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Best social audit practices in public service delivery from selected countries: Lessons for the South African local government.

By

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for the degree of Master of Public Administration
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Declaration

I declare that “Best social audit practices in public service delivery from selected countries: Lessons for the South African local government” is my own work, that it has not been submitted before for any degree or examination at any other university, and that all sources I have quoted have been indicated and acknowledged as complete references.

Fadwa Arnold 30 September 2020

Signed……..

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ABSTRACT

This study is an exploration of best social audit practices in public service delivery from selected countries: Lessons for the South African local government. The study is vital in that the end of apartheid ushered in new sets of challenges in the country and one of these was the need for transformation which saw the birth of the 1996 Constitution which introduced Local government in South Africa which consists of the municipalities. Local government then emerged as the sphere of government closest to the people providing basic services. This is consistent with Part B of Schedule 4 of the 1996 Constitution, which mandates municipalities the responsibility for basic services. This is also supported by the White Paper on Local Government of 1998, the Municipal Structures Act, of 1998 and the Systems Act of 2000 which all explain on the need for the municipality to deliver services, yet many residents are not being served leading to service delivery protest to ensure that service are delivered and others turning to social accountability mechanism such as social audits to improve governance and accountability. This study aims to discover knowledge of best social audit practices from selected countries, aims to describe the best social audit practices and methods of selected countries practicing social audits such as Canada, India and Kenya; outline the challenges of social audits from selected countries and discusses the significance of social audit and methods of selected countries. To achieve this goal the study employed a qualitative research approach and collected data from websites, journals, articles and information on local government in South Africa. The study is both descriptive and exploratory and does not intend to provide conclusive evidence but helps us to have a better understanding of the social audit concept. The study found that the social audit concept yielded considerable and positive results in the selected countries and led to an increase in accountability, participation and transparency, led to an improved service delivery and were effective in detecting corruption and irregularities. It also found that there were challenges relating to social audits like the lack of access to reliable information, the intensive nature of the audit process, the threatening of social auditors and the lack of cooperation within the social audit process. This study suggests that the South African local government sector, explores the social audit concept and process, learn from the challenges relating to social audits, amend its legislation to align with international standards and further strengthen legislation in order to ensure that enabling legislation exists for social audits to operate within. This research provides insights into the social audit concept and its application in selected countries as lessons for the South African local government sector.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND RESEARCH BACKGROUND

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

Globally, poor service delivery remains a pressing issue. According to Avis (2016), the provision of basic services such as water, sanitation and waste management among other public services is a core function of local government and is essential for the well-being and health of people. However, many countries are faced with service delivery challenges where the cause of poor service delivery relates to governance, finance, coordination and capacity. Avis (2016; 11) further argues that "the effectiveness of municipal government depends on locally available resources, skills, structures and management processes. However, Williams (2009) argues that often local government have weak capacity in areas like planning, and regulatory control, finance, human, and administrative capacity and service delivery". Local government is the sphere of government closest to the people and is tasks with the responsibility of providing basic services to its people. Williams (2009) adds that local governments continue to face challenges which often results in ineffectiveness and the inability to satisfy the needs of its communities.

In addressing the governance issues at the local level, there is a need for active citizen participation, and sound engagement processes in public service delivery. Thus, citizen participation and engagement has become increasingly important in order to ensure growth, accountability, good service delivery and good governance. The core values of public participation as outlined by the International Association for Public Participation (2007) states that public participation is based on the notion that people and communities who are affected by a decision have a right to be involved in the decision-making process, it include the promise that communities and people will guide decisions, promotes sustainable decisions by recognizing and communicating the needs, inputs and interests of all participants, facilitates the involvement of those affected by a decision and provides participants with the information needed to participate in a purposeful way. In addition to the core values of public participation, transparency becomes essential when the government engages with communities as transparency enables communities to scrutinize the work of government and enables better outcomes. Bauhr and Nasiritousi (2012) argue that transparency involves the distribution of information with openness about actions and decisions where communities can monitor and evaluate the actions of the government.

In the context of South Africa, the end of apartheid ushered in new sets of challenges to the new leaders of the African National Congress to transform the country. One of these was the need for administrative reforms and this led to the 1996 Constitution, the Municipal Structures Act of 1998, and the Systems Act of 2000 which all argue for the need to deliver services to residents. The White Paper on Local

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Government of 1998 (RSA; 1998) concurs explaining that apartheid has negatively impacted on the spatial and the socio-economic environments in which people live, work, raise families and with limited opportunities for people to participate in decision-making in their communities. The disconnect is that despite all these legislative frameworks residents still lack services leading to protest and others turning to social audits to achieve basic services.

Poor service delivery challenges are not unique to South Africa (SA) and are faced by many countries. Many countries have thus recognised the importance of active public participation in public service delivery and have adopted methods and approaches to include the voices of ordinary citizens in their planning. The Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) frameworks in the South African public sector, however, is currently assumed to be driven by a top-down policy formulation approach and reflect the values and interests of the governing elite. According to Ijeoma & Ngengelezi (2015:15), many developing countries including SA have missed the importance of stakeholder participation in planning and M&E. This has deprived the opportunity for local citizens to make inputs in decision-making, particularly in M&E. "As a result, the existing M&E approach which is sometimes assumed as being elite-driven, has not benefited the communities especially in rural municipalities.". Matsiliza (2012) argues that the implementation of the Government-Wide Monitoring and Evaluation (GWME) in SA has excluded local communities and stakeholders in participating in the mainstream of the GWME agenda. M&E assesses the performance of projects/program and aims to improve the outputs, outcomes, and impact thereof. Social audits, which are the focal point of this research, have elements of M&E but differ from the traditional top-down M&E as social audits are participatory in nature and seen as a bottom-up M&E approach. A distinction will be drawn between the concepts of social audits and M&E in Chapter two of this research.

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Countries such as Canada, India, and Kenya have adopted different methods and practices towards public participation. These countries have implemented social audit practices and methods in the delivery of public services and have displayed significant results. This research, therefore, looks at countries that have successfully implemented social audits and share their results and lessons for the South African local government sector. Social audits are concerned with the redistribution of power from the state to citizens. A social audit aims to assess how well an organisation meets its social objectives. A social audit is "a community-led process of reviewing official documents to determine whether the public expenditure and service delivery outcomes reported by the government reflect the public money spent and the services received by the community" (Conducting social audits in South Africa; 2015; 15). A social audit does not imply that financial aspects are not considered; instead, it focuses on how resources

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are used for social objectives such as service delivery. While social audits reveal the results of a program that is being audited, a financial audit may not produce such results.

In essence, a social audit determines how well resources are used for social objectives, thus enabling communities to determine the impact of the government's social performances. Social audits aim to represent the demands of the people and respond to demands from the environment. Through citizen engagement, citizens claim the right to participate in decisions that affect their lives.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

According to Plagerson & Mthembu (2019), South Africa post-1994 continues to face inequalities because of the apartheid regime. They add that the apartheid regime resulted in numerous socio-economic challenges that required a redress across the different spheres of government to achieve transformation. Although significant progress has been made in creating an equal society, these challenges persist. Plagerson & Mthembu (2019) adds that these challenges include unemployment, crime and poor service delivery, among others. The South African Constitution of 1996 defines the structures of government and provides for local government which consists of municipalities who are responsible for delivering basic services such as refuse removal, water, sanitation, street lighting and other public services. Due to poor municipal performance and poor service delivery, the Local Government Turnaround Strategy (LGTAS) was introduced by the Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA) as a government program of action for better service delivery and a responsive, accountable, effective, and efficient local government. The LGTAS focused on five focus areas namely, service delivery, governance, financial management, infrastructure development and fighting corruption. Essentially, the LGTAS was aimed at improving municipal performances. However, the LGTAS appears to have achieved little success and impact. According to Oberholzer (2012;2) the reason for the lack of impact by the LGTAS includes: "lack of skills, capacity, financial sustainability, and commitment within local government to facilitate interventions; lack of allocated funding to implement interventions; challenges within COGTAs own structures; lack of effective support, and coordination by the national and provincial government; focus on finding quick solutions, and achieving compliance with minimum requirements, rather than developing a long-term sustainable solution; political instability; and transformation intervention fatigue." While the South African government is constantly developing initiatives to improve municipal performances, these have had a little impact while poor service delivery remains a challenge.

Poor service delivery protests are rife in SA and communities are starting to recognise that the public sector is failing people. The argument is that to achieve better delivery of public services, it requires

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methods and approaches that can lead to improved governance and accountability. Poor service delivery in SA includes, but is not limited to the lack of refuse collection and access to clean water. The right to adequate service delivery is enshrined in the Constitution of SA (The Constitution; 1996), yet a gap remains between rights, people's everyday experiences and inconsistencies in service delivery. "Since 2004 an unprecedented wave of popular and violent protests has flowed across the country. With service delivery protests the protesters explain that they took to the streets because there was no way for them to get to speak to the government, let alone to get the government to listen to them. This shows that while the new system of local government has been established with genuine intentions to positively affect democracy and to bring about social and economic delivery to the people, the system has not lived up to expectations. The general feeling in the hotspots is that political leadership lack responsiveness to issues raised by communities, incompetent, prone to corruption and with a high degree of disregard for the communities" (IDASA; 2010:3). With the abolishment of apartheid and the birth of democracy in 1994, came participation mechanisms for communities to participate in the affairs of government. However, many South Africans continue to be faced with daily challenges accessing the most basic of services. Williams (2006:203) argues that "participation per se does not result in visible or desirable results as it so often can be reduced to a mere ceremonial presence of participants in local institutions. It is only when people claim or demand power to achieve specific, concrete goals (such as implementing a specific plan, project or program, that presence, participation, and voice assume experiential significance at the local level. This means that participants must be aware of their abilities to make judgments, how to effect meaningful change and how to play political roles as a citizen". This implies that the current participation processes which mainly ward committee systems at a local level in South Africa, do not guarantee or suggest that communities' inputs are taken into consideration. For communities' concerns and inputs to be taken into consideration, communities must exert some influence to achieve better outcomes.

In essence, the argument is that government is not responsive and accountable to the communities that it serves. In the context of the research problem, the social audit concept has gained prominence amongst many as a possible strategy to improve service delivery, social performances, and accountability in the public sector. This research, therefore, explores the application of social audits in Canada, India, and Kenya and share these practices, methods, successes and lessons with the South African local government sector. A social audit is a process that facilitates community engagement in the government's service delivery program. Each year, many South African municipalities boast with clean financial audit outcomes while municipal services remain poor. With this proposed research, the researcher aims to provide insights into social audit practices in Canada, India and Kenya.

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1.3 THE ROLE OF SOCIAL AUDITS IN THE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATIONS DISCIPLINE

The academic discipline of Public Administration is broad, studies government, and includes the implementation of government policy and the academic discipline that studies this implementation. The study of Public Administration is diverse in scope and the important goal is to enhance policies so that government can function and be accountable to the communities it serves. As a discipline, Public Administration is linked to the pursuit of the public good through the enhancement of civil society and social justice to make life more acceptable for citizens through the work done by officials within government institutions. Concepts and theories from economics, political science, sociology, administrative law, management, and a range of related fields are used to enrich the field of Public Administration. The goals of public administration are related to the democratic values of improving equality, justice, efficiency and effectiveness of public services (Maluleke; 2011). According to Sebola (2015), to understand local government in the context of locating it in a disciplinary space within that of Public Administration, one needs to understand Public Administration as both the discipline and practice. Traditionally, Public Administration and Local Government are considered inseparable and to be in the same discipline, being that of Public Administration.

Basic service delivery is delivered by the public sector, namely local government, which consists of municipalities. There are many studies produced on poor service delivery in SA which has been conducted by researchers in the field of Public Administration. Nleya (2011) explains that the South African local government's unsatisfactory service delivery has caused service delivery protests and frustrations in various communities. The social accountability concept has emerged as an alternative approach within which social audits are used as a form of community and government engagement. It has been argued that social audits could improve governance and accountability in the public sector. Social audits are therefore concerned with the public sector's social, economic and environmental impact on the community. Also, having citizen participation in the evaluation of social services, could also serve to improve the delivery of services by ensuring that they are tailored to population needs. According to Berthin (2011), a social audit can be defined as an approach and process to build accountability and transparency in the use and management of public resources. It relies on engagement from citizens' to directly and/or indirectly demand accountability and transparency in the public policy and budget cycles. Social audits are participatory and can be an anti-corruption and efficiency enhancing tool. It is based on the premise that citizens want and have the right to know what the government does; how it does it; how it impacts on them and that the government must account and be transparent to citizens. The study of social audits operates largely in a public sector context and therefore becomes relevant under the Public Administration discipline.

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1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The central question of this research is determining: What social audits are and how is it being applied in selected countries? In order to answer the research question, the following secondary questions are asked.

- What are social practices and how are they applied in the selected countries?
- What are the challenges in implementing social audits in selected countries?
- What are the benefits of implementing social audits in selected countries?
- What lessons can the South African local government sector learn from the social audit practices in the selected countries?

1.5 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

A research objective outlines what the research aims to achieve. Therefore, the general research objective of this research project aims to discover the knowledge of the best social audit practices from selected countries. This research is split up in the following specific objectives:

- To describe the best social audit practices and methods of selected countries.
- To outline the challenges of social audit practices from selected countries.
- To discuss the significance of social audit practices and methods of selected countries
- To make recommendations to the South African local government sector on social audit practices.

