difficult to help all poor people uniformly in the absence of the provision of basic needs.

The integrated rural development and system approaches were accepted by many researchers and Nigerian societies, as they attempt to improve the rural development economy and satisfy the needs of the rural inhabitants (Montaldo, 2013). The South African government adopted a

similar approach in 2009, the Integrated Sustainable Rural Development Strategy, which will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

The Public Service Commission (2009) explained that the rural development concept places an emphasis on changing environments to enable poor people to earn more and invest in themselves and their communities. The Commission went further to explain that rural development is multi-dimensional and much broader than poverty alleviation through social programmes and transfers. The following are the socio-economic indicators used by Surchev (2010) to measure the economic and social development of rural areas:

- Level of income as a measure of living standards.
- Stability of the municipal budget and its ability to respond to the economic and social needs of the region.
- Unemployment and employment rates.
- Population of the rural areas - changes in the number of inhabitants and the natural and mechanical population shift.
- Indicators reporting the development of transport and social infrastructure.

2.4 Challenges Facing Rural Communities

According to Dercon (2009, as cited by Macanda, 2014), poverty remains a predominantly rural problem, with the majority of the world's poor found in rural areas. This was supported by a report in the African Monitor (2012), which stated that insufficient and unreliable infrastructure services are common in the majority of rural communities in Africa, and that rural households do not have access to safe drinking water, electricity, reliable transportation or up-to-date communication networks. Dercon (2009) argued that the target group in rural development should include poor men, women and children, the poorest of the poor amongst the small-scale farmers, tenants and landless labourers.

According to Surchev (2010), low incomes and unemployment are among the main problems facing rural communities, adding that there is huge wage gap between the rural and urban areas. Surchev's view was supported by Nair (2014), who stated that people living in rural areas struggle to earn enough income, thus they end up migrating to urban areas for better opportunities. Nair also pointed out that the lack of employment opportunities in rural areas has led to rural societies being unable to sustain a decent standard of living. Most job

opportunities found in the rural areas are low wage and for unskilled labourers, because of the nature of the work. Surchev (2010) argued that another contributing factor for the deflated incomes is the low prices for agricultural products, which lead to low profit gains by agricultural companies. As has been pointed out before, agricultural companies are the major source of income for rural people, thus the industry plays an important role in rural areas when it comes to providing employment (Macanda, 2014). These are some of the main reasons for the migration from, and depopulation of, rural areas, which deprives those areas of skilled farm labour.

Research conducted by Nair (2014) in India showed that apart from low incomes, rural people also suffer from a lack of potable water and receive poor health care, which negatively affects their quality of life. The study went further to indicate that approximately 25% of rural households still do not have a guaranteed source of potable water, and up to 75% of the water does not even meet the standard approved by the World Health Organisation. In Nair's view, these conditions have badly affected the health of rural people. Macanda (2014) shared the same view in his study, stating that rural people still rely on fetching water from the river for drinking, cooking, washing and bathing. The author added that water collected from the rivers is of poor quality, which has never been tested in a laboratory. According to Mothetha, Nkuna and Mema (2013), rural people still do not have access to clean water services in South Africa, and often resort to using unclean water sources like rivers to fulfil their water needs.

Other challenges facing rural communities are the poor living and working conditions that are due to the inferior infrastructure and lack of service delivery in rural areas (Mothetha et al., 2013). According to Surchev (2010), the standard condition of infrastructure in rural areas is worse than poor, including road networks, water supply and sewerage, communication networks, electricity distribution, schools and health institutions. Fobosi (2013) supported these views by finding that rural areas are characterised by inferior infrastructure. Chirwa (2014) explained that a farmer may decide to invest in his company by adopting a new technology or new machinery, but without proper infrastructure such as a road networks or reliable electricity, the extra production may become worthless. Poor infrastructure in rural areas is thus one of the major constraints in rural development and rural economies (Mothetha et al., 2013).

Another contributing factor to the challenges facing rural communities is the state of the environment, which reduces the quality of life in rural areas. In research undertaken by Surchev (2010) in Bulgaria, the author found that the environment in the rural areas was polluted with pesticides or by industrial plants, making it difficult to produce quality and healthy products. He added that this makes life in most Bulgarian rural areas unhealthy and unsafe.

According to Daws (2013), in South Africa the percentage of households with electricity increased by 8.2% between 2002 and 2012, however a large number of households, especially in rural areas, still do not have access to electricity. This was supported by Jamal (2015), who stated that 60% of households in rural areas in South Africa still do not have access to electricity. Jamal (2015) further explained that according to electricity provider Eskom, the level of electricity consumption in rural areas is so low that it is impossible to recover capital and operations costs from tariffs alone. The South African government now provides 50 units (kWh) of electricity per household per month to low income consumers.

The quality of road conditions in rural areas is still a challenge facing rural communities. According to the African Monitor (2012), only 34% of rural households in South Africa live within approximately two kilometres of an all-season road, compared to 65% in other developing areas. This causes serious constraints to the production of agricultural products, as connectivity is key. A properly planned rural road link to the formal road network could create new markets and opportunities for isolated communities. Most rural roads remain unpaved and dusty, with erosion and rough surfaces, as shown in Figure 2.1 below (O’Niell, 2011). O’Niell further stated that to maintain these roads becomes very difficult as the weather conditions change.

Figure 2.1: Problems with Rural Roads



(Source: O'Neill, 2011: 2)

The solution to rural underdevelopment remains elusive, despite an abundance of efforts to help the poor by improving education and the health care system, building housing, and creating jobs (Bradshaw, 1990). Bradshaw contended that rural development has turned out to be more difficult than was expected or believed. According to Ibietan (2010), the Nigerian government's policies toward rural development have always benefitted a few individuals. The author explained that the administrative systems surrounding the implementation of rural development programmes do not usually function in the interest of the majority of rural dwellers, who are the people that such programmes ought to accommodate. Surchev (2010) suggested that solving these challenges facing rural areas is possible through close cooperation between government departments with local government authorities.

2.5 Government Interventions in Rural Development

When the democratic South African government came into power in 1994, rural development policies, strategies and programmes were introduced in order to improve the standard of living of rural requiring. However, implementing these policies, strategies and programmes remains a challenge, and effective plans and programmes are required (Ramaphakela, 2015). This section of the chapter thus covers an overview of the government's existing policies, strategies, projects and programmes that are in place to overcome the challenges facing rural communities.

Sharma and Rajagopal (1995) praised the introduction of the Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) in the 1980s, which had thrown a concept of inter-institutional linkages, which had in fact an important tool for achieving the objectives of economic development in rural areas in India. The programme aimed to reduce poverty in the rural areas and provide financial assistance to small-scale farmers. According to Sharma and Rajagopal, agencies were created to implement the programme. In the late 1980s the IRDP has been adopted by many countries such as India, Sri Lanka, Zambia, South Africa and many more. Smith and Fenchel (1996) argued that the failure of the IRDP was mainly because it was incorrectly implemented by government officials.

According to The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) (2006) reported that appropriate, well-targeted and comprehensive policies, legislation and institutions are needed to improve the rural livelihoods of the most vulnerable groups. The report went further to indicate that these policies need to be holistic, considering agricultural, economic, social and cultural issues at all levels. According to the Rural Development Framework (RDF) (2000), the South African government's commitment to rural development began in 1994 with the introduction of the national Rural Development Strategy (RDS), which identified core problems and the needs of rural communities. The RDF document indicated that the RDS came under a lot criticism for not interrogating concrete opportunities for, and constraints against, rural development, which resulted in the formation of the Rural Development Framework (RDF) in 1997, led by the National Department of Land Affairs and the Department of Rural Development. The key reasons for the establishment of the RDF included poverty alleviation, local economic development, integrating rural and employment creation, local democracy, and institutional sustainability (Rural Development Framework, 2000).

According to Olivier, van Zyl and Williams (2010), in April 2009, with the arrival of the Zuma Presidency, rural development was introduced as one of the key programmes for the first five years (2009-2014) of his presidency. Zuma's mandate was to ensure that all South African citizens were benefiting from economic growth, including rural communities. In their research, Olivier et al., 2010, identified three distinct phases with regards to rural development policy formulation and implementation in South Africa:

1. The Reconstruction and Development Programme (1994-2000).
2. The Integrated Sustainable Rural Development Strategy (2000-April 2009).
3. The Comprehensive Rural Development Programme (April 2009 to date).

The Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) was an integrated, coherent socio-economic policy framework that sought to mobilise all people and the country's resources toward a final eradication of the results of apartheid, and the building of a democratic, non-racial and non-sexist future (Corder, 1997). The main focus of the RDP was to improve the living conditions of the poorest people, the majority of whom were living in rural areas. Another important function of the RDP was to implement the land reform programme, raise incomes and productivity, and encourage the use of land for agricultural, other productive or residential purposes (Olivier et al., 2010). The main objective of the programme was to create 250 job opportunities in rural areas through rural development strategies.

In 2000, the South African government introduced a strategy called the Integrated Sustainable Rural Development Strategy (ISRDS), whose main objective it was to supplement the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) and the sustainability of rural development (Olivier et al., 2010). The focus was on addressing the uncoordinated and unsustainable efforts launched under the RDP. The ISRDP was supposed to achieve its objectives through existing resources, including the municipal budget, the commitments of line departments through the IDP process, the commitments of donor organisations and NGOs, and public-private partnerships (Public Service Commission, 2009). According to the findings of a study conducted by the Independent Development Trust (IDT), despite some initial successes at the beginning of the ISRDP's establishment, the programme has now faded (Public Service Commission, 2009).

The Comprehensive Rural Development Programme (CRDP) was introduced in 2009 and piloted in a rural area called Muyexe in the Limpopo Province in 2011. The main aim of the programme was to create decent work opportunities, and empower the communities in rural areas to take the initiative to gain control of their lives, as well as to eradicate poverty, with the government support (Sebiloane, 2015). According to Sebiloane, the CRDP was comprised of three phases: the first phase was meeting basic human needs, the second phase was rural enterprise development, and third phase was rural industries, markets and credit facilities. According to the Department of Rural Development's website (2017), this programme committed itself to ensuring that at least one person in each rural household where the CRDP was being implemented was employed for a minimum of two years. The programme has since been made to create an enabling environment for people in rural areas to take charge of their lives (Sebiloane, 2015).

The Department of Rural Development and Land Reforms (2009b) then introduced the Agrarian Transformation Strategy, which aimed to achieve vibrant, equitable and sustainable rural communities and food security for all. The first part of the strategy deals with basic human needs, i.e. providing the required social infrastructure for improved access to services, community building, and organisational and skills development initiatives. This strategy is linked directly with the phases of the CRDP that deal with meeting basic human needs; the establishment of rural business initiatives, agro-industries, co-operatives, cultural initiatives and vibrant local markets in rural settings; as well as the empowerment of rural people and communities, especially women, people with disabilities and youth (Rural Development Framework, 2000).

According to Surchev (2010), the Bulgarian government established its strategy for the development of rural areas based on the following three key principles:

1. The development of a competitive agriculture and forestry sector, coupled with an innovation-based food industry.
2. The preservation of natural resources and environmental protection in rural areas.
3. The promotion of employment opportunities and an improvement in social infrastructure and the quality of life in rural areas.

Surchev (2010) further mentioned that the three objectives of the plan were aimed at improving economic and social conditions in rural areas through competitiveness, market efficiency and raising the living standards of the population. He also emphasised that the achievement of the above mentioned plan was not possible without the participation of people from the regions and the efforts of local authorities.

According to research conducted by Kirori (2015), Kenya adopted a programme of rural decentralisation as a fundamental policy for rural development in 1967. The main focus of the policy was that rural development would become a prime mover that would enhance the transformation of Kenya's rural economy, enabling the rural society, among other things, to achieve better living conditions from increased productivity, improved transportation facilities and new market opportunities; to promote social systems close to the people based on their perceived needs and requirements; as well as to stimulate the growth of the national economy and ensure sustainable development. Full decentralisation took effect in the 1980s when Kenya embraced major strategies for rural development. These included the District

Focus Strategy (DFS) which made the district the operational centre for rural development in 1983, the Rural-Urban Balance Strategy (RUBS) in 1986, as well as the Integrated Strategy to Rural Development Planning in 1990s.

The USDA's Rural Development Progress Report (2015) stated that the American government invested billions through utilities programmes to connect rural communities to the global economy by improving telecommunication services, improving and expanding the capacity of the electricity grid, financing sustainable renewable energy development and conservation, and developing reliable and affordable water supply and wastewater systems. The USDA report indicated that the American government invested more than \$1.6 billion in rural water and wastewater projects to ensure the health and safety of rural communities and protect the environment in rural areas. The main objective of these investments was to achieve the American government's long term goal of ensuring that rural communities have the infrastructure they require to compete in the global economy.

