

Integrated Development Planning as a Strategy for Poverty Alleviation: The Dilemma Within the Ambit of South Africa

KI Makalela

University of Limpopo, South Africa

Abstract: The purpose of this paper is to explore whether integrated development planning can be used as strategy for poverty alleviation at the local level. This paper first appraises the unsurpassed concerted and planning exertions of the preceding, whilst poverty on the other hand is still declared as a devastating phenomenon that endure manifest in different ways and further culminates and demoralises precipitously the well-being of the local communities. Worth noting is the fact that contemporary poverty reduction strategies diverges from the usual rhetoric in the poverty discourse as contrary to putting forwards the fundamental of what the local communities through the integrated development planning would consider as an appropriate response to the daunting and an alarming issue of comprehensively addressing poverty as a multi-dimensional and a nebulous concept. This paper therefore, put forward the argument that there is a cognitive convergence to the notion that the efforts of the technocentric and macro-level development thinking did not respond positively towards the attainment and transformation of people lives. Therefore, the latter signals a shift of the planning trajectory to more of a micro-level participatory approach. Continuously, the South African government is envisaged to be developmental in nature with the purpose to overcome the unprecedented planning practices of the past and contemporarily focuses on putting the interest of the local people at the forefront of any development planning initiatives. It is therefore, against this backdrop that various policy prescripts have been put in place which includes inter alia: Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, 32 of 2000 and the Local Government Structures Act, 117 of 1998 in which they all support and aid the alleviation of poverty on the local sphere of government. The formulation and the implementation of integrated development planning as a distinctive local government initiative aid to assist municipalities to alleviate poverty at the local level.

Keywords: Integrated Development Plan, Integrated Development Planning, Poverty, Poverty Alleviation, Service Delivery, Developmental Local Government

1. Introduction

Since the advent of democracy, the South African government had been forging to be developmental in nature with the purpose and in order to alleviate poverty in local communities. It was long observed that in order to alleviate the level of poverty in local communities, there is a need to revamp development strategies to hold a pivotal role (Barole, 2013). The government on the other side subsequently identified intrinsic and rudimentary strategies to effect the transformation (Van der Walt, Venter, Phutiagae, Khalo, Van Niekerk and Nealer, 2007). Additionally, in the quest for transformation that was apparent in the African National Congress led the government to unveil the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) which serves as the basis for formulation of strategies for uplifting communities. The RDP is meant to arrive on the social upliftment of the poor which was more

culminated and imbedded within the following principles: integration and sustainability, people-driven development and meeting the basic needs of building infrastructure (RSA, 1994). Therefore, in order to operationalize the latter, the national government has to make some form of interventions that is to explicitly set out directives that compel districts and local municipality to prepare their own strategic development plan which is ultimately called integrated development planning. Municipalities are required especially by the Local Government: *Municipal Systems Act*, 32 of 2000 to formulate and implement integrated development planning that is to assist in dealing with the triple challenges which include among other to alleviate poverty (RSA, 2000; Muller, 2006). Some scholars argued that poverty is considered to be one of the major challenges that threatened the human life and persists despite the amalgamation of various interventions and efforts to reduce it (Naledi, 2005). Therefore, the

South African local government signals a shift to put as an integral goal the alleviation of poverty as the key priority of South African agenda and most notable from the international development agencies such as United Nations (UN), World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF). Poverty is a complex phenomenon and it is interpreted in different ways given the nature of its multidimensionality, trans-contextual and nebulous. But however, some scholars identified several weaknesses in the government effort to reduce poverty, namely, lack of interdisciplinary analysis of poverty, lack of political and social analysis and lack of linkage between poverty assessment and other instruments of planning and policy (Maxwell and Conway, 2000).

This paper extends its argument that in as much as an effort to complement the efforts of the technocentric and macro-level development thinking are still disillusioned in terms of addresses poverty at a global and local level. Correspondingly, the South African government is envisaged to be developmental in nature with the purpose to overcome the unprecedented planning practices of the past and contemporarily focuses on putting the interest of the local people at the forefront of any development planning initiatives of some sorts.