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1.6 RESEARCH RATIONALE

The study is vital in that post 1996 the South African government has taken several steps to improve service delivery, but these challenges persist. It is this persistence that has triggered scholars to investigate the various ways that these problems can be resolve. The study of Nleya (2011) examined how Khayelitsha residents turned to service delivery protest to address their service delivery shortcomings.

This current study employed an exploratory research approach which incorporated new concepts to ensure that best social audit practices in public service delivery from selected countries: Lessons for the South African local government are incorporated in the local government sector. The research is equally important in that post-1996 successive South African leaders had been struggling to ensure that many of the previously marginalised are provided with services, but this remains a challenge.

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1.7 RESEARCH METHODOLGY

The section provides an outline of the methodology that was utilised in gathering the data on the best social audit practices in public service delivery from selected countries: Lessons for the South African local government. This section therefore seems to reveal according to Dale and Volpe (2008) the fact that the researcher understood the methodological implications of the decisions she made, and that thought was given to the links between the study's purpose, the research question and the research methods that were selected.

1.7.1 The Research Methodology

Research Methodology is the analysis of the principles, rules and postulates utilised by a discipline and the development of methods to be applied within a specific discipline (Methodology; 2020). This section will further address issues like (a) rationale for a qualitative study (b) Research Design (c) Exploratory Research (d) case study (e) the research sample (d) research method (e) research design (f) data analysis and synthesis and ethical issues, limitations as well a chapter outline of the thesis.

1.7.2 The Qualitative Research

In this study, the researcher opted for a qualitative research method to gather the data needed. The qualitative research is defined as research which produces descriptive data (Brynard & Hanekom 1997:29). It was thought earlier that a qualitative approach was appropriate for this study because of its strength. The strength of the qualitative approach in the view of Mapuva (2007:53) lies in its ability to be more thorough and permits for the description of how actions can be evaluated to allow the researcher to adopt a well-informed position. It is due to this strength that the investigation adopted the qualitative approach to ensure a thorough investigation. In terms of epistemology or research paradigm, Dale and Volpe (2008) contend that qualitative research is grounded on essentially constructionist philosophical traditions.

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1.7.3 Research design

A research design outlines the methods and processes that will be used in a study when collecting and analysing the information obtained. According to Akhtar (2016; 68) a "research design can be considered as the structure of research it is the "Glue" that holds all of the elements in a research project together, in short it is a plan of the proposed research work." This research is descriptive as it describes the social audit practices of Canada, Kenya, and India as well as exploring social audit methods and approaches. The goal of descriptive research is to describe a phenomenon and its characteristics (Nassaji; 2015). Also, exploratory research is not intended to provide conclusive evidence, but helps to have a better

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understanding of a problem/concept and is effective in laying the groundwork that will lead to future studies (Research methodology; 2019).

1.7.4 The Exploratory research

The exploratory research better aligns with this study as it seeks to improve the knowledge of social audits. With that said, exploratory research does not enable definite conclusions on social, but addresses what, how, and why aspects of social audits. The exploratory research design adds value to this social audit study as exploratory research is flexible and allows the researcher to access a variety of secondary data and sources which lays the foundation for future studies. Therefore, the exploratory research design enables the researcher to provide insights into social audits, how it is being practiced in selected countries, and what lessons can be learned from social audit practices. The information and knowledge provided in this study provide many opportunities for furthering research through replication and re-analysis of the existing research and provide other researchers with an opportunity to test new ideas and theories on social audits and the practice thereof. As a result of poor service delivery in South Africa and protests by dissatisfied community members, the emergence of social audits is seen as an alternative approach to improve governance and accountability in the public sector. Since social audits cannot be argued as definitely improving accountability and governance, this exploratory research design paves way for the generation of new insights into social audits which may form the basis for future conclusive research.

1.7.5 Sampling method

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The sample Canada, India, and Kenya have been selected based on purposeful sampling. A purposeful sample is to select information, rich cases that best provide insight into the research questions. Purposeful sampling is widely used in qualitative research for the identification and selection of information-rich cases related to the phenomenon of interest. This involves identifying and selecting individuals, groups, and countries that have knowledge and experience in the phenomenon being studied (Palinkas et al; 2015). The countries selected were to develop a global understanding of the social audit phenomenon including similarities and differences across different settings. Therefore, Canada, Kenya, and India met this criterion. Furthermore, to ensure that the researcher obtains enough data, the researcher focused on the richness of the data within these selected countries. Rich data can provide in-depth insights into the social audit phenomenon enabling the researcher to better interpret the meaning.

In addition to purposeful sampling based on information rich cases, diversity was also needed to make accurate inferences on the social audit concept. Therefore, it was worthwhile to identify how countries who differ in continents, social, economic and political contexts, practice and implement social audits

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in order to make comparisons and contrasts. It was also useful to see how developing countries such as Kenya and India and developed countries such as Canada, makes use of the social audit concept. Furthermore, by choosing multiple countries, the researcher can analyse the data within each situation, across the different situations and enable the understanding of the similarities and differences between the cases. The evidence that is generated from a multiple case study is strong and reliable. Multiple case studies allow a wider discovering of a variety of information and can create a more convincing theory (Gustafsson; 2017). The sample also had to be small enough to deeply uncover the practices of social audits in countries who makes use of social audits. While the researcher also looked at underdeveloped countries practising social audits, the information was limited and would have restricted the researcher when reporting on social audit practices, strengths and weaknesses. The selection of these countries has been based on the need to understand the practice of social audits in countries that are implementing social audits. Hence the researcher selected countries implementing social audit across different settings. The goal is to provide social audit information and lessons.

Lastly, these countries have been selected to match the objectives, scope, and context of this study, which is primarily focused on social audits and the application thereof.

1.7.6 Case Study method

This study makes use of selected countries as case studies for this social audit study. Case studies are a detailed study on a particular case. According to Zainal (2007:1) the "case study method enables a researcher to closely examine the data within a specific context. In most cases, a case study method selects a small geographical area or a limited number of individuals as the subjects of study. Case studies, in their true essence, explore and investigate contemporary real-life phenomena through detailed contextual analysis of a limited number of events or conditions, and their relationships". Furthermore, case study research, through reports of past studies allows the exploration and understanding of complex issues. It can be considered a robust research method particularly when a holistic, in-depth investigation is required (Zainal; 2007; 1). The case studies enable the researcher to obtain extensive information on the social audit concept and how it applies in the selected countries. The selected and multiple countries allow for comparisons and contrasts of these cases. Since social audits is an emerging concept, the case study method is not aimed at concluding but defines cases and to explore a setting to understand it.

According to Gustafsson (2017) a case study can involve a single study or multiple studies. This study aims to draw comparisons and contrast between three selected and different countries. The selection of countries such as Canada, India, and Kenya enable a better understanding of the practice of social audits in these countries. Case studies have several advantages. According to Cronin (2014:20) case study

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research is a “legitimate research method suited to qualitative and quantitative research, and suggested it is well suited to a holistic, democratic discipline dealing with the understanding and change of interwoven complexities associated with interpersonal processes that emerge in a wider social context”. Many other authors agree with Cronin and argue that case studies draw into real life situations to an occurrence as it unfolds in practice. Case studies provide a detailed explanation of a particular case and aim to obtain relevant and detailed data. Case studies create hypothesis which may assist with future research and enable to collection of information which was not anticipated from the beginning. Case studies, advances and improves knowledge on the concept being studied (Krusenvik; 2016). According to Stake (1978; 4) the best use of case studies is “for adding to existing experience and human understanding.” Case studies, therefore, enable better understanding of the phenomena being studied. In this regard, using case studies to explore the social audit concept may generate a wealth of information to understand the concept and the use thereof.

Furthermore, there are limitations to all research designs including case studies. The case study offers a means of investigating complex social units consisting of multiple variables of potential importance in understanding the phenomenon”. Flyvbjerg (2006) sets up five limitations to case study research namely, (1) theoretical knowledge is more valuable than practical knowledge; (2) generalization cannot take place from a single case (3) The case study is most useful for generating hypotheses, whereas other methods are more suitable for hypotheses testing and theory building; (4) It is often difficult to summarize specific case studies and (5) the case study contains a bias toward verification. Flyvbjerg (2006) sets up the five misunderstandings about case study research, which he then dismantles, offering a more accurate statement about the issue underlying each misunderstanding as follows: (1) Predictive theories and universals cannot be found in the study of human affairs. Concrete, context-dependent knowledge is, therefore, more valuable than the vain search for predictive theories and universals; (2) One can often generalise on the basis of a single case, and the case study may be central to scientific development via generalisation as a supplement or alternative to other methods. But formal generalization is overvalued as a source of scientific development, whereas “the force of example” is underestimated; (3) The case study is useful for both generating and testing of hypotheses but is not limited to these research activities alone; (4) Difficulty in summarizing case studies is due to properties of the reality studied, not the research method’ (5) There is no greater bias in case study toward confirming preconceived notions than in other forms of research.

Moreover, in relation to the limitation of case studies, this study uses social audit information on selected countries as is practiced in these countries. Therefore, evidence and information are used in this study to explain how social audit practices apply in these countries. Furthermore, this research uses three

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countries as cases and not a single country to draw comparisons and contrasts. This study is by no means aimed at testing whether social audits improve accountability and governance or to generalize but aims to provide knowledge on social audits. According to Flyvbjerg (2006) "it must again be emphasized that despite the difficulty or undesirability in summarising case studies, the case-study method can certainly contribute to the cumulative development of knowledge, for example, in using the principles to test propositions described above concerning the second and third misunderstandings". Lastly, this research aims to share the results of the findings in the most accurate and unbiased manner without any pre-determined outcomes.

1.7.7 Data Collection

This research is based on secondary data and allows the researcher to collect data by employing books, published sources, journals, newspapers, websites, government records and podcasts. These data can also be classified as qualitative data. The qualitative data refers to non-numeric information such as transcripts, notes, journals, newspaper articles, documents, and videos. A benefit of the qualitative approach is that the information has a deeper insight into the phenomenon which is being studied. The data for this study will be collected from previous research that was conducted on social audits such as journals, books and government records on social audit practices in Canada, India, and Kenya. The researcher has identified existing social audit data from Canada, India, and Kenya. The secondary data that will be used for this study has already been collected, analysed, and made available for public use. Secondary data is also easy to access, free to use, less expensive, and less time consuming, making secondary data economical and efficient. Therefore, the use of existing data social audit data enables the researcher to make comparisons, contrasts, identifies trends, and plays a substantial role in descriptive and exploratory research.

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Furthermore, issues of validity and reliability arise in data collection for qualitative research. Although reliability is used in the context of quantitative research it is used in all research. According to Leung (2015: 5-6) "validity in qualitative research means "appropriateness" of the tools, processes, and data. Whether the research question is valid for the desired outcome, the choice of methodology is appropriate for answering the research question, the design is valid for the methodology, the sampling and data analysis is appropriate, and finally the results and conclusions are valid for the sample and context". Therefore, the methodology chosen for this study can identify relevant data, information and findings in the context of this research. The countries have been selected based on purposeful sampling and the methods used in this study align with the research approach namely the qualitative approach. Purposeful sampling often has a certain aim or framework which in this study is to explore the social audit practices in selected countries. Furthermore, to ensure validity throughout the research process, the data extracted

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and analysed will be done through data triangulation. Data triangulation refers to the use of multiple sources of data to understand a phenomenon and yields many benefits, which in this study includes, books, journals, newspapers, podcasts, etc. Considering data and findings from multiple sources is valuable, because doing so serves as a safeguard against being misled by unreliable research methods. When the goal is to diagnose a problem or predict a future event, using multiple sources of information also leads to more accurate results and conclusions (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine; 2018). Throughout this research process, the researcher will keep well-documented audit trails of materials, processes and verifications to ensure validity.

According to Leung (2015) in quantitative research, reliability refers to the exact replicability of the processes and the results. The essence of reliability for qualitative research lies with consistency. A margin of variability in results is tolerated in qualitative research provided the methodology and epistemological logistics consistently yield data that are ontologically similar but may differ in richness and ambience within similar dimensions. There are five approaches to enhance the reliability of the research process and results, namely, refutational analysis, constant data comparison, comprehensive data use, inclusive of the deviant case and use of tables. The data that is collected will be verified of their accuracy by using comparisons through data triangulation. The scope and analysis of data included will be comprehensive and inclusive.

According to Leung (2015), most qualitative research studies are meant to study a specific issue or phenomenon in a certain population or ethnic group, of a focused locality in a particular context, hence generalisability of qualitative research findings is usually not an expected attribute. However, with the rising trend of knowledge synthesis from qualitative research via meta-synthesis, meta-narrative or meta-ethnography, evaluation of generalisability becomes pertinent. Generalisability is not applicable to this study as this study does not aim to generalize but seeks to obtain information.

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1.7.8 Limitations to the study

Secondary data and research have both its advantages and disadvantages. The researcher has identified the following limitations in this study.

In the previous section, the researcher addressed the issue of generalising. Generalisability is often mentioned in qualitative research as a limitation. Flyvbjerg (2016) argued that generalisations can take place within qualitative research based on one single case and multiples case studies. Guenther & Falk (2019) shares this view and debunks the long-held myth that generalisation is primarily the domain of quantitative research. Based on a review of modern and historical approaches to generalisation, they argue that generalisation from qualitative research can be achieved, not through a process of self-

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justification, but defensible and rigorous research design and methods. Therefore, the study on social audits in selected countries and strong evidence allows generalisations. However, as mentioned in the previous sections, this study does not aim to generalise. This study aims to explore the social audit concept, the practice thereof, and seeks to inform the reader on the benefits and challenges associated with social audit based on practical experiences from selected countries, its similarities and differences. The information and knowledge provided in this study, provides many opportunities for furthering research through replication of existing research. It provides other researchers with an opportunity to test new ideas and theories.