2.6 Challenges facing the Implementation of Rural Development

The South African government is currently facing numerous rural development challenges (Simukoko, 2006). In order to mitigate these, several rural development initiatives have been started, but unfortunately they have not been effectively implemented. It has become something of a truism in many quarters to say that the South African government frequently develops policies that are ambitious and developmentally sound, but cannot be fully implemented for various reasons, such as a lack of capacity and skills and budgetary problems (Everatt and Zulu, 2012). Everatt and Zulu continued that the South African government has established policies, legislation and programmes to improve service delivery and reduce poverty in rural areas, but they have proven to be difficult to implement in an effective and efficient way.

According to the Rural Development Framework (2009), the challenges facing the implementation of rural development include the lack of effective rural development integration, the lack of technical skills and the lack of adequate financial resources within a broader context of fiscal austerity. The other challenges include the low levels of investment in physical and human infrastructure, the ineffective integration within and between different line functions of government, the lack of institutional capacity - particularly at district and local levels, and an inability to translate the distinctive competence of particular localities into a comparative advantage within the provincial economy.

According to Urban Econ (2009), the challenges of, and barriers to, the implementation of rural development include, among others, rural communities' resistance to projects; their inability to access service delivery due to a lack of transport and poor road infrastructure; and their inability to help themselves due to social issues such as low education levels, substance abuse, health problems (TB and HIV) and domestic violence. Support offices and services are far from rural a community, which has proven to be a challenge when it comes to implementing rural development.

The OECD (2014) advised that certain services, especially in the more remote rural areas, are not available or are only available at a high cost and a lower quality than in urban areas, due to rural communities often being spread over a larger territory, with additional travelling and communication costs and poor access to training facilities and other services (Urban Econ, 2009). An additional cost to service delivery in rural areas is the ageing population, as older people return to their communities once they retire, which puts an extra strain on services (Urban Econ, 2009).

The Rural Development Framework (2007) described the difficulties and challenges of implementing rural development as follows:

- Landlessness, overcrowding and inappropriate farming methods on commercial farms cause severe land degradation and soil erosion.
- Land ownership and development patterns reflect political and economic conditions left over from the apartheid era.
- Apartheid's spatial planning created a rural landscape lacking in economic opportunities for the disadvantaged majority, especially women.

2.7 Role of Local Government on Rural Development

In 1996, the South African government adopted a Constitution that defined the government's roles and responsibilities in terms of people, citizens, human rights and government institutions. According to the Constitution (Act 108 of 1996), its main objective is to protect human rights, enshrine democratic principles such as equality and freedom, and guarantee all citizens the right to access basic needs and goods and services such as health care, water, food, and social security, as well as the right to access land on an equitable basis, subject, that is, to the state's capacity to realise these rights.

Rural development is one of the duties of local government, as stated in Section 52 of the Constitution:

- (a) To provide democratic and accountable government for local communities;
- (b) to ensure the provision of services to communities in a sustainable manner;
- (c) to promote social and economic development;
- (d) to promote a safe and healthy environment; and
- (e) To encourage the involvement of communities and community organisations in the matters of local government.

According to the Constitution (Act 108 of 1996), local government represents the third sphere of government, the first two being the national government and the provincial government. The local government is located within the communities and is well-positioned to react to local needs, as well as the interests and expectations of communities, such as those in rural areas. According to Section 53 of the South African Constitution (Act 108 of 1996), all municipalities must prioritise the basic needs of the community, promote social and economic development, and participate in national and provincial development programmes. Section 153 (a) of the Constitution also indicates that the municipalities must play a significant role in the social and economic development of their regions.

According to Koma (2010), a core duty of municipalities is to provide a variety of basic and essential services to the communities within their jurisdictions, which have to be provided based on their constitutional obligations.

The Rural Development Framework (2000) described some of the challenges facing local government to implement rural development as follows:

- A lack of internal revenue due to poor billing systems, the non-payment of rates by communities, and a lack of taxing powers.
- A lack of appropriate skills to prepare applications for project funding from government grants and donors.
- Ageing infrastructure due to a lack of maintenance from municipal staff, which has led to poor service delivery.

- Serving and maintaining infrastructure in rural areas is a challenge due to dispersed settlements and high service costs.
- The unclear role of traditional authorities in rural local governments may have an effect on the execution of a rural development strategy due to the powers they are able to exercise.
- The appointment of professional service providers to prepare the IDP planning processes, instead of having councillors and communities engage on the planning.

According to Ibietan (2010) the main focus of local government in Nigeria was to promote effective development in the rural areas. The author described local government as a body of knowledge and as practice, adding that local government in the communal sense is people's political instrument to participate in resource allocation, distribution and power acquisition.

Ibietan (2010) suggested that in order to improve development in rural areas, municipalities should make every effort to increase and maintain revenues that would enable them to deliver services and projects that assure quality living for rural communities. Ibietan also suggested that the national and provincial governments should review their revenue allocation formulae to provide additional revenues to local governments, given that they are the closest sphere of government to the rural societies.

2.8 Role of Agricultural Industry on Rural Development

According to the UN's Food and Agricultural Organisation (2016), in order to contribute to rural development and to be sustainable, farming needs to be based on generating added value from a wide number of resources. The FAO further indicated that an efficient strategy is to include downstream and upstream activities on farms, such as transformation and direct sales, or to add other farming-related activities, such as forestry activities, work for the municipality, agro-tourism, or the provision of other private or public services. The agriculture sector plays a significant role in rural development, particularly due to land use, in countries where the sector is of less economic significance (European Commission, 2006). The European Commission pointed out that the main contributions of farming to rural development are in terms of supporting employment, supplementary business, and environmental services. The agricultural sector is the mainstay for more than 415 million people in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), which is 55% of the population (African Monitor, 2012).

Rural development policies should provide the support of farming, both in terms of improving on-farm activities and supporting additional services, to secure sustainable development for rural areas (European Commission, 2000). The challenges facing the agricultural sector include food security, climate change, reducing its greenhouse gas emissions, and improving the efficiency and adaptive capacity of the system (Ngomane, 2012). Ngomane added that agricultural policies have a significant part to play with regard to these challenges, and given that few agricultural producers represent the majority of the food insecure in developing countries and the bulk of production in many countries.

The agricultural sector remains important in South Africa, regardless of its relatively lesser contribution to the country's gross domestic product (GDP), as it plays a vital role in terms of creating job opportunities, particularly in rural areas. According to AgriSA (2017), around 70% of agricultural production is used as intermediate products, therefore agriculture is a crucial sector and an important driver for the growth of the economy.

Job opportunities in rural areas may depend greatly on agriculture and associated sectors, particularly in areas where tourism and the incentives to invest in industry are very low (FAO, 2006). Agricultural growth helps to reduce poverty through direct impacts on farm incomes and employment, while indirect impacts occur through growth linkages and their impact on food prices (Byerlee, Diao and Jackson, 2005).

Ibietan (2010) suggested that in order to improve development in rural areas, local municipalities should take the initiative in engaging the services of agricultural experts and agents for training and dispersing modern farming methods to the farmers, as this will help teach much-needed adaptive methods in farming with improved yields, which will ensure food sufficiency and reliance. During the period from 2000 to 2009, the South African government also introduced key policies and strategies that dealt with rural development, including:

1. the Strategic Plan for South African Agriculture (SPSSA) (2001);
2. the Integrated Food Security Strategy for South Africa (IFSS) (2002); and
3. the Drought Management Plan (DMP) (2005).

2.9 Creating Opportunities for Growth in Rural Areas

The problems of unemployment in rural areas can be resolved by creating more job opportunities and providing additional income to rural communities. Drabenstott (2008) described five areas that provide the scope for government to improve service delivery and economic growth in rural areas, including:

1. balancing the equity and efficiency targets;
2. introducing innovative rural-urban contracts;
3. encouraging logic of investment instead of logic of spending;
4. ensuring that the supply of services match the characteristics and assets of a location;
and
5. supporting innovation and non-traditional approaches to service delivery in rural areas.

A good mix of private, public and voluntary services can boost the economy and service delivery to rural areas. Government can provide services to rural communities either directly or indirectly, and where the government is not directly providing the services to rural households, it can still play a vital role through the establishment of regulations or by providing financial support to the projects or programmes.

2.10 Chapter Summary

Singh (1995) argued that rural development has attracted a great deal of attention from all political parties and the government at both the national and provincial levels. Rural development is receiving top priority, even in the process of planning at the national level. The rural population in almost every developing country is enormous, with a high number of people living below the poverty line. In this situation, the attention of the government is necessary, or non-governmental organisations have to step into the crisis to educate people and to set up welfare measures for their development. There is also a need to create a channel between rural people and the development agencies.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the research methodology and methods that were employed to answer the research questions. Furthermore, it explains the justification for choosing these. The chapter also describes and discusses the data collection techniques, data analysis, sampling techniques, sample size, validity and reliability of the qualitative research method used in this research.

The purposive sampling technique was utilised to collect the data for this research and thereafter theories were developed as a result of the data analysis. This form of sampling permits the researcher to purposefully choose specific people within a population. Semi-structured interviews were used to collect the data, which were conducted face-to-face with municipality officials to determine the effectiveness of the government policies. The last part of this chapter explains research quality criteria such as credibility, dependability and confirmability, and ends with a discussion on how the ethical considerations were managed in this research.

3.2 Research Design and Methodology

According to Creswell (2014), research approaches are the plans and procedures for research that span the steps from broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection, analysis, and interpretation. Creswell further explained that the selection of a research approach is based on the nature of the research problem or issue being addressed, the researchers' personal experiences, and the audiences for the study. The researcher lives in Ixopo, which is located in the Ubuhlebezwe Municipality in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN).

The selection of a research methodology depends on the paradigm that guides the research activity, more specifically about the nature of reality and humanity (ontology), the theory of knowledge that informs the research (epistemology), and how that knowledge may be gained (methodology) (Tuli, 2010). Tuli explained that the qualitative methodology was developed in an attempt to increase people's understanding of why things are the way they are in the social world, and why people act the ways they do. This argument emphasises the appropriateness of the qualitative method for this research.

A research design is viewed as the functional plan in which certain research methods and procedures are linked together to acquire a reliable and valid body of data for empirically grounded analyses, conclusions and theory formulation (Vosloo, 2015). According to Van

Wyk (2015), a research design is the overall plan for connecting the conceptual research problems to the pertinent (and achievable) empirical research. Furthermore, Van Wyk (2015) stated that the research design articulates what data are required, what methods are going to be used to collect and analyse this data, and how all of this is going to answer the research question. The most recommended qualitative designs, which are used by many researchers, are narrative, phenomenology, ethnography, case study and grounded theory. In addition to the qualitative research methodology, researchers can also utilise a quantitative or a mixed method design.

3.2.1 The Qualitative Research Method

According to Creswell (2014), qualitative research is an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning that individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. He further defined qualitative research as the process of research that involves emerging questions and procedures, data typically collected in the participants; setting, data analysis inductively building from particulars to general themes, and the researcher making interpretations of the meaning of the data. According to Castellan (2010), qualitative research is characterised by an interpretative paradigm, which emphasises subjective experiences and the meanings they have for an individual. This was supported by Starman (2013), who claimed that qualitative research is an idiographic approach, which emphasises an individual's perspective on the investigative situation, process, relations, etc.

A qualitative research methodology often relies on personal contact over some period of time between the researcher and the group being studied (Ulin, Robinson, and Tolley, 2012). Ulin et al. stated that qualitative methodologies are inductive, that is, they are oriented towards discovery and process, have high validity, are less concerned with generalisability, and are more concerned with a deeper understanding of the research problem in its unique context (Ulin et al., 2012).

The following summary of qualitative research was identified by Creswell (2014):

- Qualitative researchers tend to use open-ended questions so that the participants can share their views.
- Qualitative researchers seek to understand the context or setting of the participants through visiting this context and gathering information personally. They also interpret what they find; their interpretation is shaped by their own experiences and backgrounds.

- The basic generation of meaning is always social, arising in and out of interaction with a human community. The process of qualitative research is largely inductive; the inquirer generates meaning from the data collected in the field.

Some of the main reasons for conducting a qualitative study for this research were that the study was exploratory, not much has been written about the topic or the population being studied, and the researcher sought to listen to the participants and build an understanding based on what he heard. The idea behind qualitative research is to purposefully select participants or sites that will best help the researcher understand the problem and research question (Creswell, 2014).

