ASSESSING THE ROLE OF INFRASTRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENT IN ADDRESSING SOCIO-ECONOMIC ISSUES IN NYANDENI LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

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Abstract - Infrastructure plays a vital role in ensuring that the standard of living for the community is improved. Furthermore, infrastructural development leads to a sustainable way of increasing employment opportunities and ultimately reducing poverty level within the communities. However, inadequate infrastructure is at its highest rate in the world, more especially in the rural areas. The developing countries suffers more on the issue of infrastructural development as the economic growth rate is at its slowest pace. The South African rural areas are faced with challenges that hinder development and slow the pace of infrastructure development. The majority of rural areas within South Africa are still exposed to high level of poverty, unemployment, inequalities, poor service delivery and poor infrastructure. The main aim of this research was to assess the effect of infrastructure development in reducing socio-economic issues within rural settings. In other words, to access the benefits that infrastructure development brings in tackling the challenges that the rural communities faces. The objectives of the study were to: a) assess the mechanisms that Nyandeni local government has in place to ensure infrastructure development; b) explore the benefits of infrastructure development on small local businesses within Nyandeni jurisdiction; and c) assess the impact of infrastructure development on stimulating growth and development at Nyandeni local municipality. This study employed a qualitative exploratory research methodology using the semi-structured and participant observations to gain the participant's perceptions and understanding regarding the infrastructure development within Nyandeni area. The results of the study showed that lack of infrastructure development in the rural areas has the negative impact on the livelihood of the citizens. Furthermore, the findings showed that lack of resources such as funding affect the ability of the municipality to implement proper infrastructure that will stimulate the local growth and development. In conclusion, the thesis argues that, without proper support and collaboration with other stakeholders, it would be difficult for municipality to ensure proper infrastructure developments within the rural areas.

Key words - Rural infrastructure, Intergovernmental relations, Economic development, Institutional obstacles