A second limitation to this secondary study is the availability and access to relevant information. According to Johnston (2014), the most recognized limitation to the secondary data is that the data were collected for some other purpose and the data were not collected to answer the researcher's specific research questions issues. The specific information that the researcher would like to have may not have been collected; data may not have been collected in the geographic region of interest or the focus of interest. The data that the researcher collects for this study is specific and the focuses on specific countries to collect information on the practice of social audits. In any research it is important to conduct pre-planning and research to ensure that there is relevant and adequate information for a research study. The researcher has accessed and reviewed significant and specific information which is applies to this study.

Another limitation of using secondary data is that the researcher did not participate in the data collection process and does not know how it was conducted. The researcher therefore must find this information through other means such as documentation of the data collection procedures, technical reports, and publications (Johnston; 2014). In managing this issue, the researcher will use documentation from the original study and information from published findings from the original primary researchers and authors. Ensuring a match between the research questions and the existing data and following a process for careful reflective examination and critical evaluation of the data, can avoid this limitation of secondary data collection.

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1.7.9 Data analysis

This section of the thesis analysed the data of the study. The analysis of data was analysed through the data that was collected through qualitative data. The researcher interpreted, grouped the themes and analysed the data by means of content analysis to make connections and answer the research question. "Content analysis is a research tool used to determine the presence of certain words, themes, or concepts within some given qualitative data (i.e., text). Using content analysis, researchers can quantify and

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analyse the presence, meanings and relationships of such certain words, themes, or concepts. Researchers can then make inferences about the messages within the texts, the writer(s), the audience, and even the culture and time of surrounding the text." (Columbia Public health; 2020; online).

In conducting a content analysis for this study, the researcher conducted the data analysis process in the following manner. A common starting point for qualitative content analysis is often transcribed interview texts or data. The researcher collected the raw data, read, re-read, aim to gain a general understanding and transform the information into an organised summary of key results. The next step was to develop codes that are descriptive labels for the condensed meaning units. Codes concisely describe the condensed meaning unit and are tools to help researchers reflect on the data in new ways. Codes make it easier to identify connections between meaning units. The next step was to sort codes into themes and categories that answer the questions what or why? This is done by comparing codes and appraising them in determining which codes seem to belong together, thereby forming a category. In other words, a category consists of codes that appear to deal with the same issue (Erlingsson & Brysiewicz; 2017).

Once the data was analysed, comparisons and contrasts were made, the researcher proposes to report the results and the outcomes of the study by means of graphs and tables. According to Creswell (2014) qualitative data analysis is usually based on an interpretive philosophy, which aims to establish how participants make meaning of a specific event by analysing their perceptions, understanding and experiences in order to approximate their understanding of the situation. This enabled the researcher to identify patterns. The qualitative research process involves emerging questions and procedures, data which is collected in the participant's setting, data analysis inductively building from particulars to general themes while the researcher made interpretations on the meaning of the data. This approach was followed in this research where patterns and themes were identified, and data will be classified into those themes. In short, data was prepared, coded and analysed.

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1.8 CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

The conceptual analysis offers a clarification of the key concepts in the problem statement and research objective which are briefly discussed.

- **Social audits:** A social audit aims to assess how well an organisation meets its social objectives. A social audit is "a community-led process of reviewing official documents to determine whether the public expenditure and service delivery outcomes reported by the government reflect the public money spent and the services received by the community." (Conducting social audits in South Africa; 2015; 15).

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- **Social performance:** Social performance intends to measure how well an institution or organisation has translated its social goals into practice (What is social performance; 2004). Social performance is thus concerned with translating an institutions social goals and missions into practice.
- **Ethics:** According to Mle (2012) "ethics is a process by which we clarify right and wrong and act on what we take to be right, that is, a set or system of moral principles that are generally accepted. Ethics simply means what is right and wrong, what is acceptable or unacceptable and is intertwined with the value system of people. Ethics can also be seen as being relative, not absolute, as ethical behaviour is in the eyes of the beholder. Be that as it may, however, ethical conduct and behaviour normally refer to conforming with generally accepted social norms".
- **Accountability**: "The concept of accountability broadly refers to accountability as the obligation of individuals, agencies and organisations (public, private and civil society) to submit themselves to another's oversight and scrutiny and provide information and justifications for their actions and decisions (Transparency International; 2015).
- **Citizen's engagement**: Citizen's engagement and public participation have been used interchangeably. However, the two concepts have different views on the role communities ought to play. "The key difference is that citizen engagement requires an active and intentional dialogue between citizens and public decision makers whereas citizen participation can come from citizens only (Citizenlab; 2019). Citizen engagement is thus a form of interaction between citizens and their governments and may occur within the delivery of public services or policy development.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E):** M&E assesses the performance of projects/programmes and aims to improve the outputs, outcomes and impact thereof. According to Ijeoma & Ngengelezi (2015:6)" M&E are two distinct elements, but they complement each other. M&E should be understood as a managing tool that provides clarity to all stakeholders as to why certain activities are undertaken. Monitoring is a continuous function that uses systematic collection of data on specified indicators to provide management and the main stakeholders of an on-going development intervention. This is defined with indications of the extent of progress and achievement of objectives and progress in the use of allocated funds. Evaluation is the systematic and objective assessment of an on-going or completed project, programme or policy, its design, implementation and results".
- **Transparency:** Transparency refers to the process of being open. In a government context, transparency refers to an open government who shares information with the public; allows the public to attend government meetings and allows the public to scrutinize government documents.

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According to Bauhr and Nasiritousi (2012; 11), "Transparency is a multifaceted word, the meaning of which is at times misconstrued. Transparency is often conflated with accountability and press freedom and therefore difficult to operationalize. We define transparency narrowly here as the release of information that is relevant for evaluating institutions."

1.9 CHAPTER OUTLINE

The chapters in this research will be structured chronologically in the following manner:

Chapter 1: Introduction and Research background. This chapter covers the research background, problem statement; the role of social audits in the public administration discipline, research questions research objectives; research methodology, qualitative research, research design; data collection; limitations of study; data analysis, research methodology and conceptual clarification.

Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework and Literature review: This chapter deals with the theoretical framework, literature review and conceptual discussions applicable to this study including the policy context for public participation in South Africa.

Chapter 3: Legislative Framework: The provisions of the South African Constitution and other acts enforce principles of citizen's engagement as well as the strengthening of accountability in the public sector.

Chapter 4: Social audit practices in Canada, Kenya and India. This chapter deals with social audits in the international context including discussing the social audit practices, processes, application and methods of Canada, Kenya and India. This Chapter also deals with the research findings, interpretations and presentation.

Chapter 5: Summary, Conclusion and recommendations. This chapter deals with the summaries of all chapters, conclusion and recommendations.

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CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

2. INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter introduced the study and provided a contextual background to the study. This current chapter will examine the theoretical framework and the literature review on the best social audit practices in public service delivery from selected countries: Lessons for the South African local government. In this light, the chapter will examine the theoretical framework explaining theories such as public participation theory and its themes. It will proceed to unpack the literature review.

2.1 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This section addresses the theoretical framework in order to provide a conceptual platform for this research study. This section discusses the public participation theory and its themes.

2.1.1 Conceptualisation of the Public Participation Theory

This study and the content covered, aligns with the Public Participation theory. Public Participation is a process that provides private and public individuals an opportunity to influence public decisions and is a component of the democratic decision-making process. The roots of public participation date back to ancient Greece and Colonial New England. Before the 1960s, governmental processes and procedures were designed to facilitate external participation. In the mid-1960s public participation was institutionalized with President Lyndon Johnson's Great Society programs (Theory of Citizen Participation; 2003). Many agencies choose to exclude or minimize public participation in planning efforts and claims that public participation is too expensive and time consuming. However, many public participation programs are launched in response to the public's reaction to a proposed project or action. Numerous benefits can be derived from effective public involvement program such as the sharing of information and ideas on public issues; public support for planning decisions; avoidance of conflict and costly delays and cooperation and trust between the agency and the public (Theory of Citizen Participation; 2003).

The Public Participation theory applies to this study as this study is concerned with active public engagement and social audits which are concerned with the redistribution of power from the state to the people. The Public Participation theory argues for an integrated approach to planning which must include engagements with stakeholders in the search for relevant information, shared values, consensus and proposed actions that is both feasible and acceptable. The traditional planning tends to be dominated by a technical/analytic style where the planner is detached value-neutral expert advising decision-makers

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about the best way to accomplish agency goals and how to serve the public interests. The interactive planning is based on the assumption that open and participative processes lead to better decision-making. With interactive planning, the planner engages directly with stakeholders to gain support, build consensus, identify an acceptable solution and secure implementation. The success in interactive planning is measured by the extent to which balance can be achieved among competing interests while consensus is reached on appropriate actions (Theory of Citizen Participation; 2003).

According to Mohamed (2010), the concept of participation has been debated in the development domain, and even though the concept was considered a decision-making adjunct, all schools of contemporary thought view participation as a fundamental element of planning and decision-making. In the developed countries of the global north, where democracy had matured, declining patterns of public participation in a representative democracy were identified. Since the mid-1990s, debates about the need to directly engage the public in processes of policy development and decision-making have emerged in response to the perceived crisis of democracy, which questioned the adequacy of democratic institutions and the public's rights. It has been argued that representative democracy is unable to respond to the demands of the public. A much needed interactive and direct engagement process is therefore needed to respond to the needs of the public, to ensure that the interests of the public are taken into consideration and to involve the public in decision-making processes.

2.2 THEMES OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

This section examines some important themes on public participation such as legitimacy, diversity and inclusion and expertise and participation.

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2.2.1 Legitimacy

According to Quick & Bryson (2016; 4), legitimacy is one of the public participation features and refers to the adequacy of participation, the technical workability of the decision outcomes and the procedural fairness of the participation process. If the public participation process is not seen as legitimate it can detach the public from government and disrupt the implementation of policy decisions. The issue of legitimacy can be addressed by having participants explain themselves clearly, use logical arguments and utilize valid criteria for evaluating options and outcomes. Other aspects considered under legitimacy include ensuring that government policy and program choices are legitimate, acceptable and addressing the needs of the public it serves. Furthermore, legitimacy also relates to the fairness of the participation process. Procedurally just and procedurally rational processes are likely to be high in quality, where procedural justice refers to whether the participation process incorporates democratic values such as fairness, transparency, and openness to public input. The procedurally just process enables the

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acceptability of the decisions made. The procedural rationality involves the collection, analysis, and use of information that is relevant to the decision. The issue of process legitimacy is also connected to trust where there are diverse interests. However, when diverse voices are included and marginalized groups can influence outcomes, there are strong benefits for the legitimacy process, the quality of decisions, and effective decision implementation. This enables stakeholders to accept a decision, even though it is not their individually preferred choice, but because the process is based on a procedurally just manner.

2.2.2 Diversity and inclusion

According to Quick & Bryson (2016), excluding the public from decision-making processes results in tensions between the government and the public. One of the key challenges in the public participation process is attributed to the exclusion of marginalized groups based on ethnic, racial, gender and socio-economic diversity. Quick &Bryson (2016; 4) argues "all too often, supposedly participatory processes end up including the "usual suspects," people who are easily recruited, articulate in the language and logic being used to make decisions, and reasonably comfortable in public arenas. " Furthermore, the public participation process becomes consultation and giving inputs instead of resulting in deliberation and fostering new understandings between the public and government. The management of conflict, tensions and power is thus needed to ensure that marginalized groups are considered within the decision-making process and can contribute to decision-making. Ultimately inclusion in the participation process must allow different views and negotiations to identify problems and solutions (Quick &Bryson; 2016).

2.2.3 Expertise and participation

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Quick & Bryson (2016) argues that by involving diverse views, interests and perspectives in the decision-making process, the process becomes ruffled**.** This issue relates to the involvement of the public who may not possess the necessary skills, knowledge, and expertise on the implementation of a specific programme. By allowing such community members to be part of the decision-making process, the participation process becomes disturbed and may produce poor outcomes should communities be involved in the decision-making process of that specific program. However, what is essential is that by allowing communities who have no expertise in the specific program being implemented, it allows for the generation of new knowledge, information, lessons, learning and insights.

2.3 LITERATURE REVIEW

Much scholarly literature has been produced on public participation and the need for an interactive public participation process to strengthen a country's democracy. Social audits and Participatory monitoring and evaluation (M&E) are both forms of participation methods and a distinction between the concepts of participatory M&E and social audits will be provided. Furthermore, a distinction will be provided

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between the concepts of public participation, citizen participation, and community participation. The literature review covered in this section, therefore provides knowledge on public participation, citizen participation, community participation, participatory monitoring and evaluation (M&E) and social audits.