3.2.2 Quantitative Research Methodology

According to Creswell (2014), the quantitative research method is an approach for testing objective theories by examining the relationship among variables, and these variables, in turn, can be measured, typically on instruments, so that numbered data can be analysed using statistical procedures. Leedy and Ormrod (2014) explained that quantitative research is characterised by the researcher attempting to measure variables in terms of amounts or quantities using commonly accepted physical measures or carefully designed instruments measuring psychological characteristics of behaviour.

Furthermore, quantitative is predominantly used as a synonym for any data collection technique (such as a questionnaire) or data analysis procedure (such as graphs or statistics) that generates or uses numerical data (Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill, 2009). In quantitative research, the theory is used deductively and becomes a framework for the entire study; it is an organising model for the research questions or hypotheses and for the data collection procedure (Creswell, 2014). Tripathy (2015) referred to quantitative research as the systematic empirical investigation of quantitative properties and phenomena and their relationships. Saunders et al. (2009), meanwhile, explained the objective of quantitative research as the development and use of mathematical models, theories and/or hypotheses pertaining to phenomena. Table 3.1 below shows a comparison between qualitative and quantitative research, as explained by Castellan (2010).

Table 3.1: Comparison between qualitative and quantitative methods

Research Approaches	Quantitative	Qualitative
Philosophical assumptions	Positivist perspective, objective reality, researcher is independent of that which is researched	Postpositivist perspective, naturalistic, social, multiple and subjective reality where researcher interacts with that being researched
Method/ Types of research	Experimental, quasi-experimental, single subject and descriptive, comparative, correlational, ex post facto	Phenomenology, case study, ethnography, grounded theory, cultural studies
Purpose/Goal of research	Generalisability, explanation, prediction	Understanding, insight, contextualisation and interpretation
Questions or Hypothesis	Hypothesis is informed guess or prediction	Question is evolving, general and flexible
Those being researched	Randomly selected sample, proportionally representative of population	Usually a small number of non-representative cases
Those conducting the research	Etic (outsider's point of view), objective, neutral, detached and impartial	Emic (insider's point of view), personal involvement and partiality
Data collection method	Questionnaires, surveys, tests, etc. in the form of numbers and statistics	Written documents from field work, interviews, pictures, observations, objects, etc.
Data analysis	Deductive process, statistical procedures	Inductive process: codes, themes, patterns to theory

(Source: Castellan, 2010: 7)

3.2.3 Mixed Research Approach

The mixed methods approach is the general term for when both quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques and analysis procedures are used in a research design (Saunders et al., 2009). According to Creswell (2013), mixed methods focuses on collecting, analysing and mixing both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study or series of studies; its central premise is that the use of quantitative and qualitative approaches, in combination, provides a better understanding of research problems than either approach alone.

Furthermore, Creswell (2013) explained that some researchers use mixed methods in their research because there is an insufficient argument, multiple angles to an argument, a more-evidence-the-better argument, a community of practice argument, an eager to learn argument, and/or an intuitive argument. In these arguments, the researcher can choose either a quantitative or qualitative approach, or combine both.

3.3 Data Collection

According to Castellan (2010) there are three kinds of data collection utilised with qualitative research, namely interviews, observations, and written documents. This was supported by Creswell (2014), who explained the following types of data collection methods used in the qualitative research method:

- A qualitative observation is when the researcher takes field notes on the behaviour and activities of individuals at the research site.
- In qualitative interviews, the researcher conducts face-to-face interviews with participants, telephone interviews, or engages in focus group interviews with six to eight interviewees in each group. These interviews involve unstructured and generally open-ended questions that are few in number and are intended to elicit the views and opinions of the participants.
- During the research process, the investigator may collect qualitative documents that may be public documents (e.g. newspapers, minutes of meetings, official reports) or private documents (e.g. personal journals and diaries, letters, e-mails).
- A final category of qualitative data consists of qualitative audio and visual materials. This data may take the form of photographs, art objects, videotapes, website main pages, e-mails, text messages, social media text, or any form of sound.

One of the challenges with this type of data collection method is gaining access to the data collection place. According to Creswell (2014), the researcher’s ability to obtain both primary and secondary data depends on gaining access to an appropriate source, or sources, where there is a choice. Creswell also supported Gummesson (2000), who explained that the first level of access is physical access or entry, and whilst the Internet has undoubtedly made accessing some secondary data easier, gaining physical access can be still be difficult.

For the purpose of this research, qualitative interviews were employed as an appropriate data collection method. As mentioned above, this type of data collection method was best suited to address the research questions and objectives of the study. This was done through face-to-face interviews with the participants, using open-ended questions. Audio recordings were taken, which were then transcribed verbatim before the data analysis began. The interviews were conducted at the Ubuhlebezwe Municipal Offices in Ixopo. Table 3.2 below shows the list of respondents who were interviewed.

Table 3.2: List of Respondents

Respondents	Section/Department	Position	Age	Gender
R1	Infrastructure Development	Manager	36-59	Male
R2	Corporate Service	Manager	18-35	Female
R3	Corporate Service	Manager	36-59	Male
R4	Infrastructure Development	Project Manager	18-35	Female
R5	Infrastructure Development	Project Manager	36-59	Female
R6	Local Economic Development	Project Manager	18-35	Female
R7	Human Resource	Manager	18-35	Male
R8	Social Development	Manager	18-35	Male
R9	Local Economic Development	Manager	36-59	Male
R10	Infrastructure Development	Project Manager	36-59	Male
R11	Social Development	Manager	18-35	Male
R12	Local Economic Development	Manager	18-35	Female
R13	Infrastructure Development	Manager	36-59	Female
R14	Local Economic Development	Project Manager	36-59	Male
R15	Infrastructure Development	Manager	36-59	Male

A sample of fifteen Ubuhlebezwe Municipality officials were selected to participate in the interviews as indicated in Table 3.2 above. The participants were composed of nine males and six females and they were all Africans. The average work experience was approximately 6 years, thus most of the participants had been in their positions for a reasonable length of time.

3.3.1 Primary Data Collection

Tripathy (2015) described primary data as the information collected by a researcher specifically for a research project, which must be collected because no one has yet compiled or published the data in a forum available to the community. Qualitative primary data can be collected through various techniques including interviews, observation and focus groups. Furthermore, Tripathy (2015) indicated that the advantages of collecting qualitative primary data are that:

- the primary data are original and relevant to the topic of the research study so the degree of accuracy is very high;
- it can include a large population and wide geographical coverage;
- primary data are current and they can give a more realistic view to the researcher about the topic under consideration;
- the reliability of primary data is very high because they are collected by a concerned and reliable party.

The interviews were utilised as the qualitative primary data collection technique in this study. Different types of interviews are explained below.

3.3.1.1 Interviews

Saunders et al. (2009) described an interview as a purposeful discussion between two or more people that is designed to elicit the interviewee's knowledge or perspective on a topic. The authors added that interviews are useful for exploring an individual's beliefs, values, understandings, feelings, experiences and perspectives on an issue.

In addition, in this technique the researcher personally meets the participants and asks relevant questions to them regarding the topic of the study (Saunders et al., 2009). Usually a set of interview questions is carried by him and questions are also asked according to that. The researcher efficiently collects the data from the participants by cross examining them (Creswell, 2014). The interviewer must be very efficient and tactful to get accurate and

relevant data from the informants. Interviews like personal, in-depth or telephone interviews can be conducted as per the need of the study (Saunders et al., 2009).

In this study, face-to-face interviews were utilised as the research questions had to explore the individuals' understandings, feelings, experiences and perspectives of rural development in the Ubuhlebezwe Municipality. In this way, the researcher was able to establish an understanding of the participants' perceptions with regards to rural development.

The following are the advantages of interviews as a data collection method, as explained by Tripathy (2015):

- Information can be gathered from illiterate people.
- There are no chances of non-responses as the interviewer personally collects the data.
- The collected data are very reliable since the interviewer tactfully collects them by cross-examining the respondents.

Interviews may be very formal and structured, using standardised questions for each research participant, or they may be unstructured or semi-structured conversations.

3.3.1.2 Structured Interviews

Structured interviews use questionnaires based on a predetermined and 'standardised', i.e. identical, set of questions. These are referred to as interviewer-administered questionnaires (Saunders et al., 2009). Structured interviews are conducted verbally, either face-to-face, telephonically, or via email. According to Alshenqeeti (2014), the key feature of this type of interview method is that it is organised around a set of predetermined questions that require immediate, mostly 'yes' or 'no', responses, and the researcher and respondents have little freedom.

3.3.1.3 Unstructured Interviews

There is no predetermined list of questions to work through in this situation, although you need to have a clear idea about the aspect or aspects that you want to explore. The interviewee is given the opportunity to talk freely about events, behaviours and beliefs in relation to the topic area, so that this type of interaction is sometimes called 'non-directive' (Saunders et al., 2009). Alshenqeeti (2014) added that this type of interview is an open-ended interview that allows the respondents to elaborate on various issues.

3.3.1.4 Semi-Structured Interviews

In semi-structured interviews the researcher will have a list of themes and questions to be covered, although these may vary from interview to interview (Saunders et al., 2009). In semi-structured interviews, as explained by Stuckey (2013), the researcher sets the outline for the topics covered, but the interviewees' responses determine the way in which the interview is directed. In this research, semi-structured interviews were conducted verbally between the researcher and respondents. A set of questions were developed in advance that were based on the aim and objectives of the study (see Appendix 1).

This type of data collection method was appropriate for this research as it allowed the researcher to ask follow up questions as and when appropriate. The semi-structured interviews also allowed the researcher to cover various issues relating to the study, while at same time allowing for considerable flexibility, scope and depth in the discussion (Ramaphakela, 2015). This was supported by Stuckey (2013), who stated that semi-structured interviews glean more open-ended qualitative data that require more time to analyse, as the researcher has to go through his notes and audio recordings, summarising important points and patterns.

3.3.2 Secondary Data Collection

Secondary data are the data collected by a party not related to the research study, which was collected for some other purpose and at a different time in the past. If the researcher uses these data then these become secondary data for the current users.

There are various advantages and disadvantages of using secondary data.

The advantages of secondary data are that they:

- are cheaper and faster to access;
- provide a way to access the work of the best scholars all over the world;
- give a frame of reference to the researcher in terms of which direction he/she should go in for the specific research; and
- save time, effort and money, and add to the value of the research study.

3.4 Sampling Method

Sampling techniques provide a range of methods that enable the researcher to reduce the amount of data needed to be collected by considering only data from a sub-group rather than all possible cases or elements (Saunders et al., 2009). The authors also explained that sampling saves time, which is an important consideration when you have tight deadlines. The organisation of data collection is more manageable, as fewer people are involved.

There are two types of sampling techniques available for the researcher to choose from:

- probability or representative sampling; and
- non-probability or judgemental sampling.

3.4.1 Probability Sampling

Probability sampling is also known as random sampling (Elder, 2009). Saunders et al. (2009) explained that with probability sampling, the chance or probability of each person being selected from the population is known and is usually equal for all cases. They further explained that it is possible to answer research questions and to achieve objectives that require you to estimate statistically the characteristics of the population from the sample. With probability sampling, each element in the population has a known and non-zero chance of being selected into the sample. Usually, each member of the population has the same chance of being included in the probability sample (Elder, 2009).

3.4.2 Non-Probability Sampling

Saunders et al. (2009) explained that for non-probability sampling, the probability of each case being selected from the total population is not known and it is impossible to answer research questions or to address objectives that require you to make statistical inferences about the characteristics of the population. There are other types of sampling methods that are used by some researchers, including purposive sampling, quota sampling and convenience sampling, which will be discussed briefly below.

3.4.3 Purposeful Sampling

Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling technique that a researcher uses to choose a sample of subjects/units from a population. Purposeful sampling is a technique widely used in qualitative research for the identification and selection of information-rich cases for the most effective use of limited resources (Etikan, Musa, and Alkassim. 2016).

Purposive sampling was considered best suited for this research problem. The aim and objectives of this research required this type of sampling technique as it allowed the researcher to select participants who were knowledgeable with regards to rural development. Furthermore, the participants may have had experiences that the researcher was interested in, or there may have been certain aspects of their lives that the researcher was interested in (Palinkas et al., 2016). Purposive sampling also involves the identification and selection of individuals or groups of individuals who are proficient and well-informed about a phenomenon of interest (Etikan et al., 2016).

3.4.4 Quota Sampling

According to Elder (2009), quota sampling refers to a selection with controls, which ensures that specified numbers (quotas) are obtained from each specified population sub-group (e.g. households or persons classified by relevant characteristics), but with essentially no randomisation of unit selection within the sub-groups. This was supported by Maheshwari (2017), who stated that quota sampling is a non-probability technique that is used by researchers to ensure the equal representation of subjects in each of a stratified sample grouping.

