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An evaluation of the provincial Growth and Development Plan in the Eastern Cape province of South Africa: lessons for the National Development Plan

Abstract

This article evaluates of the Eastern Cape province's Provincial Growth and Development Plan (PGDP) while it also explores lessons to be learnt for the implementation of the National Development Plan. This is an empirically grounded study based on the use of a combination of data collection methods, analysis of primary and secondary sources of data including government documents, administering in-depth interviews to a range of informants within government and a questionnaire survey on sample drawn from members of the community in the province. The PGDP of the Eastern Cape was implemented within the context of developmental local government and against the background of increasing levels of poverty in the province. This paper argues that the PGDP has performed dismally due to lack of capacity in policy implementation, poor intergovernmental relations and lack of synergy with local programs. This article argues that these challenges present lessons that can be learnt for the successful implementation of the NDP to be realized. It is against this background that the paper suggests policy recommendations on intergovernmental relations, policy shifts, capacity building for policy implementation, citizen participation and the need for an overarching policy. Moreover, the article argues that institutional, technical, administrative and political capacities are pivotal for efficient and effective implementation of the National Development Plan.

Keywords: provincial growth and development plan, national development plan, policy implementation and evaluation.

JEL Classification: O2, O21.

Introduction

The South African Constitution Act 108 of 1996 establishes a governmental system constituting distinctive and autonomous spheres of government which are National, Provincial and local while the principle of cooperative governance is entrenched. This has resulted in nine provincial governments with their own legislatures, executive committees and administrative structures while there are also 284 municipalities with the following categories; local municipalities, district municipalities and metropolitan municipalities. While provinces are accountable to the provincial legislature, local governments are accountable to councils. Provincial planning therefore constitutes one of the executive functions of government. It is through this system of government that the concept of developmental government emerged to ameliorate the legacy of apartheid bedevilling the majority of South Africans in both urban and rural areas.

It is against the foregoing that in the Eastern Cape province the Provincial Growth and Development Plan was formulated at provincial level. The Eastern Cape province is one of the poorest provinces in South Africa. Therefore, the province formulated and implemented the Provincial Growth and Development Plan (PGDP), which (as it is implied in the title) is a policy document which, ideally, is meant to provide the framework for the promotion of growth and development in the province. On the other hand, the National Development Plan is a framework for the promotion of

growth and development which seeks to deal with the challenges of poverty, inequality and unemployment at the national level. The PGDP has been described as a step forward from previous development planning processes in the province, which have tended to be sectorally driven and fragmented, short-term and somewhat reactive (Eastern Cape Provincial Government, 2003). Moreover, the profile and analysis of the Eastern Cape economy by Stephen Hosking, concluded that development planning in the province was based on 'fuzzy thinking' (Hosking, 1998). It is against this background that this article seeks to evaluate the PGDP with a view to learn lessons for the National Development Plan. As far as the researcher is concerned this is the first attempt to do so.

1. Literature perspectives on the PGDP

The PGDP programs can be grouped into five clusters namely poverty reduction and job creation, improved service delivery, gearing the state to drive economic transformation, projects that can crowd in investment into the rural economy, human resources development and accelerating manufacturing output and employment (Buthelezi, 2008, p. 197). He further argues that these programs are selected on specific criteria, including their potential to:

- ◆ Deepen participation by the province's people in the development process.
- ◆ Steer government towards using its limited resources to play a bigger and more effective role in facilitating economic growth.
- ◆ Use state resources in a way that centralizes the needs of the poor, gradually moving from short

term welfare to drawing the poor into the mainstream of the economy.

- ◆ Optimize job creation and economic opportunities through targeted procurement and supply management to promote local economic development and black economic empowerment (BEE), and encourage the use of labor intensive technology where appropriate.
- ◆ Rapidly open access by the poor to finance and assets such as land, plant and machinery. This is what is meant by “increasing the asset base” of the poor.
- ◆ Effectively deal with HIV/AIDS through a comprehensive prevention treatment, and care program that does not place additional pressures on the state’s safety net (and funds) in the medium-to-long range.
- ◆ Accelerate state transformation to more efficiently deliver social services, and honor constitutional obligations to the poorest of the poor.
- ◆ Develop and enhance the potential of women and youth and increase their participation in the development process and economic activities.