2.3.1 What is public participation?

There is much literature on public participation and the concept of public participation has been used interchangeably with many other concepts. According to Sebola (2017) the concept of public participation is defined differently by different people and in different contexts. To others, public participation is a concept that can be used interchangeably with concepts such as, community participation and citizen participation while other studies provide distinct differences of those concepts confused to be synonyms with public participation. The said concepts however are different in context, interpretation, meaning and application. Brynard (as cited in DPSA; n.d) argues that "citizen participation should be distinguished from similar terms such as public participation because this term is not necessarily synonymous even though in many respects, they may be almost synonymous. In his attempt to distinguish between citizen participation, Brynard states that citizen participation is "distinctive because it emphasis on the person rather than the state in the participatory relationship." Brynard further distinguishes between citizen participation and public participation in the following way: "Public participation is not synonymous with citizen participation – mainly because the former is a wider concept which may include citizen participation. The reason for this is the fact that the word "public" in public participation refers to all the people, whether or not they possess the rights and obligations of citizenship". Public participation includes all people and citizens within a country who may be affected by the state's decisions or proposed initiatives. In short, public participation includes the general public.

Creighton (as cited in DPSA; n.d) defines public participation as "the process by which public concerns, needs, and values are incorporated into governmental and corporate decision-making. It is a two-way communication and interaction, with the overall goal of better decisions that are supported by the public." Rowe & Frewer (2005) states that public participation is the practice of involving the public in the agenda setting, decision-making and policy-forming activities of institutions responsible for policy development. "This definition of participation is arguably too broad, leaving room for variable interpretation, because the public may be involved (in policy formation, etc.) in different ways or at several levels. In some cases, the public may "participate" by being the passive recipients of information from the regulators or governing bodies concerned; in other cases, public input may be sought, as in the solicitation of public opinion through questionnaires; and in still other cases, there may be active

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participation of public representatives in the decision-making process itself, such as through lay representation on an advisory committee" (Rowe & Frewer; 2005; 254).

The important question here is, how can people who are affected by a government initiative, meaningfully, and effectively influence decision-making. As discussed, public participation is a wide concept and may include the concept of citizen participation including community participation. Community participation narrows down the number of people involved in the participation process as it excludes the general public. According to Mathebula (2016; 22), "community participation as a process through which the community can influence and share control over development initiatives, decisions, and resources affecting them". A community consists of people who live in the same geographical area and share common goals and problems. Mathebula (2016; 22) further argues that a community can be defined as a geographical area in which a municipality is divided and states that "the ontological origin of the concept is way beyond the limitations as imposed by the operational definition. Therefore, community as a concept can be used to describe social organizations and arrangements which are often regarded as natural groupings based on ties of shared blood, language, history, and most importantly culture and that participation at a municipal level can be achieved through a smaller demarcated ward where there exists a population having the features of a community." Community participation thus differs from public participation as community participation involves participation and influence by a community (within a specific geographical area and/or based on similar historical and socio-economic factors), over a proposed government initiative. Public participation, on the other hand, is inclusive of the general public and includes everyone affected by a government initiative and everyone that can influence it.

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Table 1: Key differences between the concepts of public, citizen, and community participation

Public, Citizen and Community Participation			
Activity	Public Participation	Community Participation	Citizen Participation
Who is involved	Inclusive of the general public and comprises the community (Mathebula; 2016)	A group of people coming together for mutual support and fulfilling their needs (Mathebula; 2016)	Citizen participation stems from the citizens themselves and is a bottom-up initiative (Citizenlab; 2020).

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What is the purpose	To encourage the public to have meaningful input into the decision-making process (Wouters et al; 2004)	For communities to influence and share control over development initiatives, decisions and resources affecting them (Mathebula; 2016)	Citizen participation is an instrument for citizens to voice opinions about public policies (Citizenlab; 2020).

Source: (Researcher's compilation based on Mathebula; 2016; Citizenlab; 2020; Wouters et al; 2004)

2.3.2 International Principles for public participation

Worldwide countries and its governments have adopted public participation methods to include the voices of the public in their planning. Besides, active public participation strengthens government structures and makes them more accountable to the communities they serve. The International Association for Impact Assessment (IAIA) has developed a guide for public participation best practice principles which lays the foundation for public participation globally. The concept of public participation has been defined differently by many scholars and authors. Andre et al (2006) define public participation as a process that involves communities and groups who are either positively or negatively affected by an initiative and is subject to a decision-making process. Andre et al (2006) continue to outline the objectives of public participation which includes: inviting those affected by a decision and seeking input from all stakeholders; it aims to educate all stakeholders affected; promotes mutual learning for all stakeholders; contributes to better analysis of proposals and promotes support.

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"Public participation means the chance of all those concerned and/or interested to present and/or stand up for their interests or concerns in the development of plans, program, policies, or legal instruments" (Standards of Public Participation; 2008;17). Although public participation processes look good on paper, the execution and practice of public participation are challenging. Many supporters and those who are in favour of public participation remain doubtful whether communities can influence decisions or whether community inputs are taken into consideration.

According to Sewell and Phillips (1979; 337) "proponents of public participation have welcomed the increasing opportunities for the public to comment upon plans and policies, and to identify issues that require attention. They remain sceptical, however, of the extent to which inputs of the public influence decisions. Some proponents believe that the public still lacks a voice in policymaking. The major question remains: how useful is increased public participation? Unfortunately, there is a scarcity of objective evaluations of past and on-going methods and levels of participation. Although government agencies have spent hundreds of thousands of dollars on participation program, they have generally been

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unwilling to allocate any funds to the evaluation of the effectiveness of such ventures". The challenge with the current public participation approach is that the methods and mechanisms used to facilitate public participation, does not make provision or enable different stakeholder viewpoints to be taken into consideration. This often results in a top-down decision-making process instead of a bottom-up decision- making process where the public is at the forefront of the development and planning.

Andre et al (2006) further lay down the principles of best practices for public participation which includes basic and operating principles. These principles lay the foundation for contemporary public participation, what public participation should look like, and how public participation should be practiced. Some of the basic and operating principles for public participation include (Andre et al; 2006):

- Basic principles
  - Adapted to the context: Understanding the historical background and value of communities affected by a proposed initiative.
  - Informative and proactive: The communities and public must be informed in a timeously manner on initiatives affecting them and the sharing of information that is understandable.
  - Adaptive and communicative: The ability to communicate with a diverse community who differs in demographics, values, and interests.
  - Inclusive and equitable: Ensure that the interests of all parties are taken into consideration including marginalised groups, encouraging and promoting participation.
- Operating principles
  - Initiated early and sustained: The public should be involved early and timeously before major decisions are made and should be involved continuously to build trust amongst stakeholders, improve community analysis and screening and to revise proposals based on inputs made.
  - Supportive to participants: To provide the capacity to stakeholders that enables their participation and the distribution of adequate information to enable stakeholders to make decisions and provide inputs.
  - Open and transparent: The public must have access to all relevant information and the public must be able to attend meetings and workshops related to a project or program.
  - Credible and rigorous: The public participation process must be facilitated by an individual that is neutral and objective and promote the confidence of the public to express their inputs.

From the above principles, the public participation process should not merely be a process where government disseminates information to the public on what the entity has decided regarding the implementation of a certain program or project. The public participation process should be a regular,

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interactive and face-to-face involvement between government and the public where the public contributes to making decisions on initiatives that affect their lives. Ultimately the decisions made, must reflect the views and interests of affected people.

2.3.3 Public participation in Local Government of South Africa

Public participation in local government is embedded in the South African Constitution 108 of 1996 and other acts which will be discussed under Chapter 3, the legislative framework of this study. Local government in South Africa (SA) provides that all social classes, genders and disadvantaged groups participate in the affairs of the municipality such as the implementation, and review of the Integrated Development Plan (IDP), the establishment, implementation. and review of the Performance Management System; the monitoring and review of the performance of the municipality; the preparation of the Budget; policy development, review, and monitoring; decisions relating to the provision of municipal services; the development of by-laws and regulations and the implementation of projects and initiatives. The IDP is a planning process through which a municipality establishes a development plan for the short, medium and long-term in consultation with and the participation of the project or program beneficiaries. The main mechanisms or platforms for the public to participate are mainly through ward committees; public comments and open community sessions (Municipal Systems Act, 2000). In SA it appears that the participatory mechanisms have not offered the public an effective say in policy and decision- making on matters that affect their lives. According to Friedman (2006;3) "The participation mechanisms in South Africa are biased towards those with the capacity to organize, who would be able to bring their concerns to government attention without these mechanisms - indeed, they are intrinsically hostile to effective participation by the poor, who most need access to government decisions. Nor have formal participatory structures enabled citizens to influence policy".

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Other authors share the same views as Friedman and argue that public participation is limited to consultation on needs instead of decision-making and implementation by communities. Buccus et al (2008) conducted a study on the attitudes and perceptions of municipalities about public participation. Although the results of the study showed that there was commitment from local government to public participation, the question remained whether communities could influence decision-making. Buccus et al (2008:16) argue that "the overwhelming impression created, however, was that municipalities realize that public participation is constitutionally and legislatively provided for, and therefore must be undertaken: generally, after high-level planning has been undertaken and budgets set. Generally, there were no clear indicators of a commitment to meaningful and penetrating participation. The pervading attitude appearing among officials was that they know what people want and therefore participation is not necessary. As one top official commented, 'We know what people's needs are, and what they will

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be for the next 100 years, only the rank order will change." It therefore, appears that local government follows a technocratic approach in which municipal officials makes decision on behalf of communities with no signs of commitment for a more inclusive participation approach. The technocratic approach to decisions and policymaking poses a great danger to a country's democracy as this approach is not open to the views, inputs, and scrutiny of the public.

Tshoose (2015;18) argues "in the local sphere, municipal officials tend to act as gate-keepers and controllers rather than as facilitative bodies that enable communities to have a greater voice and control over resources and resource allocation. The municipalities are accused of being either unwilling or unable to share the decision-making power with communities, especially to project identification." Similarly, Tshoose (2015) argues that the participatory mechanisms in local government are more guided towards seeking the input of communities into already formulated policy responses. The current dynamic with public participation in the local government sector of SA, is that municipalities seem to engage with communities in a manner where information are disseminated to the public based on decisions made by the municipality and its officials. These decisions made by municipalities lack the input of the public. Although municipalities are compelled by legislation to include the voices of communities in their planning and decision-making processes, the legislation does not outline how municipalities ought to engage with communities and how regular interactions must take place. The engagement between the public and municipalities are therefore seen as a top-down approach in which decisions are cascaded down to the public with little to no community input in the policy and decision- making processes.

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2.3.4 THE SOCIAL AUDIT CONCEPT

This section defines the concept of social audits and its' practices, the history of social audits, discusses social audits according to themes, its critiques, provides information on the social audit and participatory M&E concept. Social audits and Participatory M&E are both forms of participation methods and a distinction between the concepts of participatory M&E and social audits will be attempted.

2.3.4.1 What is a social audit?

According to Deegan (2009; 608) a social audit is "a process by which an organisation determines whether its operations are meeting the expectations of particular stakeholder groups or satisfying the social performance criteria set by the organisation. The results of a social audit often form the basis for the contents of a social report. Social audits allow a company to examine its social impacts and to establish whether it is meeting its own social objectives." Social auditing and social reporting increase the transparency of an organisation and the outcomes can be considered as a continuous dialogue with role players. Other literature shares similar views on Deegan's definition of a social audit. A social audit is "a community-led process of reviewing official documents to determine whether the public

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expenditure and service delivery outcomes reported by the government reflect the public money spent and the services received by the community." (Conducting social audits; 2015; 15). Therefore, social audits appear to be a tool applied within a specific community to enable the community to determine the impact government's initiative had on the community, the final beneficiaries and affected stakeholders of that initiative.

Pekkonen & Sadashiva (n.d; 1), argue that "a social audit is a process by which the people (the final beneficiaries of any scheme, programme, policy or law), are empowered to audit such schemes, program, policies and laws. It involves both the service providers and the users examining the impact of the project or service in a systematic way comparing the real benefits that have accrued with the expected benefits, while also looking at unexpected impacts". Furthermore, social audits are an on-going process in which beneficiaries and stakeholders of a project are involved from the planning up until the monitoring and evaluation of that specific program. This ensures that the project is developed and implemented in line with the priorities and preferences of the affected parties and serves the interest of the affected parties (Pekkonen & Sadashiva; nd; 1).

Pekkonen & Sadashiva (nd; 1-4), further outlines the principles of social audits which includes Transparency (government must provide full access to all information); Participation (an entitlement for all affected parties to participate in decision-making and validation and not only their representatives) and Accountability (immediate and public answerability to all affected parties. The benefits of social audits include, the raising of public awareness and knowledge; it promotes citizen empowerment and strengthens community voice; interpret findings and develop solutions; promotes local democracy and collective decision-making; enhances policy-makers' understanding of stakeholder concerns; leads to improved design and delivery of program and services; enhances trust between affected groups and government and finally enhances transparency. According to Dwivedi & Singh (2010; 1), a "social audit is a process in which, details of resource, both financial and non-financial, used by public agencies for development initiatives are shared with the people, often through a public platform. Social audits allow people to enforce accountability and transparency, providing the ultimate users an opportunity to scrutinize development initiatives." With that said, a social audit appears to be an effective tool to detect corruption, ensure government transparency, and measures government performances. The objectives of social audits include empowering beneficiaries and directly affected stakeholders of the public sector programmes in matters of planning, implementation and delivery of services amongst others. Social audit procedures provide a voice to the people to participate, to be heard and provide transparency to program management. Social audits enable communities to scan the decision-making process and the standards adopted for various elements of a programme (Dwivedi & Singh; 2010).

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In essence, as discussed, thus far, social audits appear to be a community-led process under the public participation umbrella, where the final and directly affected beneficiaries and stakeholders of projects or program are involved in the planning, decision-making and monitoring and evaluation of those projects and program. Essentially the stakeholders and beneficiaries are those people who are the affected and interested in a program, therefore forming a community based on similar interests.