3.4.5 Convenience Sampling

According to Etikan et al. (2016), convenience sampling (also known as haphazard sampling or accidental sampling) is a type of non-probability or non-random sampling, where members of the target population who meet certain practical criteria, such as easy accessibility, geographical proximity, availability at a given time, or willingness to participate, are included in the study. Maheshwari (2017) noted that convenience sampling is a non-probability technique where subjects are carefully chosen because of their convenient accessibility and proximity to the researcher.

3.5 Data Analysis

The main purpose of data analysis is for the researcher to make sense of the interview data collected by analysing these data and formulating a theory based thereon. This section outlines the process that was followed in analysing the data for this research.

Sunday (2015) defined data analysis as the range of processes and procedures whereby the researcher moves from the qualitative data that have been collected into some form of explanation, understanding or interpretation of the people and situations being investigated. Data analysis in the qualitative method is an ongoing, inductive process where data are

sorted, sifted through, read and reread, with some methods and codes being assigned to certain themes and patterns that emerge (Castellan, 2010). Furthermore, Vosloo (2015) described qualitative data analysis as the process of making sense of research participants' views and opinions on situations, corresponding patterns, themes, categories and regular similarities. Vosloo added that data analysis is the process of transforming collected data into clear, understandable, insightful, trustworthy and even original analysis.

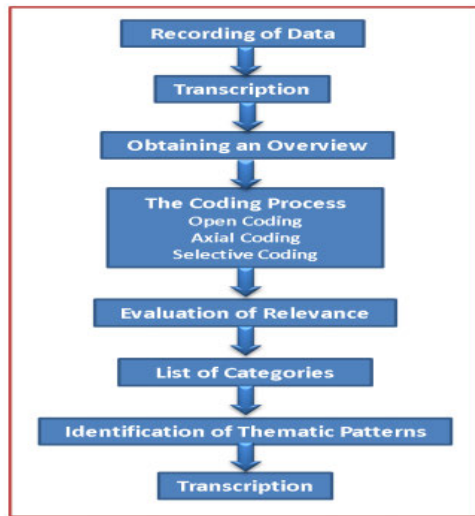
According to Rasmussen, Muir-Cochrane and Henderson (2012), analysis is the process by which data are broken down into fundamental units or themes, and thematic analysis is one form of this process. They further stated that thematic analysis is frequently chosen as the method for the qualitative paradigm, however, it is a tool that spans a range of qualitative methods, and through its flexibility allows the researcher to adapt to the depth of information that the researcher requires.

According to Vosloo (2015), the processes of data analysis consists of five steps namely:

- Defining and identifying data.
- Data reduction and sampling.
- Structuring and coding data.
- Theory building and testing.
- Reporting and writing up research.

For the purpose of this study, data analysis was conducted as per the above mentioned approach and thematic analysis was used in the analysis of the data collected from the transcripts of the interviews. The data were arranged into categories and themes in order to identify recurring themes and patterns. Figure 3.1 below shows the qualitative content analysis process as described by Vosloo (2015).

Figure 3.1: The qualitative content analysis process



(Source: Vosloo, 2015: 336)

3.6 Ethical Considerations

Cooper and Schindler (2008) defined ethics as the norms or standards of behaviour that guide moral choices about our behaviour and our relationships with others. According to Creswell (2014), ethics have important implications for the negotiation of access to people and organisations, and the collection of data and the choice of topic are always governed by ethical considerations.

Saunders et al. (2009) explained that research ethics relate to questions about how we formulate and clarify our research topic, design our research, gain access, collect data, process and store our data, analyse data and write up our research findings in a moral and responsible way.

Saunders et al. (2009) identified a number of key ethical issues that arise across the stages and duration of a research project. These relate to the:

- privacy of possible and actual participants;
- voluntary nature of participation and the right to withdraw partially or completely from the process;
- consent and possible deception of participants;
- maintenance of the confidentiality of data provided by individuals or identifiable participants and their anonymity;

- reactions of participants to the way in which one seeks to collect data, including embarrassment, stress, discomfort, pain and harm;

In this research, the above ethical considerations were overcome through the following documents:

1. A gatekeeper letter (see Appendix 2) was obtained from Ubuhlebezwe Municipality. This letter granted the researcher permission to conduct interviews with officials within the municipality. The interviews were conducted at the municipal offices to ensure the participants felt secure and comfortable.
2. Ethical clearance (see Appendix 3) was obtained from the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN). This clearance confirmed that the researcher would take into consideration the privacy and confidentiality of the information provided by the participants, e.g. no names have been mentioned or disclosed in any part of the research.
3. A consent letter was used to ensure that the participants confirmed that they understood the nature of the research project and that they were willing to participate (see Appendix 4). The informed consent letter gave the participants assurances that their involvement was voluntary, and that there were no potential risks associated with them being part of the research. Each participant signed an informed consent letter.

3.7 Research Quality Criteria

The issue of data reliability and validity were considered in this study in terms of data credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. The validity and reliability of the qualitative paradigm has been debated across all disciplines, and for those who do not embrace qualitative research, its validity and reliability still remains doubtful (Rolfe, 2006). For this study, objectivity and reliability criteria were employed to ensure the trustworthiness of the findings. This was supported by Anney (2014), who pointed out that most qualitative researchers consider that dependability, transferability, credibility and conformability as trustworthiness criteria ensure the rigour of qualitative findings. This section of the research sought to discuss the criteria employed in this study to ensure the trustworthiness of qualitative research findings and briefly discuss some of those criteria such as credibility, dependability and confirmability.

3.7.1 Trustworthy

A study is trustworthy if, and only if, the reader of the research report judges it to be so (Rolfe, 2006). Rolfe continued that the trustworthiness of qualitative research is divided into four criteria - credibility, dependability, transferability and confirmability. This section of this research briefly discusses each of these criteria as suggested in qualitative research and how this study managed them.

3.7.2 Credibility

According to Rolfe (2006), the credibility of qualitative research depends on the concepts and terminology of positivist research. Anney (2014) defined credibility as the confidence that can be placed in the truth of the research findings, adding that credibility establishes whether or not the research findings represent the information drawn from the participants' original data and is a correct interpretation of the participants' original views. Elmusharaf (2013) suggested various strategies to ensure credibility such as prolonged engagement, persistent observations, referential adequacy, peer debriefing, triangulation, member checking, interview technique and peer examination. For the purposes of this study, credibility criteria were employed as a rigorous strategy to ensure the integrity of the research findings, while open coding was employed to analyse the data and to ensure their credibility. Themes were identified based on the data collected to ensure authenticity and credibility.

3.7.3 Transferability

Transferability, as per Anney (2014), is the degree to which the results of qualitative research can be transferred to other contexts with other respondents. According to Elmusharaf (2013), the researcher facilitates the transferability judgment through thick descriptions and purposeful sampling. The assumptions and context of this research were thus defined in order to ensure data transferability. The researcher was therefore able to present a study that can be used by other scholars in their study. This involved identifying the subjects and the data collection settings. The research participants were clearly identified and the nature of the questions, as well as their purpose, was clearly explained.

3.7.4 Dependability

According to Anney (2014), dependability involves participants evaluating the findings and the interpretation and recommendations of the research to make sure that they are all supported by the data received from the informants of the study. He further stated that dependability is established using an audit trail, code recode strategy, stepwise replication,

and peer examination. Elmusharaf (2013) explained that the researcher must provide evidence that if their study were to be replicated with similar respondents in the same context, its finding would be repeated. In the context of this study, dependability was achieved through revising, peer review and checking to ensure that no mistakes were made in conceptualising the study, collecting the data, interpreting the findings and reporting the results.

3.7.5 Confirmability

According to Baxter and Eyles (1997), confirmability is the degree to which the results of research can be confirmed or corroborated by other researchers. As per Anney's (2014) suggestion, this research achieved confirmability through an audit trail, reflective journal and triangulation. Confirmability was further achieved through the support of other colleagues who assisted during the interviews and checked and rechecked the data throughout the study.

3.8 Chapter Summary

This chapter highlighted the methodological details appropriate to the study. A qualitative research approach was adopted, which enabled the researcher to collect and analyse the respondents' views on the challenges facing rural development in the Ubuhlebezwe Municipality. The purposive sampling method was utilised to collect data through face-to-face interviews, which were then tested and measured by means of credibility, confirmability, transferability and dependability to ensure the trustworthiness of the qualitative findings. This chapter concluded by examining the management of the ethical considerations of the research.

The next chapter will go into further detail on the data analysis and the findings of the study, and will present the results from the interviews.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter of this study it was mentioned that face-to-face interviews were employed as they were considered the best technique for the data collection for this research. A purposive sampling method was utilised to recruit a total of 15 municipal officials for interviews, as listed in Table 3.1. The focus of this chapter is to present the findings of the data collected during the interviewees with the respondents. A thematic approach was employed to analyse the collected data from the transcripts of the interviews. Audio recordings were used, despite some of the respondents being uncomfortable being recorded. The discussions and interpretations of the data are discussed in this chapter.

4.2 Analysis of Data

The interviews were conducted at the Ubuhlebezwe municipal offices in Ixopo, as it was considered the most suitable place for the respondents. The researcher initially visited the municipal offices to recruit respondents and to request suitable dates for the interviews. The researcher personally met with each participant and explained the purpose of the interviews to get their consent.

As mentioned in Chapter 3, the participants were chosen based on their working experience and their knowledge in the area of interest at the municipality. During the interviews the respondents were given an opportunity to express themselves and to ask any questions that they felt were relevant to the study topic. It was noted during the interviews that some of the respondents were very economical to provide the information which may put their municipality not the good state. Notes were carefully taken by the researcher during interviews with the respondents who had vast experience in relation to rural development and who really understood the challenges facing the rural communities in the Ubuhlebezwe Municipality. While taking notes, the researcher was also focused on the responses given to ensure that he did not lose track of the topic at hand.

The most of the respondents were ages between 35 to 59 years. The data gathered also shows that the respondents were mostly males. Table 4.1 below shows the years' experience of the respondents, some of whom had been employed by the municipality for more than 6 years.

Figure 4.1 Number of years' experience of each respondent

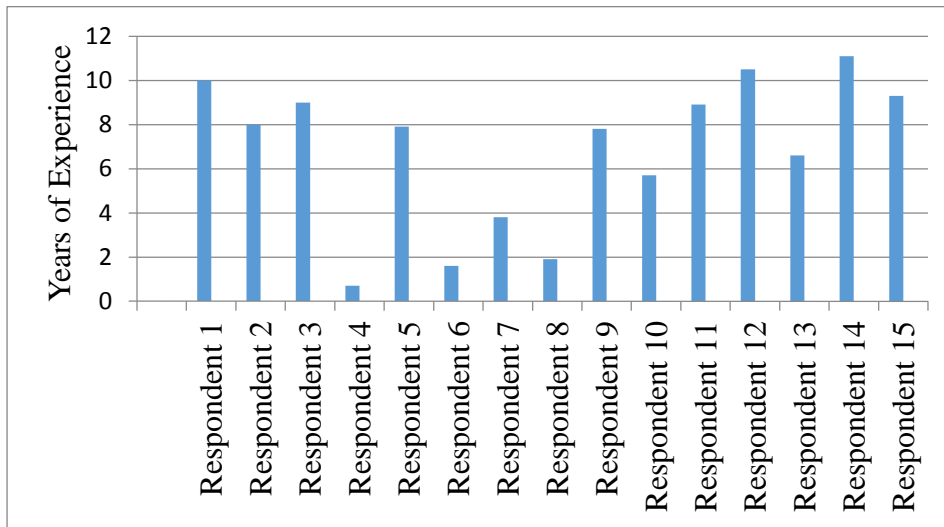


Figure 4.1: Number of years' experience of respondents

It can be seen from Figure 4.1 above that there was a mix of more experienced and less experienced of respondents which were sufficiently represented the majority of respondents exposed in rural development at Ubuhlebezwe Municipality.

The finding indicated that the majority of respondents were between the ages of 36 to 59 years. Forty seven percent of respondents fell between ages 18 to 35 and fifty three percent of respondents fell between ages of 36 to 59 years old. From this we can determine that the respondents' ages were well distributed.

4.3 Themes and Sub-themes

The data were collected using face-to-face interviews, all of which were recorded but also notes were taken. The recorded data were then arranged into categories and themes in order to identify recurring themes and patterns. The researcher utilised those themes and sub-themes to better understand the problems and analyse the data. Table 4.3 below shows a summary of the themes and their respective sub-themes.