One of the key objectives of the PGDP is the ‘systematic eradication of poverty’. Under the objective of systematic poverty eradication, several interventions have been identified which include expanded public works, water and sanitation, housing, comprehensive HIV, AIDS and TB treatment and victim empowerment. It is against the foregoing background that the article sought to evaluate the PGDP while drawing lessons from it which may be critical for the implementation of the National Development Plan which is the overarching framework for the growth and development of the National economy. The PGDP is a framework for the growth and development of the Eastern Cape province.

Ecssec (2008) found that the PGDP provided an analysis of poverty in the Eastern Cape and set out seven broad policy initiatives which include promoting access to high-quality employment and economic opportunities; boosting the physical asset base of the poor; supporting access to basic services; strengthening community management and organization of own initiatives and external programs; deepening democratic participation and ensuring access to legal entitlements and security.

Ecssec (2008) further observes that despite efforts in these areas such as the PGDP, poverty declined only marginally in the Eastern Cape since 2004, with nearly seven out of 10 people still living in poverty, for every 6 273 people, there is only one state doctor, the HIV infection rate is rising, while life expectancy in the province is only 48 years. Moreover,

Haines and Robino (2006) observe the following about the PGDP:

“There is lack of analysis of the role of traditional authorities in the social economy of the former Transkei and Ciskei regions. Research conducted in the 1980s and 1990s has revealed that traditional authorities in the rural economy have inhibited economic development and pro-poor strategies, moreover, they have contributed to perpetual patriarchal practices in their areas, which when coupled with gender imbalances, constitute major structural impediments to social mobility and social entrepreneurship”.

The Eastern Cape Development Corporation (ECDC) (2008) identifies the following stumbling blocks to the PGDP in its PGDP assessment report:

Policy environment – The absence of an overarching, integrated medium-to-long range national development strategy has severely impeded the implementation of the PGDP. The PGDP has been expected to align with a myriad of national policies, and this has affected the efficacy of intergovernmental coordination and undermined centralization.

Resources – Lack of adequate funding and inadequate technical resources have acted to retard development progress. The absence of a national development policy has also affected the extent to which fiscal transfers and budgets have followed policy priorities.

Implementation – The weakness of the PGDP lies not in its underlying strategy, but in its implementation. Lack of adequate capacity in the public sector is a key concern.

Leadership – The PGDP is not seen as the central enabling framework to which all initiatives must align. At the level of political leadership, the PGDP has no champion.

The ECDC report also identified the following challenges with regard to land reform which also constitutes one of the key pillars in addressing structural poverty in the Eastern Cape province where the majority of the poor are residents in the former homelands where poverty is rampant:

Inadequate resources – Lack of funding has hindered primary initiatives, such as land redistribution for the agricultural development program.

Tenure issues – On some tenure issues, such as those concerning community property associations, the key foundation issues of membership, rights, benefits and securing equitable access to land and other resources are not adequately addressed.

Poor data – Lack of information on land, under claim, and the complexities of the claim settlement process have made it difficult to accurately assess the number of claims (especially community claims), the amount of land involved, and number of people potentially requiring resettlement and enterprise support. Similarly, lack of accurate baseline information on the socio-economic status of program beneficiaries makes reliable post-settlement impact assessment difficult to undertake. Most of the land in the former homelands has not been surveyed.

Poor intergovernmental relations – Poor coordination and ineffective alignment of budgets and programs of different line departments and municipalities contribute to the failure to provide effective post-settlement support for restitution and redistribution projects.

Administrative problems – Delays in the issuance of title deeds registration, in processing of farms made available to the department for redistribution, in legal entity formation, and in communication with other departments all slow down the process.

Absence of effective settlement and implementation support – Without a significant investment in settlement and implementation support that begins in the planning and pre-settlement phase, existing post-settlement support services will be overwhelmed.