2.3.4.2 History of Social audits

The history of social audits dates to the 1950s. Social audits originated to ensure that businesses are accountable to the communities it served and was seen as a mechanism to share economic and non-economic impact of the business to communities. Since the 1970s and onwards, business started recognizing issues of sociability, environment, and human resources. By the mid-70's, social accounting as it was known, changed to social responsibility accounting and meant measuring and analysing the socio-economic consequences of both the behaviour of the public and private sector. From the period, 1971-1980, there was a pause period on social accounting literature which was underdeveloped and inaccessible. In 1978, a social audit methodology was developed as an independent worker co-operative training centre in England. The first social audit manual-A Management Tool for Co- Operative Working in Free Spreckling was published in 1981. The New Economic Foundation (NEF) in collaboration with Steathclyde Community Business Ltd (SEB) proposed an alternative method to the Social Audit toolkit. In the 1980s, the public awareness environmentalism increased, and the broadening of the term social accounting to social and environmental accounting. The period from 1991 to 2000 saw the advancement of environmental issues within accounting from a broader perspective, including interests from managers as well as accountants. Furthermore, the concept of social reporting and research methods became important concepts with the exploration of the type of documents that area needed to analyse how to measure disclosures. In the post-2000 period, there have been developments in empirical research in social and environmental accounting. Social disclosures and corporate reliability came to the forefront. The reporting in social accounting and social audits has become very crucial for the disclosure mechanism of the organization (Hazarika; 2015).

In the 2000's, the development of and the role of professional organisations led to a much more systematic approach to social auditing. Later, this approach was developed, and finally formed the Institute of Social and Ethical Accountability. This led to the development of new standards such as the AA1000 Accountability Assurance Standards which and involved social auditing aspects. Later, in the 2000s, social auditing was expanded to the public sector and non-governmental organisations (Adhikari; 2016).

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2.3.4.3 The application of social audits

Social audit methodologies are influenced by the country context, the availability of information, and the legal and political framework. In general, implementation would include certain steps (World Bank; 2010). The major steps usually involved in a social audit can be outlined as follows.

Table 2: The practice of social audits

The practice of Social Audits	
Activity	**Description**
Framing structure of Social Audit Process	Within this step it is important to select the programme and reasons for the social audit within this specific program. Therefore, it is important to identify the objective and the relevance of the audit. Since the objective of a social audit is to assess the impact of a program, those who are affected by the program must be involved in the analysis thereof to identify actual achievement. The objective of a social audit must be relevant to the strategy of the organisation and the following must occur within sequence: need of the program or activity; Process of implementation of particular program / activity; Participatory Assessment of quality of services provided under program or activity ; Participatory Assessment of the quality of the infrastructure created; Dialogue with the beneficiaries for their feedback regarding implementation and Fixing responsibilities for any mismanagement or irregularity. Furthermore, in relation to the relevance of the audit, before starting any audit activity, information must be gathered about the organisation's history, public opinion and image of the organization. A social auditor has to gather background information on the state of affairs when the program was taken up, the internal monitoring machinery and methodology that was provided, whether any internal evaluation was made, the other linked program which could affect the effectiveness of the program to be audited and how are those programs progressed. By obtaining this information, this will help in conducting the social audit process on ground. It is also important for the social auditors to know if the intended benefits of the programme are reaching the targeted groups.

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Identification of Stakeholders and Starting a Dialogue process	Within this step, a dialogue process must start with the identification of engagements with role-players and stakeholders involved in the social audit process to have meaningful engagements and reaching consensus. It should also be established how often role players should engage in the dialogue process. Each stakeholder will represent himself through their representatives and the selection of representatives should be transparent and cover maximum stakeholder groups. The key stakeholders involved may include: Program Beneficiaries; Elected Representatives, Government officials involved with the program; Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), the Media and National or State level Funding Agency. This process is sensitive, and it should be handled in a careful manner to collect the primary information regarding the program since people have diverse interests. The dialogue process should be planned with the stakeholders to extract accurate and needed information. This process and step should be objective, unbiased and enable trust and confidence in the community.
Focusing on important Activities & cross verification of said achievements	Within this step, it is essential to discuss and identify with all role-players, the activities that will be audited. Depending on the scope of the audit key issues need to be identified with each issue leading towards an answer on a particular piece of outputs or results. These issues are derived from the guidelines and design of the program/scheme, involvement of stakeholders and society. Within this step, role-players will identify key aspects of a program and the implementing body should be told that they must present physical and financial performance before social auditors and other stakeholders to be crosschecked during the social audit process. Different views of people will also be presented based on their understanding and knowledge of program issues. In this step primary data by means of interviews and case studies with communities and secondary data by means of government articles and reports will be collected. The secondary information will be cross-checked with primary data. Within this step, all role-players have the right to demand public information and records, as outlined by various rights to information acts.
Findings and Verification:	This step is particularly important as within this step, public comments are obtained. The key findings will be discussed in public meetings and government officials need to provide a response to the issues raised. Within a social audit public meeting, no

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	other issues are addressed other than the particular social audit issue. The proceedings and discussion during the social audit process are very important, should be consolidated, documented, included in the final report and disseminated to the community. Within the final report, must a reasonable analysis with views and opposing views must be included in the final report. Any physical verification must be done and must be recorded accurately

Source: (Researcher's compilation based on Dwivedi & Singh; 2010; 4-8)

2.3.4.4 Social audits and participatory monitoring and evaluation

Social audits have been defined as a process whereby those that are affected by a proposed program or intervention can participate in the development of the program, decision-making and the evaluation thereof to determine impact. It is a form of active engagement between government and communities where communities are part of the planning and monitoring and evaluation stages of the programme. The concept of participatory M&E can be linked to the concept of social audits. Onyango (2018;428) states "participatory monitoring and evaluation (PM&E) is a process of self-assessment, collective knowledge generation, and cooperative action in which stakeholders in a program or intervention substantively and collaboratively identify the monitoring and evaluation issues, collect and analyse data, and take-action as a result of what they learn through this process. In the development context, PM&E strengthens and deepens the contribution of primary stakeholders by honouring their perspectives, voices, preferences, and decisions". Onyango (2018) continues to state that PM&E emerged as a result of the limitations on the traditional monitoring and evaluation (M&E). Boadu & Ile (2017) shares this view and states that the use of conventional M&E in programmes has been limited to adhere to regulations instead of accomplishing higher purpose. The conventional M&E mostly involves partners and government agencies and limited involvement of project recipients, hence the development of PM&E to include the voices of project beneficiaries into program M&E. According to Boadu & Ile (2017), PM&E aims to strengthen a project's effectiveness by applying a bottom-up participation approach which allows for the involvement of those affected by a project. PM&E is a process that allows the involvement of project beneficiaries in the planning, decision-making process, and the monitoring and evaluation stages.

Some have argued that PM&E is a tool or method used under the social audit concept. According to (Pekkonen & Sadashiva; n.d; 1) "Social audits use participatory techniques to involve all relevant stakeholders, particularly the traditionally marginalized or disadvantaged groups, in collecting and

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analysing evidence, providing feedback, and recommending changes where necessary". Furthermore, based on the definition of social audits discussed thus far, when conducting social audits, social audits not only enable communities to participate in the planning and decision-making processes of a proposed project, but includes the use of the M&E tool where communities can monitor and evaluate the project being implemented, therefore allowing the whole social audit process to be participatory in nature. Social audits are wide in scope and its practices therefore include the involvement of project beneficiaries in planning, decision-making and M&E. However, the practice of PM&E also includes the involvement of project beneficiaries in the planning, decision-making and M&E process, similarly like social audits.

Pandey et al (2013; 14) argue that a social audit is a monitoring tool and defines monitoring as collecting and analyzing information on a specific project to improve the performance and results thereof and involves the community in the monitoring process which makes it participatory. "Social audit is a critical monitoring tool and can be taken up at any point of time, during and after the completion of the activity, to assess the end results of the activity. Social audit can also be used as an evaluation tool. In general, the exercises related to evaluation are conducted by external agencies to ensure the unbiased and objective assessment of processes and outputs/outcomes. The involvement of local people in the process makes the exercise participatory. A social audit carried out jointly by external facilitators and by local communities could be termed as participatory evaluation" (Pandey; 2013;14).

The below table outlines the key differences and similarities between social audits and PM&E and focuses on the why, who, where, and the how aspects of social audits and PM&E.

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Table 3: Social audits and Participatory monitoring and evaluation (M&E)

Social Audits and Participatory M&E		
Activity	**Social Audits**	**Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation (PM&E)**
The purpose and why it is undertaken	A social audit is undertaken so that the final and directly affected beneficiaries of a program are empowered to audit the program. It involves the users examining the impact of the program in a way to	PM&E aims to create an enabling environment for stakeholder groups and those directly and indirectly involved and affected by a particular intervention or program to learn how to interpret changes and

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	compare the real benefits with the expected benefits (Pekkonen & Sadashiva; n.d),	take control over their own development (Estrella et al; 2000)
Where and how it is used?	Conducted by residents living in a community in collaboration with government and other affected stakeholders and focus on issues identified by that community. It is conducted in the language of residents, inclusive and allows the whole community to participate (Conducting social audits; 2015)	PM&E is used and promoted in development processes around the world and is used in community-development program. (Estrella et al; 2000) The primary participants in PM&E include the beneficiaries of the project, intermediary organizations and government officials (Boadu & Ile; 2017).
The stakeholders involved in the process	Social audits are both a monitoring and evaluation tool. It assesses the end results of the activity. The evaluations are conducted by external agencies and involve local people in the process that makes the exercise participatory. It is carried out jointly by external facilitators and by local communities (Pandey; 2013).	An on-going collaborative process where beneficiaries and stakeholders at different levels work together to assess a specific project and take corrective actions required. It is a partnership between project beneficiaries and the usual external M&E specialists/experts (Estrella et al; 2000).
The role of stakeholders and beneficiaries	It enables communities to engage constructively with the government. It is a vehicle for community empowerment. It is a process of serious investigation and participation in governance by communities	For some, participation in PM&E is a means to achieve development objectives such as greater efficiency, improved service delivery and for others it is an end results such as

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	and enables communities to articulate their demands (Conducting social audits; 2015)	empowerment (Estrella et al; 2000).
How does participation take place	Social audits enable communities to participate in the planning, decision-making, the monitoring and evaluation phases of a program being implemented therefore allowing the whole social audit process to be participatory in nature. (Pekkonen & Sadashiva; n.d).	"Most practitioners of PM&E recognize that participation does not take place uniformly throughout the entire M&E process but, rather, varies across temporal and spatial contexts". A participatory approach to M&E may be adopted from the beginning and continued throughout or it may only be undertaken during selected events (Estrella et al; 2000;192)

Source: (Researcher's compilation based on Estrella et al; 2000; Pekkonen & Sadashiva; n.d; Conducting social audits; 2015; Boadu & Ile; 2017; Pandey; 2013)

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What is notable is that social audits emphasis on communities who are the final beneficiaries of an initiative and directly affected by a proposed initiative while PM&E too focuses on those directly affected by a proposed initiative but also those indirectly affected, therefore, opening the participation process to multiple role-players and people. Social audits appear to narrow down the inclusion of people within the planning and decision-making process by applying the tool within a particular project and within the specific community directly affected by a proposed project. In the evaluation stages of a program, both social audits and PM&E allow external facilitators or experts to conduct evaluations in collaboration with communities to allow objectivity in the process.

The project beneficiaries participating in social audits and PM&E; participate to bring about change, to achieve empowerment, improved service delivery and efficiency in program or project delivery. Social audits appear to be more participatory in nature by creating an interactive platform within a particular community, enabling the community to be actively involved in all phases of a proposed program while

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participation in PM&E may only occur in certain phases of a program or in some instances participation may take place throughout all program phases.

Nevertheless, social audits and PM&E both operate as tools within the public participation and development domain and both tools strive to include the voices of people into government's proposed programs in terms of planning, decision-making and every aspect of that program.

2.3.5 KEY THEMES OF SOCIAL AUDITS

2.3.5.1 Social audits and participatory governance

Vij (2011; 6) argues that social audits create a collaborative platform for participatory governance. As countries develop, their administrative systems become more complex and may become difficult for the public to access. With higher levels of interdependence between government departments and the growing interconnectedness of administrative problems with socio-economic issues, policy implementation has become shared implementation. To overcome these challenges, public administrators often make a case for decentralized collaboration networks with enhanced participation from the public. These decentralized, participatory processes encourage democratic decision-making processes and encourage citizen engagement, leading to higher decision quality, fairness, reduce post policy implementation resistance, and mistrust by the public on the government officials. When the public are engaged in the policy process from the initial stages, the public develop a sense of mutual understanding, collective responsibility, and accountability within the community.

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2.3.5.2 Social audits and accountability

In practicing social audits, it has been argued that social audits lead to social accountability. According to Agarwal et al (2009;1), "social accountability is an approach towards building accountability that relies on civic engagement, in which citizens participate directly or indirectly in demanding accountability from service providers and public officials. Social accountability can be used a weapon to fight for better governance and effective service delivery". Furthermore, social accountability consists of mechanisms that communities and civil society organizations can use to monitor and hold public officials accountable. In essence, social accountability relies on civic engagement where the public access information about budgets, expenditures, services, and extracts accountability. While the traditional accountability relationships rely on top-down or external donor-driven monitoring of service providers, they often fail. "As a complementary strategy, social accountability strengthens citizens-clients to monitor and exert accountability. Two sets of obstacles must be overcome for this to happen: citizens must have reliable information on their entitlements and the performance of services, and they must be able to take actions based on that information to demand accountability" (Agarwal et al; 2009;

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1). In essence, through social audits and active civic engagement, social accountability can be achieved, communities can be empowered, and governance may be improved.