2. Conceptualisation of Integrated Development Planning

Integrated development planning can be defined as an elaborative and collaborative planning process which produces a strategic plan designed to guide municipalities and their entities to systematically eradicate service delivery backlogs. Encourage socio-economic development, preserve and conserve the natural environment, address spatial disparities of development and deliver on the agreed priorities which are translated into projects with clearly defined output and targets within five year planning cycle. This plan covers a five-year period and it is reviewed annually to accommodate new pressing priorities (Department of Provincial and Local Government, 2000).

Worth noting and important to realise in this paper is the difference between integrated development planning and integrated development plan (IDP). The former refers to the municipal planning process whereas the latter refers to the output or product of the process. In that case, IDP is a document produced through integrated development

planning process. IDP is a vital strategic document that must be produced by all municipalities as a comprehensive plan which guides all services and development within the jurisdiction of a municipality (RSA, 2000). Furthermore, it aims to co-ordinate the work of local and other spheres of government in a coherent plan to improve the quality of life for all people living in the area (Mautjana and Mtapuri, 2014).

Municipalities are accorded a developmental role to enhance service delivery. According to Tsatsire, Taylor and Raga (2010) the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa requires municipalities to structure and manage their administration, budgeting and planning processes to give priority to the basic needs of communities and to promote social and economic development. Van Niekerk (2014) further asserts that integrated development planning becomes the function in which the local government is assigned the responsibility to develop an IDP for the local area. In the essence of this paper integrated development planning is viewed as a tool that assists in identifying the least serviced and most impoverished areas and point out where municipal funds should be spent (Borole, 2013).

3. Developmental Local Government Within South African Context

The character of the current system of local government is informed by the 1996 Constitution which defined five objects for local government and made provisions for all municipalities to strive for the realisation of these objectives within their financial and administrative capacity (DPLG, 2000). The objects of the local government as per section 152(1) are to:

- Provide democratic and accountable government for local communities;
- Ensure the provision of services to communities in a sustainable manner;
- Promote social and economic development;
- Promote a safe and healthy environment; and
- Encourage the involvement of communities and community organisation in matters of local government.

Developmental local government, according to the white paper, refers to a local government that must be committed to work with citizens and groups within the community to find sustainable ways to meet their social, economic and material needs and improve the quality of their lives. It should target especially those members and groups within the communities that are marginalised or excluded, such as women, disabled people and the very poor (RSA, 1998). Therefore, it is inevitably evident that one of the salient and fundamental objectives behind the South African developmental local government is to address higher levels of poverty and inequality at the local level as the failure of apartheid system to strengthen the local authorities to address the needs of communities (Asha, 2014). Some scholars lamented on the attributes that lead to the failure of the apartheid planning system as follows: as the kind of the fragmented planning system that prioritises racially segregated planning, the system of planning that channels resources and infrastructural development in favour of the white communities (Ameir Issa, 2004). As a result, the system led to the prolific infrastructural backlogs, precipitous decline in service delivery and poverty at the grass root level. The centralised governance system that was used did not constitutionally safeguard the local government simply because the local government was treated as a standalone sphere (Williams, 2006). The latter hindered the local government from having the autonomy over initiating and implementing their development initiatives. Therefore, developmental local government in South Africa became as an explicit approach that transform the local government system towards people-centred development to services, poverty alleviation and local governments (Thornhill, 2008). It is within this backdrop that it's evident that apartheid system had left challenges to the new government of South Africa in redressing the imbalances of the past. Continuingly, in order to overcome the unprecedented effort caused by the apartheid legacy, the local government through the outcomes of developmental local government requires the municipalities to structure and manage its administration, planning and budgeting processes differently (DPLG, 2000). *The White Paper on Local Government, 1998*, proposes the pillars of the systems that the municipalities need to adopt and which concretely support the developmental orientation as enshrined in the *Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, 32 of 2000* which includes the following:

- Integrated development planning to assist municipalities to develop a coherent, long-term plan for the co-ordination of all development and delivery in their areas;
- Performance measurement and management assist to make sure that all sections of the municipality co-operate to achieve the goals and targets and also to ensure that plans are being implemented; and
- Structures and systems to enable active involvement of citizens and communities in the affairs of municipalities.