Lack of synergy with local programs – There is no linkage between land use planning and management at local level. Productive agricultural land is sometimes mistakenly used for housing. Most district and local municipalities have not conducted land needs assessments, and their Integrated Development Plans (IDPs) do not contain information on outstanding redistribution applications.

1.1. The National Development Plan. The National Development Plan is a plan that was conceptualized by the National Planning Commission of the Republic of South Africa that was set up by the Presidency to provide an overarching framework for the development of the country. Key focus areas of the National Development Plan entail growing the economy, thereby, creating employment; innovation, raising the standard of education, skills development, and; enhancing the developmental, transformative capacity of the state to spearhead economic growth and development. The plan is set to be implemented by all three spheres of government (which are national, provincial and local) in five year planning cycles from 2014 to 2030. It envisaged that poverty will be eliminated by the year 2030. However, we argue that the following key issues need serious consideration for the implemen-

tation of the National Development Plan to be effective.

- ◆ Effective intergovernmental relations.
- ◆ Policy consistency.
- ◆ Synergy of various plans/projects/programs.
- ◆ Political, institutional, technical and administrative capacities are key ingredients.
- ◆ Financial and human resources.
- ◆ Participation by key stakeholders.
- ◆ Monitoring and evaluation must feature prominently in the NDP discourse (in the PGDP context it was very poor).
- ◆ NDP must be prioritized by government departments.

1.2. The developmental state theory and development planning in South Africa. In light of the ‘aspiration of former President Thabo Mbeki’s government for South Africa to become a democratic developmental state and also given the assertion that the phrase ‘developmental state’ has been a buzzword in South Africa, it is imperative to analyze development planning in the South African context from a developmental state perspective (Southall, 2007). Moreover, due to the historical legacy of apartheid of racially based if not biased local government structures the South African government adopted a developmental and participatory approach to local government. The government of South Africa in the Mbeki era sought to position itself as a democratic developmental state for the successful transformation of provincial and local government hence the phrase ‘developmental local government’.

The very phrase ‘developmental local government’ is largely informed by the concept of the developmental state. It is within this framework that developmental local government had to transform structures of local government from forces of oppression to development agents (Heller, 2001) for the overhaul of the undemocratic and unrepresentative apartheid local government structures.

It has been argued that the arguments against the developmental state in Africa are ‘not firmly founded either in African historical experience or in the trajectories of the more successful developmental states’ (Mkandawire, 2001, p. 2). The developmental orientation of such a state inevitably capacitates the state not only to formulate policies but implement them in an effective and efficient manner. While the developmental orientation of a state is dynamic and not static such a state envisions development as its ultimate goal. It is within this broader framework of a developmental state that the PGDP as well as the NDP were conceptualized

hence the need for evaluation from a developmental state perspective.

2. Method

This is an empirically grounded study based on the use of a combination of qualitative data collection methods, analysis of primary and secondary sources of data, including government documents. This article adopted the qualitative research methodology and the case study research design. In-depth interviews were held with key informants who were purposefully selected from the office of the Premier of the province, department of social development, other provincial departments and senior managers in the Amathole District Municipality. Moreover, a questionnaire survey on a sample of 300 research participants randomly drawn from members of the community in the Amathole District Municipality in the Eastern Cape province was also conducted.

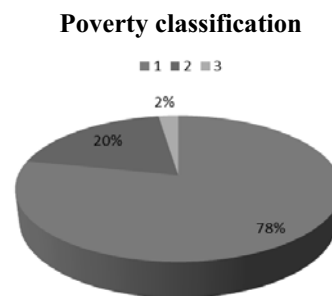
3. Findings and discussion

The major objective of this article was to evaluate the impact of the PGDP, mainly on poverty eradication and service delivery with an intention to glean lessons for the National Development Plan. Therefore, this section of the article presents and analyzes key findings from the in-depth interviews held with key government officials at Provincial and District levels regarding their views on the impact of the PGDP. The study also sought to establish perceptions on the PGDP as a poverty intervention measure. Key findings from a survey of beneficiaries on their participation in and knowledge of the PGDP are also presented and analyzed.