2.3.5.3 Social audits and access to information

The access to information is given under the social audit concept. The right to access information is aimed at promoting transparency, accountability, and democratic governance. According to Akro-Cobbah & Olivier (2016), the right to access information links with improved government responsiveness, transparency, participation and accountability because information is seen as having power and provides people with knowledge to demand political, economic and social rights. The right to access information alongside civil societies leads to transparency in governance and that there is a link between access to information and socio-economic rights which can only be realised through meaningful and active engagement. According to Akro-Cobbah & Olivier (2016), "the right of access to information is provided for in the South African constitution, which gives every person the right to access information held by the state or private entities that is required for the exercise or protection of any rights. In this way social audits contribute to building a culture of transparency, as citizens identify, source, and engage with relevant information." The meaningful engagement and right to access information promotes accountability and transparency in the delivery of socio-economic goods and services.

2.3.6 CRITIQUES OF SOCIAL AUDITS

For any research to be objective, the research must outline the critique of the concept which is being studied. This section addresses the critique of social audits.

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2.3.6.1 The critique of social audits

The critique of social audits relates to the social audit process. Social audits are being criticised as a duplication of monitoring processes, as most governments belief that their monitoring systems are adequate and therefore do not see the need for the public or communities to be involved in the monitoring process (Kente; 2019). Furthermore, Kente (2019; 29) states, "the social audit tool is an evidence-based objective accounting process that enables communities to determine the value of a service or facility provided. The community is also able to establish the extent to which the rendered services meet the standards stipulated in the service level agreement or contract signed between a government entity and a service provider". As a result of the technicality of the accounting process and service level agreements, it challenges the ordinary person to engage with the information in a meaningful way. Kente (2019) further argues that as a result of the technical nature of social audits, multiples resources are needed to capacitate communities to undertake and be part of the social audit process. Although the right to access

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information acts, provides the public the right to government documents, these documents often need to be simplified for communities. For communities to successfully be part of the social audit process they must have technical capacity and resources which is often only possible if communities form part of a broader network of non-governmental organisations (NGO's).

2.4 SUMMARY

This chapter has examined the theoretical groundings and conceptual clarifications of the best principles for public participation. The literature review in this study outlines the best principles for public participation and discusses what interactive public participation ought to look like. Further literature review discussed in this study outlines the weaknesses to the traditional public participation methods of consultation and obtaining inputs from communities in the government's proposed initiatives and projects. The lack of effective and active engagement where people are at the forefront of development and planning is clearly not achieved in many countries including SA. Despite the numerous pieces of South African legislation and policies that guide public participation, the weaknesses in participation mechanisms continue to persist. Social audits appear to be a tool that can be used to address the shortcoming in public participation and promote active community-government engagement where communities are involved in all aspects of a proposed government initiative thereby also addressing issues such as accountability and transparency. The study will now transit to Chapter three to provide a legislative framework for this study. The provisions of the South African Constitution and other acts enforce principles of participation as well as the strengthening of accountability in the public sector.

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3. CHAPTER THREE: LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

3.1 INTERNATIONAL BILL OF HUMAN RIGHTS

The United Nations, International Bill of Human Rights (1948) requires that the international community which includes countries world-wide, fulfill their obligation and promote human rights and provide freedom for all. The International Bill of Human Rights, Article 6, provides that government's world-wide consult and engages with affected people when decisions are to be made with regards to legislative or administrative measures. Besides, government's world-wide must provide appropriate platforms for its people to participate at all levels of decision-making on policies and program which they are affected by. The engagement taking place between governments and the public must be undertaken lawfully and honestly with a higher purpose of reaching consensus. The United Nations (1948; 93-94) outlines that "the peoples concerned shall have the right to decide their own priorities for the process of development as it affects their lives, beliefs, institutions, and spiritual well-being and the lands they occupy or otherwise use, and to exercise control, to the extent possible, over their own economic, social and cultural development. Also, they shall participate in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of plans and programmes for national and regional development which may affect them directly" (United Nations; 1948; 93-94).

The International Bill of Human Rights consists of the five important human rights treaties which aim to promote freedom and protect the basic human rights of all people. The Bill regulates the decisions and actions of Government, State and Non-State actors to make economic, social, and cultural rights a top priority in the formation and implementation of national, regional, and international policy and law. These treaties include the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty (International Network for Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights; nd).

The rights enshrined in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) include, among others, the right to work; to social security; to an adequate standard of living; to physical and mental health; to water and sanitation; to housing; to education; and to take part in cultural life (SAHRC; 2011). These rights can only be realised if meaningful participation takes place and people are actively engaged in the government's planning, and decision-making processes.

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In April 2015, the South African government accepted the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). The acceptance of the ICESCR provides new opportunities for the people and government to engage in dialogue and actions to enhance the promotion, protection and realisation of socioeconomic and cultural rights in SA (Studies in Poverty and Inequality Institute; 2016). By accepting the ICESCR, the South African government is bounded to the obligations of the ICESCR and bounded by international law to act in accordance with the ICESCR. The approval of the ICESCR requires that domestic legislation and policies be aligned with the obligations contained in the ICESCR. These actions would signal SA's dedication to advancing socioeconomic rights as contained in the Bill of Rights (Petherbridge; 2012). However, it appears that SA has not fulfilled its obligations in terms of the ICESCR. In 2018, during its 64th session, the Committee on ICESCR examined SA's implementation of the ICESCR including SA's reporting under articles 16 and 17 of the Covenant. The International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) raised the following concerns and comments on SA's implementation of the ICESCR (International Commission of Jurists; 2018)

- South Africa's incomplete discharge of its obligations in terms of the Covenant.
- The South African Government's need for guidance from the Committee on the discharge of its obligations in terms of the right to an adequate standard of living.
- The South African Government's failure to report effectively and accurately on its efforts to realize the rights of persons with disabilities.
- The uncertain status of the South African Government's commitment to the enactment of legislation to ensure the implementation of the Covenant.

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Due to SA's obligation to an adequate standard of living which includes rights such as housing, water, and sanitation amongst others, the ICJ invited the ICESCR committee to make the following recommendations to the South African government (International Commission of Jurists; 2018; 12)

- That the Government realize each Covenant right through implementation of its general obligation to ensure the right to an adequate standard of living. To this end, they must ensure that the levels to which such rights are fulfilled meet the requirements of an adequate standard of living.
- That the Government of South Africa facilitates the determination and adoption of a minimum standard of living as contemplated in the National Development Plan and ensure that such a standard meets the requirements of the right to an adequate standard of living.

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- That the Government of South Africa considers and initiate public debate on constitutional amendments to ensure consistency with the right to an adequate standard of living in the Covenant. Such an amendment should include the rights to clothing, sanitation, electricity, water, and other basic services required to ensure an adequate standard of living.
- That the Government of South Africa consult meaningfully and at regular periodic intervals with the South African Human Rights Commission, civil society organizations, and academic sources in the process of implementing these recommendations and on the right to an adequate standard of living.

Furthermore, it appears that there is a lack of alignment between the South African Constitution and the ICESCR. In SA's report, it admitted that the acceptance of the ICESCR is a step in the right direction giving the ICESCR greater force in domestic law and it will continue to deepen the enforcement of socio-economic rights in SA. The language and obligations of SA's Constitution, to a large extend mirror the socio-economic norms and standards of the ICESCR. However, elsewhere in its report, the SA government accepts that there is not an exact symmetry between the ICESCR and the Constitution but rather that there are many similar provisions for most of the socio-economic rights. The South African government acknowledges that the provisions of national laws and regulations need to be aligned with the norms and standards contained in international instruments (International Commission of Jurists; 2018). The SA government needs to harmonise its domestic policies with international policies to ensure that the rights of its people are respected and promoted in terms of the ICESCR and in compliance with the ICESCR. Once again, this requires the inclusive engagement of communities and the people with government and the use of effective participation tools to realise the socio-economic rights of the people.

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3.2 THE AFRICAN CHARTER FOR POPULAR PARTICIPATION IN DEVELOPMENT AND TRANSFORMATION

The African continent has developed its own set of principles for public participation. Given the different context of countries globally, the African public participation charter does not differ from the international public participation principles as discussed in Chapter 2 of this study and the International Bill of rights which requires the active participation of people who are affected by government initiatives in order to realise full socio-economic and other rights.

The International Conference on Popular Participation in the Recovery and Development Process in Africa was held, in Arusha, the United Republic of Tanzania, as a collaborative effort between African organizations, governments, non-governmental organizations, and the United Nations agencies, in the search for a collective understanding of the role of popular participation in the development and

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transformation of the region. Moreover, the Charter was adopted as a result of deterioration in social and economic conditions in African countries in the 1980s (African Charter for Popular Participation in Development and Transformation; 1990).

“Popular participation is, in essence, the empowerment of the people to effectively involve themselves in creating the structures and in designing policies and programs that serve the interests of all as well as to effectively contribute to the development process and share equitably in its benefits. Therefore, there must be an opening up of the political process to accommodate freedom of opinions, tolerate differences, accept the consensus on issues as well as ensure the effective participation of the people and their organizations and associations” (African Charter for Popular Participation in Development and Transformation; 1990; 6). The Charter outlines basic strategies for government to ensure effective participation and these include (African Charter for Popular Participation in Development and Transformation; 1990):

- African Governments must embrace development strategies, approaches, and programs, the content and parameters of which are in line with the interest and aspirations of the people, and which incorporate, instead of isolating, African values, economic, social, cultural, political, and environmental realities.
- African Governments must promote the formulation and implementation of national development programs within the framework of the aforesaid aspirations, interest, and realities, and is aimed at the transformation of the African economies to achieve self-reliant and self-sustaining people-centred development as a result of popular participation and reaching a democratic consensus.
- In implementing people-centred development strategies, an enabling environment must be created to advance and promote broad-based participation, on a decentralized-basis, in the development process. The enabling environment is an important pre-requisite for the stimulation of initiatives and creativity and for enhancing output and productivity.

From these proposed strategies, there is a clear alignment with the international principals for public participation as outlined in Chapter 2. Countries worldwide are faced with many challenges and are starting to recognise the need for an interactive and bottom-up participation process where the public is at the forefront of planning and development. Similarly, to the International principles for public participation, the African charter argues for public participation to be inclusive, promoted; considering the diverse backgrounds and interests of the public and educating the public to enable informed decisions.

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3.3 LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

The abolishment of the apartheid regime in SA saw the development and implementation of various acts and policies to address the injustice of the past. Particularly the local government sector underwent a transformation that saw the development of several acts for municipalities in SA. Legal frameworks in the local government sector have been developed and deal with public participation, municipal planning, decision-making and municipal finances. These acts will be discussed outlining matters about participation. Although, there is no clear legislation that guides social audits worldwide, the South African legislative framework on public participation makes provision for communities and the public to participate in the affairs of local government; hence the legislation discussed is applies to the social audit concept and guides the social audit concept. The provisions of the South African Constitution and other acts enforce principles of public and community participation as well as aiming to strengthen accountability in the public sector.

3.3.1 The Constitution of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996

The Constitution of SA speaks to several concepts based on the definition of social audits such as human rights and access to government information which enable communities to monitor government service delivery and expenditure. Chapter 2, the Bill of Rights outlines the following rights for all, right to equality, human dignity, social security, and access to information. Section 195 of the Constitution requires that every sphere of government, organs of state and public enterprise ensure the following principles: people's needs must be responded to, the public must be encouraged to participate in a policymaking, the government must be transparent and provide the public with timely, accessible and accurate information. The local sphere of government consists of municipalities, which must be established for the whole of the territory of the Republic of South Africa (The Constitution; 1996). In particular, the Constitution (1996; 74) outlines that the objectives of local government are to:

- provide a 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.
- encourage the involvement of communities and community organisations in the matters of local government.

Furthermore, municipalities must strive, within its financial and administrative capacity, to achieve the objects set out as above. In fulfilling its developmental duties, municipalities must structure and manage its administration, budgeting, and planning processes to give priority to the basic needs of the

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community; promote the social and economic development of the community; and participate in national and provincial development programs (The Constitution; 1996; 74).

3.3.2 The White Paper on Local Government 1998

The White Paper on local government (1998) provides for a developmental local government who engages with communities to bring about positive change in the lives of people. A developmental local government is a local government committed to working 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. The Constitution gives effect to the White Paper on Local government and commits the government to take reasonable measures, within its available resources, to ensure that all South Africans have access to adequate housing, health care, education, food, water, and social security.

A developmental local government must play a central role in representing communities, protecting our human rights, and meeting their basic needs. It must focus its efforts and resources on improving the quality of life of communities, those that are marginalised and excluded, such as women, disabled people, and poor people. Developmental local government has four interrelated characteristics (The White Paper on Local Government; 1998; 23):

- Maximising social development and economic growth: The powers and functions of local government should be exercised where it has a maximum impact on the social development of communities - in particular, meeting the basic needs of the poor - and on the growth of the local economy.
- Integrating and coordinating: Working collaboratively with other spheres of government communities and other stakeholders to contribute to development. One of the methods for achieving greater coordination and integration is integrated development planning. Integrated development plans (IDP's) in local government provide powerful tools for municipalities to facilitate integrated and coordinated service delivery.
- Democratising development: To promote democracy and promoting the involvement of communities in the design and delivery of municipal programs. The participatory processes must not become an obstacle to development and municipalities must find ways of structuring participation which enhance, rather than impede, the delivery process.
- Leading and learning: Developmental local government requires that municipalities become more strategic, visionary and ultimately influential in the way they operate. This includes building the kind of political leadership that is able to bring together coalitions and networks of local interests that cooperate to realise a shared vision.