4. The South African Paradigm Shift in Local Government Trajectory

The ideal transformation of the South African local government started appearing in the early 1990s during the negotiation of the local government forum. The transformation deemed necessary and highly imperative to demolish discriminatory policies in order to elicit and encourage the contemporary system of local government in post-apartheid South Africa. Henceforth, the *Local Government Transition Act, 1993* was introduced and provided the guidelines to reform the new system of local government of the country (RSA, 1993). The *Local Government Transition Act* enacts the establishment of various councils ranging from metropolitan, district and local. The South African development path had also gone to the transformation process of local government planning and implementation through the introduction of the comprehensive socio-economic development policy. Inter alia: *The White Paper on Reconstruction and Development Programme of 1994* was introduced. The policy aimed to promote socio-economic development through meeting basic needs of people, including job creation, land reform, housing, water, sanitation and social welfare and security (RSA, 1994). The government further adopted the *Development Facilitation Act of 1995*. The act focuses on the shift of development planning from technocentric or top-down approach that does not entirely reflect the actual needs of communities (Asha, 2014). Continuingly, the government adopted integrated development planning as a strategy that is deemed to revamp and facilitate development planning at the local level (Beyers, 2015). Conversely, the local government planning because of the paradigm shift from macro-level development thinking position

of integrated development planning at the centre stage of the local function and that the local government through IDP has a role to play in spite of traditional role of providing services, but to also lead, manage and play an active role in social and human development (Van Niekerk, 2014).

5. The Rationality of Poverty in South Africa

Poverty in South Africa is found to be regarded as one of the greatest burden on the lives of the people and is predominately affecting millions of people who are engulfed by unemployment. Poverty is a multi-dimensional concept manifest itself in different ways which can includes, unemployment, poor infrastructure, lack of skills and education and poor health (Malefane, 2004). As the South African government effort to reduce poverty, some scholars argue that poverty alleviation strategies are designed to influence policy, but in most of the instances they are found to be having little influence. The study on poverty and inequality institutes define poverty reduction as strategies and policies that reduce the number of percentage of people living in poverty or the severity of the impact of poverty on the lives of the poor people. It is also evident that poverty reduction has been a major concern for international and national development agencies and has increased attention in the recent years. Therefore, it is also of highly significant in this paper to have an operational definition of what constitutes poverty notwithstanding its complexity. Some scholars define poverty as the inability to attain absolute minimum standard of living, reflected by quantifiable and absolute indicator applied to a constant threshold, such as minimum income line, that separate the poor from the non-poor (Pressend and Ruiters, 2008). Martin and Rosh (2002) define poverty as the inability of individuals, households or communities to command sufficient resources to satisfy a socially acceptable minimum standard of living. It comprises both the physiological and social wellbeing of the poor people. But however, for the purpose of this article poverty will be viewed from basic municipal service perspective which culminates and looks at inability of people at the ground to access certain basic municipal services in their areas of jurisdiction. Therefore, important to note from the latter is that poverty does not only revolve around income perspective, it furthermore extended to lack of basic services and public infrastructure (Borole, 2013).

6. The Prevalence of Poverty in South African Communities

Poverty in South Africa is visible and its visibility is widely shown and demonstrated by what people are subjected to. The poverty that exists in South Africa whether created by design or not, its effects are still evident and felt. Between 45% and 55% of the South African population live in various degrees of poverty and still experience insufficient access to basic services, overcrowding in informal settlements, malnutrition, ill health, limited economic resources and opportunities, social exclusion, and joblessness (Hindson, 2003). Various degrees of poverty are experienced and manifested within the following: absolute poverty, relative poverty and poverty line. Firstly, absolute poverty is more of the household which is unable to afford the basics with regard to inability to access basic education, clothing, services, health facilities and food is classified under absolute poverty. Devas, Amis, Beall, Grant, Mitlin, Nunan, and Rakodi (2004) define absolute poverty as those who do not have sufficient income to afford a minimum level of nutrition and basic needs. Absolute poverty, therefore, denies the citizens sufficient income which enables them to access basic services such as electricity, houses, health, education, water and sanitation, and also unable citizens to access goods such as food and clothing. The higher absolute restriction nations are often characterised by a lack of goods and services as well as severely limited access to marketplaces by most consumers (Hill and Martin, 2012). Secondly, in terms of relative poverty, Devas *et al.* (2004) define it as the position of the poor in relation to the rest of society, and so is the head-count index, which indicates the numbers falling below a specified poverty line. When comparing the position of the poor in terms of their resources to that of the rest of the society, interventions such as welfare schemes and programmes should be implemented to narrow the societal gap that exists, and to reduce the poverty levels. Relative poverty lines can be developed based on a percentage cut-off point in the welfare distribution, below which some proportion of the population is located (Pressend, 2008). Thirdly, the poverty which is the combination of relative and absolute poverty characterises the poverty line, and the poverty line can either be absolute or relative depending on the situation of the recipients. In support of this, Pressend *et al.* (2008) state that measuring the degree or level of poverty within the community or geographical area gives an indication whether poverty is relative or absolute,