4. Impact of the PGDP

4.1. Policy shifts. One of the key findings was that the PGDP was the previous administration’s top priority area but now due to the change of government/administration the PGDP has taken a ‘back seat’ because it is now associated with the Congress of the People (COPE), a party formed by people who broke away from the ruling African National Congress (ANC). What is taking centre stage, instead, is the provincial strategic framework which was about to be launched by the present administration, at the time of data collection. One of the officials interviewed lamented that ‘Government priorities have since changed’. This finding confirms the observation by DFID which highlighted earlier on that policy consistency is a necessary ingredient for the success of a program. As a result of the shift in policy the PGDP has no political champion implying that there is no political will necessary for ensuring the success of the PGDP. This implies that the impact of the PGDP is therefore compromised.

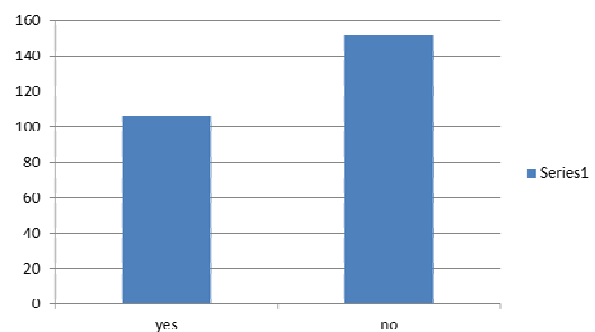
4.2. Incidence of poverty. The incidence of poverty in this context is useful in assessing the effectiveness of the PGDP. Although a significant number of jobs were created under the expanded public works program, identified as a poverty eradication measure in the PGDP, the program lacks sustainability and a long term impact. Figure 1 below is a reflection on the status of the respondents who were asked to classify themselves as poor or not poor in the survey. It is clear from the Figure that only 20% of the respondents (coded as 2) classified themselves as not poor while the majority of them (about 78%) (coded 1) classified themselves as poor. It was quite evident from the houses (most of which were shacks and mud) occupied by the respondents, that there is hardly any impact that the PGDP has had on the lives of the respondents.



Source: Fieldwork research: Amathole District.

Fig. 1. Incidence of poverty

4.2. Standard of living. The standard of living is a measure of the extent to which the PGDP has been effective in eradicating poverty. The standard of living among beneficiaries in the survey was unimpressive. Figure 2 below also shows that among the surveyed beneficiaries their standard of living has not improved despite the implementation of the PGDP. The respondents were asked to indicate by yes or no responses whether their standard of living had improved. In the survey carried, about 60% of the respondents under the ‘no’ category observed that their standard of living has not improved despite the efforts by the provincial government. Only 40% of the respondents reflected that their standard of living has improved.



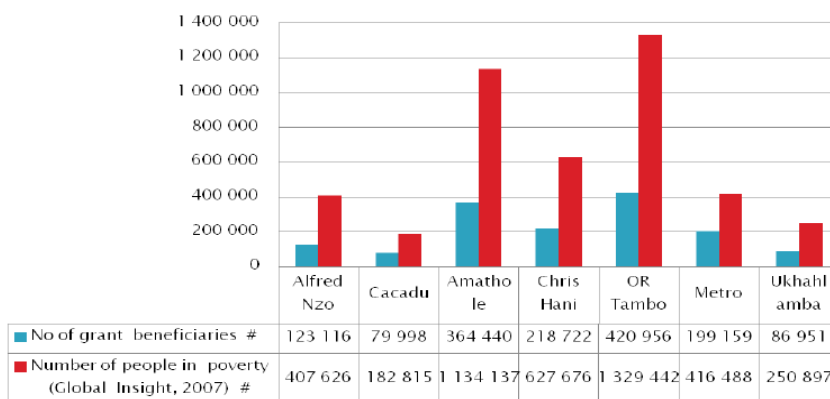
Source: Fieldwork research: Amathole District.

Fig. 2. Standard of living

This concurs with the findings by Statistics South Africa (2001) which in some cases discovered that about 35% of the population in the Amathole District Municipality (ADM) have no income while about 32% have annual income which is below R10 000 (ADM Integrated Development Plan, 2009). It also confirms why household grant dependence is higher in Amathole District (66%) in the province, as a whole, than in any other district in the province (ADM IDP, 2009).

