

## Women in South Africa's development trajectory: Disjuncture between Voice, Participation and integrated Development Planning

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### Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to explore the involvement of women and the audibility of their voices in the planning and implementation of Integrated Development Plan (IDP). Integrated development planning is legislatively mandated which unfold within a participatory approach to promote sustainable growth, equity and as a result empower the poor and marginalized group within the society. Thus, local municipalities are mandated to consult all development beneficiaries during integrated development planning to establish thorough understanding as a planning base and foster the deepening of democracy. However, gender inequality and the marginalization of women remains a dominant obstacle during planning in rural areas. Thus encumbering the robust and meaningful participation of women in the IDP. Furthermore, the realization of democracy and the notion that "The People Shall Govern" is rooted on pragmatic evidence felt by the ordinary, particularly the poor and marginalized citizens in rural areas. The paper sets out the following questions: How has the municipality incorporated women's voices in the IDP as a participatory mechanism? How have the interest of women been mainstreamed in the IDP? What are the effective and efficient measures has municipalities employed to promote women's participation in the planning and implementation of IDP? The paper concludes that women empowerment as a social phenomenon, requires a social movement that promotes effective measures to improve the involvement of women in the society. Furthermore, the voice and the needs of women should be inculcated in planning if the societal problems like poverty are to be resolved. The paper recommends measures to enhance women's involvement in the developing and adopting of IDP so that it could be inclusive of all affected stakeholders and thus reflect the actual needs of communities.

**Keywords:** Gender, Integrated Development Plan (IDP), Developmental Local Government.

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