and this is realised using the poverty lines which is in the form of Minimum Income Question (MIQ). A popular approach to estimate poverty line is based on the Minimum Income Question (Nivorozhkin, Nivorozhkin, Nivorozhkina and Ovcharova, 2010). Chambers (1982) defines a poverty line as a measure of the amount of money society believes is necessary for a person to live at minimum of subsistence or at a level consistent with a socially decent standard of life.

The above definition in simple terms explains that the poverty line separates acceptable from unacceptable levels of well-being and thus essentially reflects a value judgment (Notten and De Neubourg, 2011). The poverty line provides a measure of the level of poverty, of the geographical areas or communities that are observed, inequality provides an indication of the gap between the rich and the poor within a group (Asmah-Andoh, 2009).

7. The Efficacy of Integrated Development Planning on Poverty Alleviation in South African Context

Integrated development planning is seen as the means to achieve developmental and participative local government, requiring that different departments collectively link their plans, objectives, budgets, resource auditing, and performance monitoring and community consultation in a process of cooperative governance (Department of Constitutional Development, 1998). In order to effectively alleviate poverty at the grass root level, IDPs should align all available resources towards development goals, integrate local activities and prioritise objectives. IDPs should put too much of emphasis on effective and affordable service delivery, local development and community participation (McEwan, 2003). Some other scholars argue that the functional IDP process is the one which is able to identify the real needs of the people and break down into sectoral issues such as water, health electrification and housing so that the precipitous decline in poverty can be observed (Mashamba, 2008; Beyers, 2015). As IDP is a legal document, it is preceded by progressive policies in order to alleviate poverty and to promote development at the local sphere. *Inter alia*, Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) in which one of its object is to enact change and moving the poor people out of the poverty traps (RSA, 1994). RDP aims to transform the lives of the people through

the creation of conducive environment for people to participate in and to define their own development path. IDP saliently assigned community participation to take the centre stage which will in turn assist to tie closer the people and enable them to determine their own form of development that is in line with their developmental needs and priorities (Madzhivandila and Asha, 2012).

8. Legislative Prescripts for Integrated Development Planning and Poverty Alleviation in South Africa

There is a vast amount of policy prescripts that guides the formulation and implementation of the IDP. The national and provincial government has passed legislation that directly impact on the municipal planning and that need to ultimately considered in the IDP processes (Mashamba, 2008). The purpose of this article will focus much of its attention on the following: *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996*; *White Paper on Local Government, 1998*, *Local Government: Municipal System Act, 32 of 2000* and lastly *Development Facilitation Act, 67 of 1995*. The *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996*, is the supreme law of the country. It aims to protect human rights and promote democratic governance. It provides for the developmental roles and responsibilities of local government to be achieved through the IDP. In term of section 15(1) of the constitution, developmental local government should make provision for a democratic and accountable government for communities, to ensure the provision of services to communities in a sustainable manner in order to promote social and economic development (RSA, 1996). The Constitution further highlights that municipalities should structure and manage their administration processes in a way that gives effect to the basic needs of communities.