4.3. Access to basic services. A report by ECSECC (2009) indicates the level of access to basic services such as on site sanitation, provision of water, and hospital again demonstrates lack of progress in areas identified. However, efforts to provide water may be commented since a substantial portion of the district has access to clean water. These indicators suggest that there is a lot of ground to be covered for poverty eradication to be realized. It must be noted that the PGDP has highlighted poverty eradication and not alleviation as its objective. Given such indicators and others highlighted earlier on, one can argue that poverty eradication remains a pipe dream.

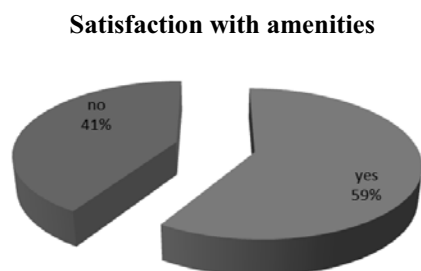
4.4. Social grants. The provision of social grants has been identified as one of the poverty alleviation measures in South Africa. Figure 3 below, clearly shows that there are far inadequate since the number of people on social grants is far less than those who do not have access to social grants. In fact, while the provision of social grants is a short-term relief measure, it however, does not provide a sustainable basis for systematic poverty eradication which is one of the PGDP objectives. As highlighted earlier, poverty eradication requires transformative approaches and the enhancement of capabilities as Sen (1999) argues.



Source: ECSECC, 2009.

Fig. 3. Social grants

4.5. Satisfaction with amenities. The research participants were also asked to indicate whether they were satisfied with the amenities in their communities, as a measure of service delivery objectives of the PGDP and the responses are shown in the figure below.

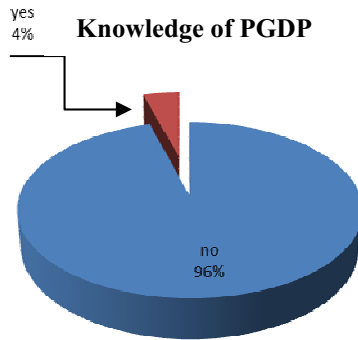


Source: Fieldwork research: Amathole District.

Fig. 4. Satisfaction with amenities

The figure above shows that a significant number of the respondents were satisfied by the amenities in the communities. However, about 41% of the participants, which is still a significant number, indicated that they were not satisfied with them. This to some extent shows that the PGDP has made some inroads in the provision of basic amenities although some of them may have been provided during the period prior to the implementation of the PGDP.

4.6. Community awareness. One of the tenets of democracy, more so, in a country aspiring to be a democratic developmental state is citizen participation, which is lacking in this context. Most of the respondents (90%) in the survey showed a lot of ignorance of the PGDP and they had problems in identifying some of the projects that fall under the plan. Very few respondents indicated that they had an idea of the PGDP. As shown in Figure 5 below, about 96% of the respondents, which is an overwhelming number of respondents, indicated that they had neither heard about the PGDP nor could they understand what it meant. This is worrying from a participatory development perspective, because communities must be made to participate in or influence the development planning processes that are meant to benefit them especially in a country which aspires to be a democratic developmental state.



Source: Fieldwork research: Amathole District.

Fig. 5. Knowledge of PGDP

5. Some wider analysis

The PGDP neither defines poverty (Van De Walt, 2002) nor poverty eradication while it identifies interventions for the eradication of poverty. This has serious implications for the conceptualization of the poverty eradication efforts. In fact Laderchi, Saith, Stewart and House (2006) write that while poverty definitions have crucial implications for targeting policy, clearer definitions are important for poverty centred development. One can argue that the PGDP assumes that there is consensus on the definition of poverty. However, as argued elsewhere, the conceptualization and definition of poverty are contested in literature. Such a contestation manifests not only in economic terms but in socio-cultural political realms also. Moreover, Haines and Robino (2006, p. 9) further assert that:

“While the PGDP reflects a comprehensive policy exercise, there are some significant shortcomings and omissions. While there is admirable emphasis on pro-poor programs through a range of targeted inputs, an identification of the need for substantive land and tenure reform, community public private partnerships and extensive public works as well as job creation schemes, the conceptual challenges and logistical magnitude of the task are not fully appreciated”.