Table 4.3: Summary of themes and Sub-themes

Themes	Subthemes
4.3.1 Challenges facing rural development in Ubuhlebezwe Municipality	4.3.1.1 Rural development in Ubuhlebezwe local government 4.3.1.2 Service delivery in Ubuhlebezwe Municipality 4.3.1.3 Water scarcity and poor sanitation 4.3.1.4 Poor condition of road networks 4.3.1.5 Lack of electricity supply 4.3.1.6 Lack of education institutions 4.3.1.7 Lack of health institutions 4.3.1.8 Lack of housing 4.3.1.9 Lack of employment opportunities 4.3.1.10 Skills shortage 4.3.1.11 Lack of internal revenue 4.3.1.12 Insufficient budget allocation
4.3.2 Government intervention to reduce poverty in Ubuhlebezwe Municipality	
4.3.3 Role of agriculture industry in rural development in Ubuhlebezwe Municipality	
4.3.4 Strategies to facilitate rural development in Ubuhlebezwe Municipality	

The above mentioned themes indicate the challenges facing rural communities in the Ubuhlebezwe municipal area, and identify the roles played by local government and agricultural sector to mitigate these challenges. The themes and sub-themes are discussed below.

4.3.1 Challenges Facing Rural Development in Ubuhlebezwe Municipality

The views received from many respondents suggested that this municipality is faced with quite a number of challenges to improve service delivery to the community of Ubuhlebezwe Municipality. The question was asked about the challenges involved in developing this rural area. Explained below are some of the challenges mentioned by respondents during interactions. This section begins with respondents' understanding of rural development and service delivery in Ubuhlebezwe Municipality.

4.3.1.1 Rural Development in Ubuhlebezwe Municipality

Rural development was defined as development that benefits rural people, where development is understood to be the sustained improvement of the standard of living of rural communities. The responses received from the participants indicated that most of them seem to understand the concept of rural development. The majority were also pleased with the progress made so far by their municipality to improve the standard of living of the community of Ubuhlebezwe. Some of respondents were not pleased with the pace of service delivery, however, as they thought that it is moving at a very slow pace. The respondents even said that government needs to intervene by improving the budget allocation to the rural municipalities.

One respondent explained his view with regards to rural development in Ubuhlebezwe Municipality, saying:

My view with regard to rural development is that, it is an initiative by South African government to improve the standard of living of rural communities and also to eradicate poverty level in rural areas. I think this municipality has done great job to ensure people in this area received better services from this municipality. (R3)

This positive attitude towards rural development in Ubuhlebezwe Municipality was seconded by another respondent, who maintained that:

I think the standard of living of rural people in this area is much better now compare to the time of the apartheid era, maybe this is because of the establishment of the programme such as rural development programmes. However, despite the significant improvements made by SA's government, I still believe there is still a lot need to be done to improve the situation in this area to ensure people received better services. (R7)

It is clear from the above that most of the people in this area still expect more from their municipality, even though there is a significant improvement. Some respondents mentioned that when the democratic government came into power in 1994, rural people thought their standard of living would improve drastically.

Some respondents felt very confident about their municipality; one respondent explained that:

My view with regards to rural development is that it was established to empower people of rural areas to control their lives and with the support from our government. I think this municipality is doing a great job in terms of rural development as people in this area are starting to get electricity and low cost housing mostly in the area called Ofafa village. (R1)

Some respondents expressed a concern about the slow pace of rural development in Ubuhlebezwe Municipality. One respondent compared their municipality with other municipalities, and gave the example of poor infrastructure in their municipality:

The rural development in this area is moving at the very slow pace compare to other rural areas for an example the conditions of roads here are still extremely bad and people are still driving a long distance on the gravel roads. Others are forced to buy big expensive cars because of the poor road conditions in this area. The communities' needs are high with limited budget as this municipality mostly depends on conditional government grant such as Municipal Infrastructure Grant (MIG) to improve road conditions. (R14)

Respondents seemed to share the same view, i.e. that their municipality is doing a great job to improve the standard of living of their community with limited resources. However, some of the respondents were not satisfied with their budget allocation and were of the view that it hinders the progress of rural development.

4.3.1.2 Service Delivery in Ubuhlebezwe Municipality

The common thread amongst the respondents was that the poor service delivery is due to inadequate funds to implement the projects. Another contributing factor mentioned by most respondents is the skills shortages within the municipality. Respondent 3 also highlighted the issue of the inaccessibility of the Ubuhlebezwe municipal area from big cities such as Pietermaritzburg and Durban, and which leads to poor economic growth. Various opinions were given by the respondents, and it came out that there are a lot of challenges even though the municipality is doing quite well in improving the standard of living for rural people.

The following are some of the respondents' views with regard to the services rendered by the municipality:

Our municipality is facing with a quite number of challenges such as the remoteness of this Municipality from big cities. You will find that, some of the materials used for construction of roads and houses need to be procured very far away and this leads to increase the price of that material. (R3)

Respondents emphasised the fact that limited resources and a shortage of skills hinders the improvement of service delivery to the community of Ubuhlebezwe. One respondent revealed that some of the duties of the municipality are carried out by other departments or are outsourced because of skills shortages.

My view is that our municipality with limited resources does provide better services to the community of Ubuhlebezwe. The main challenge we have, is the skills shortage. You will find that services such as water supply to the communities are done by Harry Gwala District Municipality because of lack of capacity in our Municipality. (R9)

There was consensus amongst the respondents with regard to the issue of there being an inadequate budget to implement projects for service delivery. It seems that the budget issue is the main contributor to the poor service delivery in Ubuhlebezwe Municipality.

One respondent said that:

Lack of funding is the one of the main challenges that hinders service delivery in our Municipality. (R1)

Another respondent highlighted the programmes within the municipality that contributed to the improvement of service delivery:

There is quite a lot of improvement with regards to service delivery in the past five years from this municipality. This is because of the introduction of the programmes such as rural development and Local Economic Development (LED) in rural areas. I have seen projects such as electrical distribution in this municipality and it is now at the stage where you can say, 70% of houses have access to electricity supply. (R7)

A further respondent said that:

The service delivery by this municipality is not bad as some people may think of. The challenges facing this municipality in order to improve service delivery in this area is the funding. The revenue received from by this municipality is insufficient to provide these services. (R8)

Based on the above views, it is evident that the municipal officials are quite satisfied with the service delivery rendered by the municipality, even though there are some challenges. Respondents shared the same view, i.e. that the municipality is facing challenges, which they attribute to a lack of required skills, inadequate funds and a weak governance system.

Participants seemed to understand the role of local government in the rural communities as per the South African Constitution. Most respondents explained the role as providing basic services such as electricity, housing, water and sanitation to the people of South Africa.

I think the role of local government is to provide basic services to the community. These services include access to safe drinking water, reliable electrical supply and proper sanitation. I think this municipality is playing it role very well to this regards. (R5)

The Constitution and the associated Bill of Rights states that all citizens of South Africa have the right to access adequate shelter. This was supported by a number of respondents:

People of South Africa have right to have access to affordable houses according to the constitution of South Africa and this is the mandate given to local government. We as the municipality, we must make sure that our people received better service delivery from our local government. (R2)

The role of local municipality as understood by most respondents indicated that majority of population of Ubhlebezwe Municipality residing in the rural areas which they need to access to better service delivery from municipality. The Constitution also outlines government's roles and responsibilities in terms of people, human rights and government institutions:

The role of local government is to ensure rural communities participate in the municipal functions and contribute in the economic growth in their area. This is done through izimbizo and IDP forums. (R4)

The local municipality is responsible for the construction of municipal roads, gravelling of access roads, and construction of community facilities, such as halls and sports fields. (R1)

4.3.1.3 Water Scarcity and Poor Sanitation

A lack of safe drinking water, water scarcity and poor sanitation are some of the biggest challenges facing this municipality, as per the majority of the respondents. One respondent stated that only 12% of household dwellers receive piped water, while two respondents shared their concern about the “*very poor*” standard of sanitation. They noted that only 14% of households have access to flush toilets that are connected to the sewerage system.

Respondent R3 in explaining the water problem said:

The municipality is currently facing with challenge of skills shortage and this municipality have decided to outsource the water and sanitation services to Harry Gwala District Municipality. Even though these services is done by District, majority of people of Ubuhlebezwe area are still do not have access to piped clean water and some are still fetching water from river. This compromises their healthy conditions. (R3)

One respondent pointed out that water scarcity is a serious problem facing the community, while another noted that:

The schools and health facilities are the most affected by water crisis. Every child has the right to be in a school that offers safe water, healthy sanitation and hygiene education. (R7)

Other respondents supported the above view and mentioned that some of the patients in clinics do not have clean water to take their medication, and the Harry Gwala District Municipality does not have enough water tankers to distribute water to the clinics, schools and hospitals.

Respondent R12 indicated that:

The number of households without water and sanitation is declining in this municipality even though the pace is very slow. (R12)

4.3.1.4 Poor Condition of Road Networks

The inferior infrastructure, including the poor condition of the roads, is the one of the reasons given by the respondents for the low economic growth of the municipality. The roads within the municipal area are not in a good condition, which leads to materials and products being damaged while being transported. Respondent R10 said:

The municipality is having challenges of aging and inadequate infrastructure. This has resulted to the municipality unable to attract the investors to this municipal area. (R10)

Not being able to attract investors has a negative impact on the economic growth of the municipality and results in a lack of job opportunities. One respondent added that the municipality received grants from the government for road rehabilitation and building new roads to mitigate this problem, but they were still not enough.

The municipality received MIG conditional grants funding from COGTA to improve condition of roads in this municipal area but this funding is insufficient to cover all our municipal roads. (R7)

Most businesses and development in this municipal area are dependent on the road network for the transportation of products to consumers and to access products from suppliers, thus the poor road conditions have a negative impact in this regard.

The municipality has made provision for construction of new roads and rehabilitation of old roads as a strategy to improve service delivery of Ubuhlebezwe municipal area. (R4)

4.3.1.5 Lack of Electricity Supply

Respondents acknowledged the progress that has been made by the municipality with regards to access to electricity connections, especially in the village called Mahhehle, Mkhunya and Ofafa. However, some respondents indicated that in some areas, especially in the traditional rural areas, access to electricity is still inadequate.

The access to electricity in other areas such as Echibin is still a challenge and some of the people in these areas still utilised other source energy such as coal, paraffin and candles to source energy. (R9)

One respondent mentioned that the electricity supply in the area of Ubuhlebezwe is supplied by Eskom. The municipality has submitted the list of households to Eskom that need to be connected to electricity.

We as municipality have secured the funding to connect to electricity most of households and the list have been submitted to Eskom to implement the project. (R7)

One interviewee noted that the municipality has received funding from COGTA to implement projects such as street lighting to ensure the safety of the community of Ubuhlebezwe, while others were concerned about the availability of funding to connect the majority of households and one respondent added that:

The lack of access to electricity is attributed to inadequate bulk supply, poor access to areas due to topography and insufficient funding. (R4)

The issue of electrical capacity is major challenge facing Eskom, as was mentioned by one respondent.

Eskom has recently indicated that due to the increased in electricity demand within this municipal area and the existing power station has reached its maximum demand. However the power utility is in the process of construction of new power station at Kenteton. This power station will able to meet electricity demand required by this municipality. (R8)

It is clear from the above that the electricity supply to the Ubuhlebezwe municipal area still remains a challenge, even though the municipality is trying to ensure access to electricity for more households.

4.3.1.6 Lack of Education Institutions

Almost all of the respondents indicated that the majority of the population in this municipality does not have a formal education and one respondent added the reason for that:

My view is that there is a shortage of education institutions in the most of our villages and for an example; you find that one village consist of one primary school and one high school. (R11)

One respondent indicated that building of education facilities is not the municipality's responsibility, but said that the municipality should liaise with the Department of Education in this.

Building and maintaining schools is not our function as a municipality and I believe, this is the Department of Education's function but having said that municipality should work together with Department of Education to ensure that schools are constructed where the community needed them the most. (R11)

Another respondent highlighted that the schools that do exist are remote and not easily accessible, thus children have to walk a long distance to school.

The number of education institutions in this area is inadequate. You find that children walks long distance to school without transport by the time reach at school is exhausted and unable to learn effectively. (R10)

To support the above view, the other respondents indicated that the municipality is engaging, through its IDP/Budget process plan, with the Department of Education to facilitate the construction of school facilities in this municipal area.