The *White Paper on Local Government, 1998*, provides an approach for workable relationships with the local citizenry and partners. The White Paper characterises developmental local government as maximising social development, integration and co-ordination and democratising development within a developmentally oriented context. In terms of the Municipal Systems Act, 32 of 2000 section 23 elude that municipalities are expected to undertake developmentally oriented planning to ensure that they achieve the objective of local government stipulated in the Constitution, 1996. In terms of section 25 of the *Municipal Systems Act, 2000*,

states that municipalities should adopt a single, inclusive and strategic plan for the development of the municipality within its prescribed five-year period. Municipalities are required to ensure that there are constant community engagements in the planning and implementation of the IDP. The latter has also been lamented by the section 152(1) of the Constitution, 1996 that the object of local government is to encourage the involvement of communities in matters of local government. The land development projects served as the catalyst towards the alleviation of poverty in communities around South Africa. Mavengere (2008) stated that the *Development Facilitation Act, 67 of 1995*, (DFA) sets out principles that will guide all the decisions relating to the development of land. Integrated land development as part of the aforementioned principles is there to encourage IDP programmes to alleviate poverty through the implementation of a sustainable development strategy. In conjunction with the *Development Facilitation Act, 67 of 1995*, the National Development Agency Act, 108 of 1998 established the National Development Agency which is aimed at granting funds for project and programmes meeting the development needs of poor communities (McMurray and Van Rensburg, 2004). Therefore, Chapter 1 of the *Development Facilitation Act, 67 of 1995*, encourages and promotes sustainable development that: is within the fiscal, institutional and administrative means of the country; establishes viable communities; meets the basic needs of all citizens in an affordable way; protects the environment; and ensures the safe use of land.

There are evidently a lot of government responses through the use of policies in place to reduce poverty. But the focus in this article will only be limited to Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP), Accelerated Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa (ASGISA) *inter alia*. RDP is a set of a policy framework which aimed to reduce poverty and inequality in South African society. RDP is a socio-economic framework that is based on the principles of integration, sustainability and people-centred processes, peace and security and meeting the basic needs. The RDP is aimed reduce poverty by focusing on building low cost houses, provision of and access to electricity and provision of running water. Expanded Public Works Programme was also introduced in order to reduce poverty by providing essential services, infrastructure, skills and jobs creation. Chakwizira (2010), states that the government has

two objectives behind the introduction of EPWP. Firstly, is to provide short term relief strategies by means of creating short-term jobs, secondly is to include previously marginalised groups such as youth, people with disabilities, women and black people in general in a formal labour market. The EPWP is an alternative labour management policy framework for the reduction of rural unemployment, poverty, and for addressing development challenges. The programme enables the government to adopt common performance standards in implementing similar large scale development initiatives. Projects within the scope of the EPWP are aimed at addressing social imbalances by creating opportunities for the previously disadvantaged individuals (McCord, 2004). The Accelerated Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa (ASGISA) was introduced in 2006 to halve poverty and unemployment by 2014 by focusing its attention on women and youth. Specifically, this policy framework puts emphasis on human resource training, access to finance, taking the poor out of the second economy, ensuring their participation in agriculture and creative industries, improving their access to basic services, and increasing their participation in EPWP.

9. Conclusion

This paper concludes that Integrated Development Planning (IDP) as an intrinsic municipal planning tool, did not entirely provided much of the efforts in alleviating poverty at the grass root level. It is anecdotally evident that the inability of IDP to deal with the unprecedented and daunting poverty is attributed to the fact and its nature of multidimensionality. It is also clear that the multidimensionality of poverty makes it impractical for municipalities to alleviate it from its roots. This paper also observed that beyond reasonable doubt poverty is not only limited to lack of income to access several basic necessities, but it way beyond and inculcates the diverse of issue ranging from poor infrastructure, lack of basic services, social exclusion among others. It is clear that poverty alleviation efforts in most of the instances are guided by the vast amount of policy prescripts, but however the very same policies are found in most cases to have little influence which makes it difficult for poverty to be reduced. One of the many government responses to poverty has been evident through policy implementation in South Africa. Many of the policy guidelines have been consistent in proclaiming that because poverty is a multidimensional phenomenon, responses

to it cannot be solely based on policies, but rather inclusive sets of well-co-ordinated measures that are able to deal effectively with it. This signals a shift for inclusive and holistic approach for poverty alleviation. Therefore, this paper suggests that a robust and meaningful participation by all affected individuals and stakeholders is needed in order for people to be able to influence and determine what constitutes their own form of development.

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