In addition, implied in the PGDP are ‘classical statistical approaches’ which were used for poverty analysis confining poverty to indicators of income, health and education, while poverty itself was assigned a monetary value (poverty line) while negating a plethora of dimensions of poverty such as vulnerability and a host of others. In fact, Chambers succinctly observes that the concept of participatory poverty assessments is crucial for effective poverty reduction. Chambers (1997) points out that the PPA approach “stresses changes in the behavior and attitudes of outsiders to become facilitators not teachers, not lecturers but listeners and learners”.

A report by ECSECC confirms that the PGDP is lagging behind in its targets. While the PGDP target for poverty eradication is to reduce the number of people living in poverty to 20% the report shows that in 2007 about 62% of the population was still languishing in poverty (ECSECC, 2009). The target for reducing infant mortality rate was 34% but in 2007 it was still very high at 90% implying that it is still a very long way to be reached.

6. Policy implications for the National Development Plan

The PGDP is informed by the neo-liberal perspective which is contrary to the developmental state theory. Neo-liberals are ‘free marketers’ and adherents to the ‘Washington consensus’, which advocate for the rolling back of the frontiers of state for the invisible hand of demand and supply to take its course in the market. Probably this explains why the benefits of economic growth in the country have not trickled down to the poor. While the government claims success in the provision of water, electricity, telephone and sanitation, studies by McDonald and Pape (2003) reveal that: approximately ten million cut-offs in the water, electricity sectors have occurred because people have been unable to pay their bills. About two million people have been victims of rates and rent-related evictions from their houses for the non-payment of rents and rates. In 2002, the Department of Provincial and Local Government (DPLG 2002, 30-1) reported that more than 296 000 homes had electricity disconnected, 133 000 had water disconnected also (McDonald, 2002).

The indicators detailed in the presentation of findings point to the fact that underdevelopment is still rampant in the Eastern Cape while poverty is still widespread and still persists. Therefore, as much as South Africa has been transformed politically, there seems to be no change economically. The findings aforementioned also seem to confirm what Bond refers to as an ‘elite transition from racial apartheid to class apartheid’ and ‘from apartheid to neo-liberalism’ highlighting the transition’s development failure and exposing how progressive policy making has always been compromised (Bond, 2000). It is in this context that the NDP should grapple with this ‘elite transition that is perpetuating the challenges of poverty, inequality and unemployment.

Moreover, it has been observed that the PGDP has performed dismally due to lack of capacity in policy implementation, poor intergovernmental relations, lack of synergy with local programs, lack of an overarching national development policy. The challenges imply that South Africa is not yet a developmental state. This article argues that these challenges present lessons that can be learnt for the suc-

successful implementation of the NDP to be realized. It is against this background that the paper argues that there is need for effective intergovernmental relations to improve interdepartmental coordination if the National Development Plan is to succeed. This should be coupled with robust talent management for effective policy implementation.

Moreover, policy shifts must be avoided while capacity building for policy implementation, citizen participation are also critical ingredients. There is need for courage, innovation and reflexivity in economic transformation and intergovernmental coordination for the challenges of poverty inequality and unemployment to be overcome. We further argue that institutional, technical, administrative and political capacities are pivotal for efficient and effective implementation of the national development plan. It is sad that the PGDP has no political champion, implying that there is no political will as observed

earlier on due to the change of government which resulted in policy shifts. Therefore, it is important that if the NDP is to succeed there must be serious political will and commitment to its success. As much the PGDP must have addressed the historical reality of the province instead of reinforcing the status quo, this article argues that the NDP must equally do the same.

Lack of integration of the PGDP and other plans at local level has also been highlighted as a challenge for the PGDP. Therefore, it is important that the NDP is made to align with other frameworks for growth and development in other spheres of government. This would also require efficiency and effectiveness in not only intergovernmental relations but also monitoring and evaluation. The successful implementation of the national development plan will be a key milestone towards the labelling of the Republic of South Africa as a developmental state.

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