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Furthermore, Section D of the White Paper on Local Government (1998; 53) outlines that the "promotion of local democracy should be seen as a central role for any municipal government where the local sphere is an arena for people to participate in decision-making to shape their own living environments, and exercise and extend their democratic (social, economic and political) rights." It is often seen as critical for enhancing participative democracy because citizens may have greater incentives to participate at the local level and fewer disincentives. An individual is more likely to exercise some influence over a policy decision in a smaller, local institution, close to home". This is much in alignment with the social audit concept, which focuses on providing an inclusive platform for communities to actively engage with the government.

3.3.3 The Local Government Finance Management act 56 of 2003

The Local Government Finance Management Act (2003) aims to secure sound and sustainable management of the financial affairs of municipalities and other institutions in the local sphere of government; to establish treasury norms and standards for the local sphere of government and to provide for matters connected therewith. The Act also makes provision for the local community to participate in the development of the municipal budget.

The Local Government Finance Management act (2003; 20) provides that the mayor of a municipality must:

- co-ordinate the processes for preparing the annual budget and for reviewing the municipality's integrated development plan and budget-related policies to ensure that the tabled budget and any revisions of the integrated development plan and budget-related policies are mutually consistent and credible.
- at least 10 months before the start of the budget year, table in the municipal council a time schedule outlining key deadlines for the preparation, tabling and approval of the annual budget and the annual review of the IDP and budget-related policies.
- table and adopt any amendments to the IDP and the budget-related policies and any consultative processes forming part of the processes.

When the annual budget has been tabled, the municipal council must consider any views of the local community, National Treasury, the relevant provincial treasury, and any provincial or national organs of state or municipalities which made submissions on the budget. After considering all budget submissions, the council allow the mayor an opportunity to respond to the submissions and if necessary, to revise the budget and table amendments for consideration by the council (The Local Government Finance Management Act; 2003; 21).

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3.3.4 The Local Government Municipal Structures Act 117 of 1998

The Municipal Systems Act is applicable to the social audit concept and aims to empower local government to fulfil its Constitutional objects including the setting of structures to encourage community participation. With that said the Structures Act provides that municipalities oversee the provision of services to communities in a sustainable manner by working with communities in creating environments and human settlements in which all people can lead uplifted and dignified lives. A municipal council must strive within its capacity to achieve the objectives set out in section 152 of the Constitution and must annually review (The Municipal Structures Act; 1998; 14):

- the needs of the community.
- its priorities, to meet those needs.
- its processes for involving the community.
- its organisational and delivery mechanisms for meeting the needs of the community.
- must develop mechanisms to consult the community and community organisations in performing its functions and exercising its powers.

Furthermore, Chapter 4 of the Municipal Structures Act (1998) requires municipalities to establish ward committees to promote participation. The ward committees may make recommendations on any matter affecting its ward to the ward councillor; or through the ward councillor, to the metro or local council, the executive committee, the executive mayor, or the relevant metropolitan sub council; and has such duties and powers as the metro or local council may delegate to it. Ward committees in local government, however, have been argued to be ineffective. The lack of effective ward committee systems is a challenge that municipalities are faced with. Ward committees play an essential role in municipalities. Ward committees are the link between the communities and the municipality and informs municipalities on community needs which must be incorporated into the IDP.

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According to Sekgala (2016; p.4) ward committees lack skills that prevents them from fulfilling their development obligations. Ward committee systems do not comprehend the technicalities of decisions made within municipalities. This means that if ward committees do not understand the decisions made within municipalities, these committees will not be able to transfer information and inform communities effectively. This often further leads to the lack of participation in the IDP as communities do not understand the IDP and its contents. Furthermore, another challenge that ward committees' face is the lack of impact on the decisions of municipal councils. Ward committees must be actively involved and participate in municipal decisions and issues raised by these committees on the needs of communities must be taken into consideration. Often municipalities are non-responsive to community issues are broad

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forward by these committees (Sekgala, 2016, p.5). This could be because municipalities are not obliged by law to establish ward committees hence, these committees are disregarded by municipalities. Sekgala (2016, p.2) states that municipalities may establish ward committees but are not obliged by the Structures Act to establish ward committees.

3.3.5 The Local Government: Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000

Chapter 4 of the Municipal Systems Act is applicable to the social audit concept and provides that municipalities develop a culture and mechanisms for community participation. The members of the local community have the right to: (The Municipal System Act; 2000;11)

- through mechanisms and in accordance with processes and procedures provided for in terms of this Act or other applicable legislation to contribute to the decision-making processes of the municipality.
- to prompt responses to their written or oral communications, including complaints, to the municipal council or another political structure or a political office bearer or the administration of the municipality.
- to be informed of decisions of the municipal council, or another political structure or any political office bearer of the municipality, affecting their rights, property, and reasonable expectations.
- to regular disclosure on the state of affairs of the municipality, including its finances.

Furthermore, the Municipal Systems Act (2000; 16) requires that municipalities develop a culture of municipal governance that complements formal representative government with a system of participatory governance. Municipalities must encourage and create conditions for the local community to participate in the affairs of the municipality, including in the preparation, implementation and review of its IDP, the establishment, implementation, and review of its performance management system, the monitoring, and review of its performance, including the outcomes and impact of such performance; the preparation of its budget and strategic decisions relating to the provision of municipal services. Also, municipalities must contribute to building the capacity of the local community to enable them to participate in the affairs of the municipality. These participation mechanisms must take place through political structures for participation, the mechanisms, processes, and procedures for participation in municipal governance, and other appropriate mechanisms, processes, and procedures established by the municipality. The participation must include, consider petitions and complaints; public meetings and hearing, consultative sessions, and reporting-back to communities.

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3.3.6 The Promotion of Access to Information Act 2 of 2000

The Promotion of Access to Information Act 2 of 2000 (PAIA) gives effect to section 32 of the Constitution, which provides that everyone has the right to access information held by the State, as well as information held by another person (or private body) when such privately held information is required for the exercise and protection of rights. The PAIA aims to foster a culture of transparency and accountability in public and private bodies by giving effect to the right of access to information; actively promote a society in which the people of SA have effective access to information to enable them to more fully exercise and protect all of their rights. The objectives of the PAIA can be outlined as follows (The Promotion of Access to Information; 2000; 12).

- to give effect to the Constitutional obligations of the State of promoting a human rights culture and social justice.
- to establish voluntary and mandatory mechanisms or procedures to give effect to that right in a manner which enables persons to obtain access to records of public and private bodies as swiftly, inexpensively, and effortlessly as reasonably possible.
- to promote transparency, accountability, and effective governance of all public and private bodies by, including, but not limited to, empowering and educating everyone: to understand their rights in terms of the Act to exercise their rights to public and private bodies; to understand the functions and operation of public bodies; and to effectively scrutinise, and participate in, decision-making by public bodies that affects their rights.

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The PAIA, therefore, links to social audits. For communities and the public to engage with government, they need sufficient information in order to understand a situation and interrogate government. Since social audits is a community-led process whereby communities review government documents and information, the PAIA is essential within the social audit process. Kente (2019) argues that access to information is embedded in the use of the social audit tool and it becomes difficult to conduct a social audit without access to information. Therefore, the social audit tool opens mechanisms for citizens to openly engage with government documents and spending. It provides communities with an opportunity to ask questions about specific service delivery objectives.

3.3.7 Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation's Framework for strengthening citizen- government partnerships for monitoring frontline services.

The South African Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME) are responsible for providing leadership on Government-Wide Monitoring and Evaluation (GWM&E). Recently, DPME became interested in Citizen-Based Monitoring (CBM) to include the public into monitoring the

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government's performance as opposed to mere participation and consultation. The DPME's framework for strengthening citizen-government partnerships for monitoring frontline services of 2013 focuses on CBM which is an approach to monitoring government performance that focuses on the experiences of ordinary citizens and communities to strengthen public accountability and drive service delivery improvements. The framework is applicable to the social audit concept and its principles are as follows: the voice of citizens is integral to building a capable and developmental state in SA; government monitoring systems need to include the views and experiences of citizens and communities; government departments must encourage independent monitoring by civil societies and lastly CBM is not a once-off event but an on-going process of relationship building and performance improvement (DPME; 2013).

3.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter explored the various pieces of local government legislation for participation in SA. The above-mentioned Acts discussed thus far, aims to promote and encourage participation in the affairs of local government. It requires municipalities to develop adequate strategies for participation and the involvement of those affected by an initiative in the planning and decision-making processes. SA's domestic policies are however not in alignment with international laws and require amendments to enable meaningful participation and the realisation of basic human rights.

The Local Government Municipal Systems Act requires municipalities to establish a ward committee to promote participation and actively deal with matters affecting that ward. The Act, however, does not impose an obligation on municipalities to establish ward committees which will enable inclusive engagements and participation by the people. Nor does legislation set clear guidelines on how participation should take place. It is therefore important that in implementing and executing these Acts, it does not become a mere tick-box exercise for local government. Participation in local government affairs should enable communities to participate in planning and decision-making processes to improve their lives. The legislation guiding participation should set clear guidelines and obliges the local government to develop participation structures that are inclusive to have meaningful engagements with the public and communities. Perhaps the time has come for the South African government to rethink its participation approach and amend legislation that guides meaningful participation in SA. The study will now transit to chapter four which focuses on the practice of social audits in selected countries and the presentations of the research findings.

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CHAPTER FOUR: THE PRACTICE OF SOCIAL AUDITS IN SELECTED COUNTRIES AND RESEARCH FINDINGS, INTERPRETATIONS AND PRESENTATION

4. INTRODUCTION

The previous/or preceding chapter examined the theoretical framework and literature review on the best social audit practices in public service delivery from selected countries. This current chapter will therefore provide the practice of social audits in these selected countries and further provide the research findings, interpretations, and presentations.

4.1 THE CRITICAL CONDITIONS FOR SOCIAL AUDITS

This section provides critical conditions for social audits. Ideally, social audits should not only be seen as an inclusive planning and decision-making process but should be seen as a process that enables many opportunities. Besides, the whole social audit process should enable greater community engagement, accountability and transparency. According to Berthin (2011; 39), "there is wide consensus that social audit initiatives are not only a matter of a planning process, but also of windows of opportunity and capacity that are directly related to the political, policy, institutional, and organizational settings in a given country". Although there is no standard design to conduct social audits, many governments and donors share a basic understanding of key conditions that are necessary for social audits to be effective. These conditions are outlined as follows (Berthin; 2011; 29).

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4.1.1 Political Will

Social audits become successful if governments enable and allow civil societies to react, assess and comment on the government's activities. This allows for constructive feedback, paints a picture on how stakeholders perceive governments, and enables a cooperative relationship between government and the stakeholders involved. According to Berthin (2011; 39) "governments are not always willing to cooperate, nor allow citizens to monitor their activities and/or respond to citizens' evaluations of government actions. In that case, social audit requires developing creative and effective ways to communicate their findings and grasping the attention of public officials."

4.1.2 Enabling legislation

A legal framework must exist to ensure that an effective audit takes place. By having a legal framework in place for social audits, this enables and provides the right to demand, the right to participate in the affairs of government, and the right to access information. According to Berthin (2011; 40), "evidence shows that the legal framework for a social audit can be international, regional, national and/or even sub-national (municipal). Since many countries are signatories of international and regional anti-

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corruption conventions, such as the United Nations Convention against Corruption or regional Conventions against Corruption, recognise the importance of external oversight, offer one legal basis for social audit activities". Furthermore, in most countries, its Constitution refers to issues of accountability and transparency and provides a possibility of external oversight, which is another legal basis for social auditing. If no legal framework exists for participation in social audits, a biding mechanism can be developed to enable social audits to have a legal basis (Berthin; 2011).

4.1.3 Skills and resources

In providing an enabling environment for social audits to operate within, skills and capacity are necessary and needed by communities for the social audit process to be effective. Berthin (2011) refer to the capacity of Civil Society Organisations (CSO) and argues that "the central elements enabling Civil Society Organizations (CSO), to conduct social audits, entails their capacity to organize, as well as their available technical and advocacy skills. The skills required probably encompass legal, operational and communication skills, and are important not only in terms of technical skills but also to use them to mobilize support and resources". Similarly, this can be argued for communities and the public, to possess knowledge and skills to interrogate and assess government's performance. Therefore, communities must be trained and have the necessary skills and knowledge to monitor and evaluate the performance of government for the social audit process to be effective.

4.1.4 Objectivity and independence

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Within the social audit process, it is important to remain objective and independent from yhe government. Therefore, those involved in the social audits process and involved in monitoring government's activities must always remain objective for the social audit process to be effective. According to Berthin (2011; 42) "objective and impartial collection of data and/or information is vital for the ability of social audits to inform both government and society about government activities and their consequences. Politically motivated social auditing exercises lose credibility and impact. Similarly, programs and policies audited by third parties should not have a vested interest in the public entity being monitored".