4.3.1.7 Lack of Health Institutions

The majority of the respondents gave a similar response, describing that the creation of clinics and hospitals is the Department of Health's function, however the municipality does provide services such as electricity, water and sanitation. One respondent said:

Though the construction of Clinics, Community Health Centre, Hospitals are Department of Health's mandate, basic services such as electricity, water and sanitation are provided by the municipality to these facilities. (R3)

One respondent pointed out that the local health facilities do not have adequate resources such as medication, and ambulance services usually take too long to respond when called. Another respondent voiced their concern about the support received from government departments in terms of their initiative to grow vegetables to promote health amongst the rural people.

There is lack of commitment from government with regards to some of municipal initiative such as installation of vegetables for people with a chronic disease. This project initial started very well but later it lacked a support from national and provincial government. (R2)

4.3.1.8 Lack of Housing

The lack of housing was highlighted as one of the major challenges facing the Ubuhlebezwe municipal area. In order to address the lack of appropriate housing, one of the respondents indicated that:

The Ubuhlebezwe Municipality has introduced the Human Settlement Sector Plan with an objective to reduce housing backlog and facilitate rapid and cost effective release of land for human settlement purposes. (R13)

The issue of land was mentioned by most participants, who indicated that most of the land in this area belongs to farmers and is used for agriculture and forestry.

The Human Settlement Sector Plan ensures the integration of human settlement projects with other development programmes between Ubuhlebezwe Municipality and Harry Gwala District's IDP. (R1)

According to the participants, the abovementioned plan has to be reviewed annually in order to take into account the development changes and progress of implementation. One of the main challenges mentioned by the majority of respondents about housing is the lack of bulk services from the District Municipality. The lack of housing to accommodate the working class results in the municipality losing a lot of money.

Although there has been significant progress with regards to providing housing for rural people in the Ubuhlebezwe municipal area, some challenges still need to be resolved, such as land distribution and land ownership for rural people.

4.3.1.9 Lack of Employment Opportunities

Respondents indicated that unemployment is the major concern facing this municipality. According to R3, unemployment is considered the main reason for poverty in Ubuhlebezwe. They added that the unemployment rate is 25% which is below poverty line, as indicated in 2018 IDP Report. The high rate of unemployment in this municipal area is an indication that unemployment still remains a concern. One respondent said:

The rate of unemployment is very high in this area and is the one of the main reasons for poverty. (R6)

The majority of people living in this municipality depend on social grants to survive, while some work for farmers for minimum wage salary and these were the views of some of participants.

Most people in this area are heavy dependence on welfare grants and unemployment is the major challenge in this municipality. (R7)

Respondents indicated that there is a lack of job opportunities in this area, especially for unskilled people. The few job opportunities that do exist are for certain skills such as professionals, artisans and information technology workers. The respondents also explained that most people in this area depend on agriculture as their source of income.

Job opportunities are not enough at Ubuhlebezwe municipal area and I believe the main reason for that, there are few industries where people can get employed. (R3)

A respondent added that a lack of education facilities is a contributor to the lack of job opportunities and said:

There are few job opportunities in this area, if any and lacking of training facilities are the one of the biggest contributor to this problem. (R14)

It was noted that the rate of unemployment within the municipality is very high; most people migrate to the cities to look for jobs.

I think the challenge we having here is that most people especially the youth move to cities like Pietermaritzburg and Durban to educate themselves and they don't come back to their communities after graduating. They look for the job in those cities. The only people remain behind are the domestic works, teachers and nurses. (R11)

One respondent said:

Creating job opportunities is a challenge facing our government. Most people in this area are not working and they depend on social grants to support themselves. (R5)

Other respondents indicated that the failure of the agricultural sector to create job opportunities is a major contributor to the poverty in the area.

The area within this municipality is predominantly an agricultural area and there are few other industries. People here are only relying on the agricultural sector. (R9)

4.3.1.10 Shortage of Appropriate Skills

The issue of skills shortages is one of the biggest challenges, according to the majority of respondents, as is the difficulty retaining skilled employees due to the low salaries. They commented that the municipality does not pay enough to attract scarce skills to service rural people.

The municipality is facing with challenge of unable to recruit required skilled employees due to poor salary scale. There are lot vacancies for skilled people but we can't able get them filled because of municipality low salary scale. (R1)

The above view was supported by another respondent who said:

The problem with our government is the issue of paying a competitive salary compare to private sector. We will always come second best when it comes to returning high skilled labour. (R5)

Respondents shared the same view that the municipality is facing a challenge of retaining/attracting required skills to support inclusive growth and to provide quality service delivery to the community of Ubuhlebezwe.

On the positive side, one respondent indicated that the municipality has designed and implemented programmes to improve skills development within the municipality and to capacitate staff with the required skills. Another respondent pointed out that the municipality works closely with the SETA through the Workplace Skills Plan (WSP) to provide training for employees for 12 months based on the operational requirements of the organisation and the critical skills identified by SETA.

One respondent said:

Ubuhlebezwe Workplace Skills Plan has been accepted by the municipality and it is aligned with the municipal strategic objectives. The main objective of this plan is to empower the employees with skills to deliver services effectively and efficiently. (R3)

The development of employees is vital for the municipality, as it assists the municipality to accomplish its mandate of service delivery.

4.3.1.11 Lack of Internal Revenue

Ubuhlebezwe Municipality has developed a revenue enhancement strategy with the aim of addressing revenue collection challenges such as municipal property development, hiring out the community hall and exploring other revenue collection strategies. This was identified by some of the participants.

Some respondents indicated that the municipality is experiencing challenges collecting debts from rates, property rentals, waste and electricity.

Respondent 14 said:

The revenue enhancement strategy has been developed by municipality to assist the municipality to address revenue collection. (R14)

4.3.1.12 Insufficient Budget Allocation

To address the issue of insufficient budget allocation, one of the respondents explained how the municipalities are classified:

The municipal budget allocation is based on the category level of the municipality. Ubuhlebezwe Municipality is classified as category B4 municipality. (R3)

I think one of the challenges to implement any project or government programme is shortage of funds. You will find that most of the projects start very well but they do not get completed because of the limited budget. (R9)

Almost all the respondents indicated that the municipality is faced with infrastructure maintenance backlogs due to insufficient funds; budget allocation to the municipality is insufficient to address all the infrastructure maintenance problems.

Respondent 4 said:

The situation here is bad when it comes to financial issues. You will understand that our municipality is very small with low revenue based and municipality mostly depends on the government Grants funding to fund their projects and programme. (R4)

4.3.2 Government Interventions to Reduce Poverty in Ubuhlebezwe Municipality

The South African government has introduced programmes, policies and legislation to improve their service delivery, specifically in rural areas, in order to reduce poverty. One respondent indicated that some of these development mechanisms are good in theory, but have proven to be very difficult to implement effectively. Some respondents were not well informed with regards to projects that are currently underway or planned by the national or provincial governments under the rural development programme. A senior manager did mention the CRDP, but this programme has not been implemented in this municipality.

A senior official from the municipality said that:

In 2014/2015 final year, KZN COGTA used up to R40 million to Small Town Rehabilitation Programme to development Ixopo town which falls under this municipality. The main objective of the programme was to grow the economy of this municipality and to create environment that will attract investment to this area. (R1)

A further respondent supported the above remarks and mentioned that some of the capital projects in the municipality are largely financed by conditional grants from the national and provincial governments. Some of the grants, as per the participants, are for electrification (the Department of Energy), Small Town Rehab (COGTA), road infrastructure (MIG) and library grants (Cyber), to mention a few. One respondent said:

The department of COGTA is currently working together with Municipality to complete R2 million on the taxi rank project, and R20 million on the electrical distribution to the area of

Mahehle, Mkhuya and Fafa villages. These projects have generated temporary jobs and permanent jobs to the community of Ubuhlebezwe. (R6)

It is clear from the above response that the KZN government has been working together with the municipality to improve the standard of living of the community.

One of the respondents indicated that:

The Department of Rural Development and Land Reform has assisted municipality in undertaking the development of one of the community area called Highflats and this project has already started and is progressing very well. (R15)

On the negative side, one respondent indicated that some projects are not finished in time or are not finished at all, due to a lack of integration between the relevant stakeholders.

Some of the projects do not finished due lack of coordination between different stakeholders such as involvement of communities, provincial government authorities and local government. (R1)

A respondent indicated that Treasury has introduced an Infrastructure Development Management System (IDMS) which aims to facilitate formal inter-governmental and cross-section cooperation and coordination, which is essential for an integrated system approach to achieve the government's vision on rural development.

Almost all the respondents indicated that the LED and EPWP programmes noted the role played by these programmes to alleviate poverty and reduce unemployment.

The establishment of programme such as LED and EPWP has played an important role to eradicated poverty and ensuring people are able to get short term employment at the same time developing skills for the individuals. (R8)

4.3.3 Role of Agriculture Industry in Rural Development in Ubuhlebezwe Municipality

Most people living in rural areas depend on agriculture, fisheries, forestry and other related activities for survival, as per the majority of respondents. It also emerged from the respondents that agriculture plays an important role in poverty reduction and rural economic growth.

Respondents highlighted that agriculture is the major economic driver within Ubuhlebezwe Municipality, however one respondent indicated that manufacturing and business services are the biggest contributors to the economy of the municipal area. One respondent said:

Agricultural production is the most important economic sector in this area, however the challenge that we have is the low agricultural production. (R8)

One respondent indicated that in 2013, Ubuhlebezwe adopted an agriculture plan that focuses on the municipality's farming systems and farming, with the aim of developing practical solutions to the challenges facing the agricultural sector and to identify existing opportunities in order to strengthen farming in the municipality. Another respondent supported this comment and mentioned that:

The aim of the plan is to contribute to agriculture and the municipality's long term economic development and sustainability. (R7)

Another participant mentioned that there is a farmer support initiative which was established in 2015 by Abamili Phambili Project and funded by Jos Fund

One of the challenges facing the farmers, as mentioned by one respondent, is the low skill base of emerging farmers which limits their rate of development into commercial farmers. He added that most emerging farmers lack the capital and collateral to access credit from the banks.

Another respondent added that most of Ubuhlebezwe's municipal roads are unusable during the rainy season, which negatively affects the transport of inputs and produce.

The lack of transport as result of poor road conditions has a negative impact on the marketing of agricultural production of emerging farmers. (R11)

A lack of interest in agriculture among the youth of Ubuhlebezwe was a concern mentioned by most respondents.

4.3.4 Strategies to Facilitate Rural Development in Ubuhlebezwe Municipality

All respondents mentioned that the Municipality does have a plan called the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) and its function is to coordinate service delivery within the Municipality. Three respondents also mentioned that, this plan used to be compiled by service providers but recently is being compiled internal within the Municipality. A copy of the approved 2017/2018 IDP report was shown to the researcher by one of the respondents.

Two respondents also mentioned that the IDP is reviewed annually and gets approved once every five years.

One respondent explained that:

The Ubuhlebezwe Integrated Development Plan (IDP) was prepared by municipality for 2017/2018 financial year to support the municipality in achieving its obligations and to integrate and coordinate service delivery within the Municipality. (R7)

Other respondent indicated that the main objective of IDP is to assist the Municipality to align itself with other implementing agents and other departments. The respondent indicated that the Municipality has achieved a lot through IDP implementation.

Integrated Development Plan (IDP) assists the municipality to align its resources and other service providers with the implementation of the IDP. (R3)

The other participant supported the above and added that the Municipality is also encouraging the communities to participate during the IDP process. The respondent said:

The IDP empowers the community to contribute in the development and implementation of rural development programmes. (R2)

The challenge with IDP as mentioned by one of the respondent was connecting priorities with available resources. One respondent explained the objective of the IDP as a strategic plan that guide budget spending. One respondent said:

There was a concern from members of the communities that some of their needs are not included in the IDP. (R3)

4.4 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the results of the study. The data collected from the respondents revealed that there has not been much improvement with regards to the standard of living of rural people in Ubuhlebezwe, and the pace of rural development is very slow.

The next chapter presents a discussion of the findings in comparison to the other studies and the literature on a similar study topic.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented the study's findings, while this chapter interprets and discusses the data findings collected from the research participants. The literature review discussed in Chapter Two and previous research studies were used as comparisons with the findings of this study.

The emerging themes and sub-themes emanating from the study, as identified in Chapter Four, are discussed as key findings.

5.2 Key Findings

5.2.1 Rural Development at Ubuhlebezwe Government

The findings of the research show that there was a common understanding of the concept of rural development amongst many respondents. According to their views, rural development is an initiative of the South African government to improve the standard of living of rural communities and to reduce the poverty level. Furthermore, the respondents stated that rural development was established by the South African government to empower people from rural areas to take control of their lives with support from the government.

Montaldo (2013) supported the above notion, stating that the establishment of rural development was to ensure that people living in rural areas receive better service delivery and improve their standard of living. The author concurred with most of the respondents, stating that rural development empowers rural people in order to boost their source of income and reduce poverty.

Some respondents argued that the pace of rural development in the municipality is moving very slowly compared to other rural areas, the reason for which they alluded to being a skills shortage in the municipality. Macanda's (2014) view, however, was that rural development cannot be expected to be successful within a short period in democracy, i.e. people in rural areas need to be patient with regards to rural development. Some of the respondents shared the some views as Macanda (2014), comparing the standard of living today to that of apartheid.

5.2.2 Service Delivery at Ubuhlebezwe Municipality

The study identified that almost all the respondents were well aware of the services that should be rendered by the municipality according to the South African Constitution. It was highlighted that the function of local government is to provide services to the communities within their areas. This is in agreement with the explanation by Ramaphakela (2015), who stated that local governments have a responsibility to provide basic services to their communities, such as electricity, roads, water and sanitation. A report by the African Monitor (2012) emphasised the importance of providing these services, as they support people's quality of life and improve the health of rural inhabitants. The South African Bill of Rights states that the government has a duty to protect, promote and fulfil the right of access to quality service delivery (Fobosi, 2013).

The findings of the study also indicated that most people within the Ubuhlebezwe municipal area still do not have access to safe drinking water and proper sanitation. As mentioned by some respondents, water distribution to the communities is a function of local government, i.e. rural development is not taking place in the Ubuhlebezwe area and the municipality is failing to provide the required services to their people as per the Constitution. According to Fobosi (2013), a function of the local government is to provide access to ordinary public services such as water and sanitation.

A role of local municipalities in rural development is to educate the public about the importance of water saving to ensure the availability of water in South Africa. The local government must thus ensure that water leaks are dealt with and that people receive piped clean water.

5.2.3 Challenges Facing Rural Development at Ubuhlebezwe Municipality

The study revealed that respondents are well aware of the challenges limiting rural development in the area of Ubuhlebezwe Municipality, noting that some of these are the function of the municipality while others are the functions of government departments or the District Municipality. However, they also understand that working together with other government institutions will benefit the rural people in Ubuhlebezwe and will mitigate these challenges. Some of these key challenges are briefly discussed below in this section.

5.2.4 Water Scarcity

The study indicated that water scarcity is one of the challenges facing the Ubuhlebezwe municipal area. Research conducted by Nair (2010) found that people living in rural areas suffer from a lack of access to potable water, which results in poor health. Most respondents indicated that very few households in the Ubuhlebezwe municipal area receive piped clean water or have access to flush toilets that are connected to the sewerage system. Macanda (2014) ascertained that most people living in rural areas fetch water from the river for drinking, cooking, washing and bathing. There was general consensus among the participants that schools and health facilities are the most affected by the water scarcity.

5.2.5 Poor Condition of the Road Networks

The study revealed that the condition of the roads in Ubuhlebezwe is very poor, which has a negative impact on the economic growth of the area as well as the development of job opportunities. This view is consistent with O’Niell (2011), who indicated that a poor road condition in rural areas hinders the progress of rural development and economic growth. The study also revealed that the municipality is unable to attract investors due to the poor conditions of the road networks.

The study revealed that most businesses in Ubuhlebezwe depend on the transportation of products to consumers and access products from suppliers. Therefore, if the road conditions are very poor, it affects their business financially. This was supported by Ramaphakela (2015), who stated that poor infrastructure development prevents economic growth in rural areas. The other viewpoint revealed by most of the participants is that the municipality depends largely on conditional government grants for the rehabilitation of municipal roads, thus some of the roads have been greatly improved.

5.2.6 Lack of Electricity

The study established that although significant progress has been made by the Ubuhlebezwe Municipality to provide electricity to rural households, a number of households remain without access to electricity. This study finding is supported by Jamal (2015), who stated that 60% of households in rural areas at South Africa still do not have access to electricity. Currently, 72% of households in Ubuhlebezwe Municipality do not have electricity.

An initiative that emerged from the study was to provide a small amount of electricity per household per month to rural people, free of cost. This initiative is in line with a suggestion

by Daws (2013), who suggested that rural people should receive few unit of electricity per month in order to fulfil their basic electricity needs.

5.2.7 Lack of Housing

The study showed that Ubuhlebezwe Municipality is still facing challenges of backlogs in housing for rural people, despite the Housing Act of 1997 which calls for each municipality, as part of its integrated rural development planning process, to take reasonable and necessary measures within the national and provincial policy towards the progressive realisation of this right. The process includes initiating, planning, coordinating, promoting and enabling appropriate housing development within municipalities' areas of jurisdiction (Jooste, Graham and Foster, 2013). This was consistent with the responses from the participants.

The study revealed that most of people living in traditionally rural areas live in very poor conditions and lack adequate services. A RDP housing project provided most people in the town with a much-needed opportunity to own houses for the first time in their lives, however there is a huge shortage of low cost houses in the deep rural areas.

5.2.8 Lack of Employment Opportunities

The study revealed that poverty and food insecurity are the biggest problems facing the rural community in Ubuhlebezwe Municipality as a result of insufficient employment opportunities. This was as per Surchev (2010), who noted that low incomes and unemployment are among the main problems facing rural communities and results in poverty.

Respondents raised a concern with regards to the lack of employment opportunities in the Ubuhlebezwe area, saying that the majority of young people migrate to the nearby cities to look for jobs and to educate themselves. The findings also revealed that these young people do not come back to serve their communities with their skills, thus the rate of unemployment grows. This view was shared by Ramaphakela (2015), who said that most of the people in rural areas migrate to cities such as Durban, Cape Town, Johannesburg and Pretoria to seek employment. Furthermore, the author indicated that those who remain work in poorly paying jobs such as in agricultural and domestic services.

The study also identified that most people living in rural areas depend on social grants as their source of income, while most unemployed young women depend on the child support grant to support themselves as there are no job opportunities available for them. This was also pointed out by Ramaphakela (2015), who stated that many households in rural areas are

dependent largely on government social grants, such as old age pensions grants, disability grants, and child support grants.

5.3 Challenges of Implementation Rural Development

This section of the study discusses the findings of challenges for implementation of rural development.

5.3.1 Role of Agriculture in Rural Development

The findings of this study revealed that the role of the agricultural sector in rural development is very important, however the sector is facing many challenges in this municipal area. It was found that one challenge is the poor production of agricultural products, which has a negative impact on the economic growth of Ubuhlebezwe. This is in agreement with the Mozambique Poverty Hearings Survey (2012), indicated that in the Mozambique Poverty Hearings, the grassroots communities also lamented the lack of adequate infrastructure; bad roads were identified as having a negative effect on business and the community's ability to access important facilities such as schools.

5.3.2 Budget Allocation and Internal Revenue

The findings on this theme showed that the budget allocation to this municipality is insufficient to carry out all the required activities and provide services to the rural community of Ubuhlebezwe. The study further revealed that poor data management impacts the functioning of the municipality, from customer management to revenue collection. This is in agreement with Molobela (2016), who stated that most of the rural municipalities in South Africa facing challenges with revenue planning and consumer debt collection. Molobela further stated that despite these challenges, the municipalities are obligated to provide services to their communities, as mandated in the Constitution.

The findings indicate that two of the main sources of revenue for the municipality are property rates and service charges, yet according to the participants, the revenue received is not enough to implement rural development. The overall municipal management agrees that money must be collected and used in an effective and efficient way, which is as per Molobela (2016), who indicated that municipalities are required to generate their own revenue from internal and external sources.

5.4 Chapter Summary

Chapter Five discussed the study's findings in line with the research questions and the literature review. The main objective of this chapter was to explore and highlight the number of challenges limiting rural development in the Ubuhlebezwe Municipality, and to suggest possible ways to mitigate these problems. Based on these objectives, the data were collected and analysed. The study revealed that various challenges are affecting rural development in the Ubuhlebezwe Municipality, which is similar to other previous studies. The following chapter will present the conclusion and recommendations which follow from this chapter.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

This chapter present conclusions and recommendations which are based on the key findings of the research. The recommendations and suggestions of the rural development for the future research are also discussed in this chapter.

The rural communities of Ubuhlebezwe Municipality as discussed in previous chapters has been faced with challenges of service delivery and underdeveloped infrastructure which include access to safe drinking water and sanitation, poor roads conditions, most of inhabitants do not have electricity and are still using candles and other forms of energy for lighting and cooking and lack of telecommunication. Poor access to health institutions and education institutions are among of the challenges facing rural communities of Ubuhlebezwe. Moreover, people of this area are still facing with challenges of lack of employment opportunities, low income, and access to land for agricultural use and natural resources, access to and shortage of affordable housing of good quality and people are still living in a very poor housing and poverty still remain high.

Ubuhlebezwe Municipality is thus under extreme pressure to provide better service delivery for their communities. The community of Ubuhlebezwe has primarily depended on agriculture for employment, agricultural production for food security, and selling agricultural products in order to provide an income for their families. The agricultural sector thus plays a vital role in rural development by providing employment, reducing poverty, ensuring food security, improving skills development, improving the rural economy, and improving health and nutrition for rural communities such as Ubuhlebezwe. The forestry sector is also considered to be an important contributor to rural development, as it improves the quality of life of rural people by providing job opportunities and generating income to alleviate poverty, growing the local economy through the production of paper and timber products such as furniture and roof trusses, and protecting natural resources.

The main objectives of this study were as follows:

- To determine the challenges facing rural development at Ubuhlebezwe Municipality.
- To determine the role that the agricultural industry plays in rural development in Ubuhlebezwe Municipality.
- To identify government interventions which are in place to reduce poverty in Ubuhlebezwe Municipality.
- To develop strategies to facilitate rural development in Ubuhlebezwe Municipality.

A qualitative research methodology was employed in this research, with 15 participants being interviewed using face-to-face interviews at the Ubuhlebezwe municipal offices. It is evident that this research was needed based on the responses of the respondents regarding the slow progress in rural development that needs to be addressed. Data were analysed using thematic analysis, and the themes were used to present the results for discussion and to draw conclusions and make recommendations.

Various literature were consulted in order to develop a deeper understanding of the theoretical framework, as well as to identify studies, models and case studies on rural development, although little information could be found. The literature review was also used to define the key terms and definitions of rural development.

This chapter summarises the key findings of the research and it also present implications of the research and limitations of the study are discussed below. The recommendations to improve rural development at Ubuhlebezwe and recommendation for future study is also presented in this chapter.

6.2 Addressing the research objectives

The key findings of the study will be discussed in terms of the study objectives and the themes that emerged during the analysis of the collected interview data. The study has shown that the challenges of rural development could be overcome if all the relevant stakeholders work together to ensure that rural people benefit from the rural development programmes. The relevant stakeholders include the local municipality, district municipality, community of Ubuhlebezwe, government departments and the private sector.

6.2.1 Objective 1: To determine the challenges facing rural development at Ubuhlebezwe Municipality.

The study highlighted that there are a number of challenges facing rural development in the rural local municipality. These challenges correspond to previous studies, discussed under the section literature review. The rural development challenges as identified by respondents were as follows:

The rural municipality is facing with skills shortage resulting in outsourcing some of their services to other service providers such as professionals, contractors and private sectors. In other cases rural municipality outsource some of their services to the district municipality, services like water distribution to the people of rural area.

The other challenge mentioned by respondents is the shortage of land to build quality houses for rural community. Most of land has been taken by forest and farms. This industry does not improve the economy of the rural areas as the products are being process in urban areas.

The study indicated that the agricultural industry is facing with the change of meeting food security while adapting to the climate change. South Africa is currently facing with shortage of water as a result of drought conditions. These conditions have resulted in reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.

The rural community still depends on getting water from nearby rivers for cooking, bathing, washing and drinking. This water is not suitable for drinking may result in unhealthy condition to the rural people. There is few people received water from cleaned piped water. This is still challenge facing rural development at rural local municipality.

The study revealed that inadequate and unreliable infrastructure in rural areas is still a challenge for rural development. Poor road conditions are not only bad for the transport of rural community; it also increases cost of service delivery, resulting in loss of investment, tourism and business profitability. The majority of people living in rural area still do not have electricity because of skills shortage, poor infrastructure. The telecommunication is extremely bad, infrastructure is non-existent, and there are very few lines of communication compared to urban areas.

6.2.2 Objective 2: To determine the role that the agricultural industry plays in rural development in Ubuhlebezwe Municipality.

The study indicated that the agricultural industry in the rural areas remains the weakest link when it comes to their contribution to rural development and building a rural economy. This was identified by the study that most of the agricultural products are being processed in urban areas instead of being processed in rural areas. This resulted in the lack of employment opportunities in rural areas whereby most of the factories that process agricultural production are located in urban areas. This means that job opportunities are created at the urban areas and which then boost the economy of urban areas. It came out from the study that most young people from rural areas migrate to urban areas looking for better job opportunities; a number of factories are located in urban areas.

From the study it was mentioned that most farms are located in rural areas and most of the land is used for farming. It was stated that 5% of milk production of the country comes from the Ubuhlebezwe area but milk processing is taking place at Durban. This takes away job creation at the Ubuhlebezwe area, whereas the most of the land is being used for farming only. This is one of the reasons for the migration of rural people to urban areas. Most of the ancillary industries that support the services and production of agricultural products are located in urban areas. These industries are also the source of employment. It was highlighted in the research that most of the farms are faced with challenges of limited access to markets and credit facilities. This led to an increase in food prices and rural communities cannot afford to buy food at a higher price.

The findings of this study indicated that the agricultural sector has not been able to meet the demands of the rural people especially with regards to food security and supporting employment. Respondents still believe that agriculture can still play an important role in rural development due to land use and supporting the rural economy and employment. It was mentioned during the interviews that most of the workers in the agricultural sector do not have necessary skills to adapt alternative agricultural activities to improve rural development. It was revealed that the quality of education and health care systems in this area is very low and this is due to the level of economic activity.

6.2.3 Objective 3: To identify government interventions which are in place to reduce poverty in Ubuhlebezwe Municipality.

The study indicated that one of the government interventions to alleviate poverty was the introduction of Local Economic Development (LED). LED was introduced with the aim to create jobs by making the Ubuhlebezwe Municipality economy to grow. This means that more businesses and factories should be started in the municipal area. As the private sector grows inclusively, poverty is reduced sustainability, and public sector income also increases. The study indicated that the LED strategy must be part of the Integrated Development Planning process and municipality must decide on best LED strategies. The following are some of the key strategies identified by the study:

- Improvement of municipality infrastructure to make it easier for companies to function.
- Promoting tourism by developing local tourist sites and facilities, improving security and ensuring that all residents are welcoming of tourists.
- The procurement policies of the municipality must favour small contractors and emerging businesses.

The study indicated that the Expanded Public Works Programme is the one of government interventions to alleviate and reduce unemployment and increase the ability of workers to earn an income, either through the labour market or through entrepreneurial activity especially in rural areas. The study indicated that the Ubuhlebezwe Municipality is expected to develop EPWP policy in alignment with the municipality's IDP and a number of jobs has been created through EPWP. The municipality received funding for EPWP stipend, number of EPWP projects are initiated within the municipality that create a number of jobs, this include Waste management, Greening, cleaning in all municipal facilities including community halls and sport fields. The study indicated that the municipality has maintained an average of 100 EPWP workers for the past 3 years.

6.2.4 Objective 4: To develop strategies to facilitate rural development in Ubuhlebezwe Municipality.

The study indicated that the one of the strategies to facilitate rural development is to give rural people access to land to create their own efficient farms. Other strategies as indicated in the study are the access to water, loans, and training. As indicated in this study agriculture

play significant role in reducing rural poverty and unemployment in the community of Ubuhlebezwe Municipality.

6.3 Recommendations

Having interrogated and reviewed the literature extensively and undertaken this research, the below recommendations are made in relation to the findings. The study proposes below discussed recommendations be implemented to remedy the above mentioned challenges. Based on the above discussions and findings, the following recommendations are made to address the gaps and challenges facing the rural development at Ubuhlebezwe Municipality.

- Support should be provided to the local municipality to develop their capacity to manage rural development programmes and projects.
- Ensure that service delivery and rural development is planned and delivered in the most efficient and effective way.
- The municipality should employ Infrastructure Development Management (IDMS) to manage its operations.
- The municipality must comply with the Municipal Finance Management Act No. 56 of 2003.
- Municipality to ensure to comply with Intergovernmental Relations Framework Act No.13 of 2005. This Act promotes coherent government, monitor implementation of policy and legislation and also facilitate the realisation of national priorities.

By increasing employment on farms may result in increasing the production as more labour is required to increase production output. As more job opportunities created will result to reduce poverty and improve economic growth of the municipal area.

6.4 Review of Rural Development

Rural development, if well implemented, has the potential not only to improve service delivery, but also to alleviate poverty, reduce the unemployment rate, increase the overall level of income, improve economic growth, and improve the standard of living of rural communities. The fact that this study revealed that the pace of rural development progress is very slow shows that more interventions are needed from the South African government in the form of larger budget allocations to rural municipalities.

It is recommended that urban municipalities share resources with rural municipalities to improve service delivery in rural areas. This can be done by sharing skills for services such as electrification, plumbing, sourcing water through boreholes, and supplying potable water.

It is recommended that more agricultural research and innovation be funded and supported by the South African government; young people at tertiary institutions should be encouraged to study agricultural science in order to benefit the rural communities once they graduate.

Partnerships between the private and public sectors need to be developed to improve market-related matters and grow procurement from small traders and producers. NGOs could act as implementation agents for rural development and gender consideration in development. It is recommended that ancillary industries be relocated to the rural areas to ensure that better job opportunities are created and to increase economic growth in rural areas.

The findings and approach of this research could be used to contribute and benefit the community of Ubuhlebezwe Municipality. Respondents indicated that in order to improve its service delivery and financial performance, the municipality needs to appoint skilled and competent officials with relevant qualifications and experience. In addition, municipal officials must be developed and trained, stakeholders must be more involved.

6.5 Recommendations for future research

The study concentrated on the challenges facing rural development in the Ubuhlebezwe Municipality. Further research studies need to be carried in other provinces in South Africa to establish the application of the findings, especially in the deep rural areas in South Africa. Future studies could also focus on the impact of LED programmes implemented by the Ubuhlebezwe Municipality on the livelihoods of local people.

6.6 Chapter Summary

The aim of this study was to determine which challenges are hindering rural development in the Ubuhlebezwe Municipality. The study had four main objectives, i.e. to determine the challenges limiting rural development in the Ubuhlebezwe Municipality; to determine the role that the agricultural industry plays in rural development in the Ubuhlebezwe Municipality; to identify which government interventions are in place to reduce poverty in the Ubuhlebezwe Municipality; and to develop strategies to facilitate rural development in the Ubuhlebezwe Municipality.

The above recommendations were made in to mitigate the challenges facing Ubuhlebezwe municipality. The research showed that there is still long way to achieve the objective of rural development. The findings of this study indicated that in order to improve service delivery and sound financial performance, the municipality needs to appoint skilled and competent officials with qualification and experience, development and training of Municipal officials, stakeholders' involvement, ensuring sound revenue planning, continuity of revenue care.

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APPENDIX 1: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Challenges facing rural development in Ubuhlebezwe Municipality, South Africa

1. Male Female

Ages

18-35 years 36-59 years 60 years and above

2. How long have you been employed by the Municipality?

0-15 years 16-30 years 31 years and above

3. What are your views regarding rural development in Ubuhlebezwe Municipality? What are the challenges involved in developing this rural area?

4. How do you feel about services rendered by this Municipality to the community of Ixopo?

5. What do you think needs to be done to improve service delivery in this area?

6. Is there any rural development plan and what are the challenges, if any, in implementing this plan? Please elaborate.

7. Is there enough budget from government to improve infrastructure development such as road, water and electrical supply? Please elaborate.

8. Would you like to add anything regarding development services in this Municipality that you think it can improved?

9. What are your views on the role played by the agricultural industry or private sector to improve the standard of living of the community of Ubuhlebezwe Municipality?

10. How can we maximise employment generation through rural development programmes?

11. What are the government interventions or programmes that are in place to reduce poverty through rural development in Ubuhlebezwe Municipality?

12. How effective is the rural development policy framework related to economic development?

13. What strategies can be developed to facilitate rural development in Ubuhlebezwe Municipality?

APPENDIX 2: GATEKEER LETTER

UBUHLEBEZWE

Telephone: 039 – 834 7700
Fax: 039 – 834 1168
E-mail: mm@ubuhlebezwe.org.za
Website: www.ubuhlebezwe.org.za



PO BOX 132
29 Margaret Street, Ixopo
Kwa-Zulu Natal, 3276
South Africa

MUNICIPALITY

From the Office of the Municipal Manager.

1663 Unit H
Edendale
Pietermaritzburg
3200
26 September 2017

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH WITH UBUHLEBEZWE MUNICIPALITY:

Dear Mr. S.G Dlamini,

We acknowledge receipt of your correspondence dated 07 September 2017, requesting permission to conduct a dissertation research towards the fulfillment of your Masters of Business Administration Degree with the University of KwaZulu Natal.

Ubuhebezwe Municipality hereby grants you permission to conduct the requested research within the area of Ubuhebezwe, and with the identified relevant personnel at Ubuhebezwe Municipality.

Hoping you will find the above in order.

Yours Sincerely


Mr.

Municipal Manager
Ubuhebezwe Municipality

APPENDIX 3: ETHICAL CLEARANCE



07 November 2017

Mr Siboniso Goodman Dlamini (963092565)
Graduate School of Business & Leadership
Westville Campus

Dear Mr Mr Dlamini,

Protocol reference number: HSS/1913/017M

Project title: Challenges facing rural development in Ubuhlebezwe Municipality, South Africa

Approval Notification – Expedited Approval

In response to your application received on 10 October 2017, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the 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.

The ethical clearance certificate is only valid for a period of 3 years from the date of issue. Thereafter Recertification must be applied for on an annual basis.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully



Dr Shamila Naidoo (Deputy Chair)

/ms

Cc Supervisor: Dr Cedile Gerwel Proches and Mr L Gumbi
Cc Academic Leader Research: Dr Muhammad Hoque
Cc School Administrator: Ms Zarina Bullyraj

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)

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APPENDIX 4: INFORMED CONSENT

Informed Consent Letter 3C

**UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS AND LEADERSHIP**

MBA Research Project

Researcher: Siboniso Dlamini (0748241232)

Supervisors: Dr C. Proches and Mr L. Gumbi (0312608318)

Research Office: Ms P Ximba (0312603587)

Dear Respondent,

I, Siboniso Goodman Dlamini an MBA student, at the Graduate School of Business and Leadership, of the University of KwaZulu-Natal. You are invited to participate in a research project entitled “Challenges facing rural development in Ubuhlebezwe Municipality, South Africa”. The aim of this study is to determine the challenges facing rural development in Ubuhlebezwe Municipality and suggest possible ways to mitigate these problems. The study will look at the progress done so far and make some recommendations to improve the pace of rural development to address these problems.

Through your participation I hope to understand the challenges facing rural development in Ubuhlebezwe Municipality.

Your participation in this project is voluntary. You may refuse to participate or withdraw from the project at any time with no negative consequence. There will be no monetary gain from participating in this interview. Confidentiality and anonymity of records identifying you as a participant will be maintained by the Graduate School of Business and Leadership, UKZN.

If you have any questions or concerns about participating in this study, you may contact me or my supervisor at the numbers listed above.

The interview should take about 45 minutes of your time.

Sincerely

Investigator’s signature _____ Date _____

This page is to be retained by participant

**UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS AND LEADERSHIP**

MBA Research Project

Researcher: Siboniso Dlamini (0748241232)

Supervisors: Dr C. Proches and Mr L. Gumbi (0312608318)

Research Office: Ms P Ximba (0312603587)

CONSENT

I.....(full names of participant) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participating in the research project.

I hereby consent / do not consent to have this interview recorded.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire.

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

DATE

.....

This page is to be retained by researcher

APPENDIX 5: TURN-IT IN REPORT

CHALLENGES FACING RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN UBUHLEBEZWE MUNICIPALITY, SOUTH AFRICA

ORIGINALITY REPORT

7 %	9 %	2 %	2 %
SIMILARITY INDEX	INTERNET SOURCES	PUBLICATIONS	STUDENT PAPERS

PRIMARY SOURCES

1	tru.uni-sz.bg Internet Source	1 %
2	devplan.kzntl.gov.za Internet Source	1 %
3	repository.up.ac.za Internet Source	1 %
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APPENDIX 6: EDITORS LETTER

JENNIFER RENTON

PO Box 68648

Bryanston

2021

20th July 2018

To whom it may concern,

This letter is to confirm that I am a professional editor and proof reader and that I have edited Siboniso Dlamini's thesis, the title being: *Challenges facing rural development in the Ubuhlebezwe local municipality, South Africa.*

For any queries, please contact me on jenniferrenton@live.com.

Yours sincerely,

Jennifer Renton