4.1.5 Broad civil society participation

When communities are involved in the entire social audit process, it yields better results and creates a sense of ownership. Berthin (2011; 42) states that CSO's must establish links with communities that they represent to be credible and argues that "citizen initiatives which originated in organizations without community support lose credibility and effectiveness. Syndicates and unions, and sometimes even

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private enterprises can also play an important role in enhancing accountability. More importantly, broader social coalitions increase the power and effectiveness of advocacy initiatives in support of government reforms".

In essence, for the entire social audit process to effective, it requires the establishment of political will, legislation, skills and resources, objectivity and independence and broad participation. Without these conditions giving effect to the social audit process, the process becomes unreliable and loses its ability to ensure accountability and transparency. Therefore, it is important for countries when embarking on the social audit process, to consider these conditions into consideration to enable the social audit process to be carried out effectively.

4.2 SOCIAL AUDIT INITIATIVES

This section addresses the various social audit initiatives or tools that are available. Many initiatives or tools such as score cards and surveys have been used in the delivery of various public services, projects and programs. Many of these initiatives are applicable and used in the local government sector as it is the sphere of government closest to the people and enable communities to influence and be involved in the government's planning and decision-making processes.

4.2.1 Community score cards

A community score card is a tool that is used within the social audit process to enable the users of public services or beneficiaries of a project or program, to assess the performance of that service or project, using a grading system in the form of scores. This tool enables the service user and service provider to collaboratively identify issues of service delivery problems and collaboratively to find solutions to those problems. The scorecard aims to seek the perception of users on the quality of service, satisfaction levels, transparency, and the general performance of the service provider. It is further aimed at improving service delivery include quality, efficiency, accessibility, relevance and accountability (Oduor & Tabuche; 2017).

According to Oduor and Tabuche (2017; 12) "the community score card is conducted at the local level with community members. Information is gathered through focus group discussions and enables maximum participation of the local community. The score card provides immediate feedback and response to service providers, and joint decision making."

4.2.2 Citizen Report Card

The Citizen Report Card (CRC) enables public agencies to identify the strengths and weaknesses of their work through systematic feedback of the service users on the quality and adequacy of a particular public

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service. It should be noted that the CRC is not an opinion poll as opinion polls measure the opinion of citizens with regards to a specific issue and do not require participation by beneficiaries or stakeholders. The CRC provides the information needed for service improvement (Nitschke; 2015).

Moreover, the issue of using concepts interchangeably such as community, citizen, and public participation as discussed in Chapter 2 of this research, comes through in the discussion of the social audit tools. A distinction can be drawn between the community score card and the citizen report card (International Budget Partnership; nd) as per Table 4.

Table 4: Citizen Report Card vs. Community Score Card

Citizen Report Card vs. Community Score card	
Citizen Report Card	**Community Score Card**
Survey instrument – data collected through questionnaires	Participatory process – data collected through focus group discussions
Unit – household/individual	Unit – community
Macro level (e.g., city)	Local level (e.g., village
Emphasis on monitoring demand side data on performance and actual scores	Emphasis is on immediate feedback and accountability, less on actual data
Feedback later, through media	Immediate feedback through Interface Meeting (between community & local government)
Scientific survey approach ensures unbiased information	Facilitates active and direct participation from communities
Survey costs can limit the number of times it can be implemented	Integrates available government budget information with demand-side feedback (from community

Source: (The International Budget Partnership, nd; 2)

Nevertheless, the tools mentioned above are used in social audit processes to promote accountability, transparency and improve public service delivery and the delivery of public programs and projects.

4.2.3 Public expenditure tracking surveys

The Public Expenditure Tracking Surveys (PETS) assists governments, communities, and CSOs to ensure that allocated public resources reach the intended beneficiaries. It aims to address and identify problems and weaknesses in systems of public expenditure, transfer, and service delivery. Furthermore,

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PETS is also effective in revealing corruption and detecting the location of leakages (Malena;n.d). “A Public Expenditure Tracking Survey (PETS) is a social accountability tool that can be used to follow the money and determine how much of the originally-allocated resources reach the intended beneficiaries at the local level. Expenditure tracking can be used to check whether public money is spent as planned. The tool is also useful to generate pieces of evidence on the public spending pattern needed for fact-based advocacy for change or reform” (MOALMC; 2018; 11). Furthermore, the key objective of the PETS is to provide evidence on the flow of funds through financial and administrative systems, identifying how much of the funding reached the end beneficiaries and identifies political and institutional problems (MOALMC; 2018).

4.2.4 Citizen charters

A Citizen Charter (CC) is a document that informs citizens about the service entitlements they have as users of public service, the standards they can expect for a service (time frame and quality), remedies available for non-adherence to standards, and the procedures, costs and charges of service. A CC is an expression of an understanding between the citizen and the service provider about the quantity and the quality of services received. The CC is a document that lists the rights of the public and the obligations of the public servants along with the information necessary to redress grievances or submitting complaints. The CC aims to improve the quality of services by publishing standards users can expect for each service they receive and provide users with a base for requesting an explanation if the standards are not met. The CCs are mainly implemented at a National and Local Level (Nitschke; 2015; 13). The CC, therefore, enables communities and the people to become aware of their rights and the standards for public services and the ability to raise grievances.

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4.2.5 Public Hearings

Public Hearings are formal community meetings that occur at a local level. According to Nitschke (2015; 16) Public Hearings (PHs) are formal public meetings at the community level where local officials and citizens could exchange information and opinions on community affairs. A PH is seen as a forum where individual citizens, citizens groups, communities and local officials come together to exchange information and opinions about civic issues before action is taken. A PH aims to inform citizens or to solicit their opinion regarding an issue, decision, or a course of action intended to be taken by the municipality.

4.2.6 Community-based monitoring

Community-based monitoring (CBM) refers to service users assessing the effectiveness, quality, accessibility, and impact of programs and services which they receive. CBM includes monitoring led by communities, where the key principle of CBM is that communities decide what to monitor and act upon

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the data that is collected. CBM is undertaken through mechanisms that, depending on the specific objectives of the monitoring, service users and communities gather quantitative and qualitative data and observations to assess the availability, accessibility, acceptability, equity, and quality of services they receive and uses that information to hold service providers and decision-makers accountable (The Global Fund; 2020)

4.3 EMERGING CHALLENGES OF SOCIAL AUDITS

The social audit tool has many benefits as outlined in the previous sections. However, social audits have several challenges. These challenges will be discussed in general.

Dwivedi & Singh (2010) attribute social audit challenges to social auditors and argues that social auditors face challenges due to their own making and due to factors beyond their control in the social audit process. In examining the factors due to their own making, social auditors, may be unable to justify criticism of non-achievement of targets laid down in a program. The social auditor has to "look at the positive social changes brought about and in some cases their costs. When scrutinizing short-falls and non-achievements, he has to take into account the efforts of events beyond the boundary of the program all of which the designers of the program may not have been in a position to envisage and allow for the implementers to deal with" (Dwivedi & Singh; 2010; 8). In examining the factors beyond the social auditor's control, "not all social welfare programs are well designed or based on valid assumptions. Some programs do not attack the problems at the first level of symptom cause relationship, but at remoter levels and so are destined to achieve only moderate success. Others ignore the need for a package of programs to simultaneously attack a variety of related unsatisfactory social situations" (Dwivedi & Singh; 2010;8). Furthermore, ineffective and inadequate government systems contribute to challenges faced during the social auditing process where there is an inability to measure social changes and the impact a program had on communities (Dwivedi & Singh; 2010)

Moreover, in many instances the social audit process is driven by NGO's who acts on behalf of a broader community network. Those leading the social audit process create further challenges to the social audit process, making it ineffective. The challenges thus relate to forces manipulating the social audit process. According to Adhikari (2016) some NGO's silence participants and stakeholders during social audit processes where commenting by participants is not allowed. Further challenges of social audits within the context of the NGO's includes the control of information where NGO's decide which information are to be shared with participants with the exclusion of negative information.

Pekkonen & Sadashiva (nd; 4-5), attributes social audit challenges relating to the implementation of social audits led by communities which may require technical support in obtaining and analysing data.

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Furthermore, having access to public records is important in the social audit process and obtaining government records may depend on the intervention of sympathetic officials. To overcome this challenge may involve petitioning government to introduce legislation that grants the public access to public records. Another challenge relates to service providers and policy makers who may feel threatened by the social audit process. It is therefore useful to interact with them in a positive manner from the start and steer criticism towards institutions instead of individuals. Moreover, if social audits are not handled thoughtfully and with care, it can provoke emotions and can lead to conflict from those who are exposed. It is therefore advisable to anticipate the need for conflict management and to remind participants that the primary goal is not to assign blame to anyone but to bring about the necessary improvements.

4.4 THE PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF SOCIAL AUDITS IN SELECTED COUNTRIES

This section discusses the practical application of social audits in selected countries namely, India, Kenya and Canada. The discussion of the practical application of social audit, takes place in no order and seeks to inform the reader, how social audits are applied in the selected countries. This section also provides practical examples of the use of social audits within projects in these countries.

4.4.1 THE PRACTICE OF SOCIAL AUDITS IN KENYA

The use of social audits is best carried out by community members. Often social audits are carried out by CSO's, NGO's and Community Based Organisations (CBO's) in collaboration with project beneficiaries, communities, and government. This is because these organisations possess the necessary skills, resources, and knowledge of the social audit process and represent communities in this regard. Ultimately the social audit process is best done by project beneficiaries. In the case of Kenya, it appears that the social audit process is carried out by CSO's, NGO's or CBOs in collaboration with the government and affected communities and project beneficiaries. In Kenya, the Social Accountability Learning Group (SALG) is a network of CSO's promoting social accountability by entrenching a culture of citizen vigilance in local development in Kenya. SALG provides a platform for member CSOs to regularly evaluate the progress of their social audit projects through a peer review process as well as facilitate practice learning through the sharing of best practices (SALG; 2016).

According to Wakoko (2016;7), "there is no legislation that expressly allows for or banishes social auditing in Kenya. The best index that shows social auditing is allowed is the support given to the various organizations which have conducted social audits". As previously outlined, enabling legislation must exist for social audits to take place. Although there is no explicit legislation on social auditing in Kenya, the legal and institutional frameworks in Kenya provide an enabling environment for social audits to be conducted. The Constitution of Kenya, 2010, and other acts such as the Public Finance Management Act

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of 2012 makes provision for social audit activities and anchors social accountability. The practice of social audits in Kenya therefore finds support in the Constitution and other Acts. It is stated in the Constitution of Kenya, the SALG (2016; 20) outlines that "sovereignty of the people under Article 1 and 2 puts people at the center of governance. Public Participation in governance is no longer a privilege but a right because sovereignty belongs to the people. Additionally, article 10 recognizes good governance, integrity, transparency, and accountability, among core national values that are binding for all Kenyans and state officers. Effectively, article 10 makes the demand for social accountability a right and social auditing as a method of public participation in governance legitimate." Furthermore, the Public Finance Management Act, article 201 (a) provides that openness and accountability including public participation in the Kenyan government matters. Where government is not responsive to the public, communities, and citizens, they have the right to seek remedial action through civil disobedience where article 37 provides freedom for people to assembly and demonstration which becomes part of public participation in governance (The Social Accountability Learning Group; 2016)

Public participation and accountability as outlined in the Constitution of Kenya and other Acts provide opportunities for the institutionalization of social auditing. Thus, with the Constitution of Kenya and other Acts, one derives that Kenya has a vigorous legal framework that supports social auditing as a practice.

4.4.1.1 Kenya's Constituency Development Fund

The Muslims for Human Rights (MUHURI), a CSO based in Kenya and established in 1997, is concerned with promoting good governance and respect for human rights. The "MUHURI seeks to enhance the capacity of communities to hold state and non-state actors accountable for human rights violations; increase public participation in the political, social, and economic development of coastal communities; and progressively mainstream a gender perspective into the policies, institutions, and practices of these communities" (International Budget Partnership;2011;1).

The MUHURI aims to empower communities to monitor public funds for communities to participate in the administration and implementation of development projects and demand accountability of public officials. The MUHURI has embarked on a social accountability program to monitor expenditures made under Kenya's Constituency Development Fund (CDF) which provides each member of Parliament a budget to support development projects in their area. The purpose of the CDF is to address socio-economic development to reduce poverty and promote equity and supports grass-roots development projects. Therefore, most projects at a local level are carried out under the CDF. Since its inception in 2003, the CDF has been plagued by allegations of corruption, nepotism, poor planning, and a lack of

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oversight. This is to bridge the CDF's accountability gap, MUHURI has been conducting social audits in which communities monitor publicly financed projects and identify how best to improve project outcomes (International Budget Partnership; 2011; 1). This is also much in alignment with the PETS social audit initiative.

(a) The Social audit model of the Constituency Development Fund

The social audit process in the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) projects starts with six steps as outlined below in Table 5.

Table 5: The Social audit Model for the Constituency Development Fund

The Social Audit Model for the Constituency Development Fund	
Activity	**Description**
Organising the social audit and Gathering Information	Establishment of the social duty scope, selection of social audit teams, building community involvement and support from all stakeholders. Obtaining public records from local Constituency Development Fund offices for the project to be studied in the social audit
Training local people	Deciphering documents and budgets, monitoring expenditures, and physically inspecting public works
Educating and mobilizing communities and citizens	Making people aware of their right to information and accountability and encouraging them to attend a public hearing, where information about CDF misuse and graft is shared and people's reactions and input are gathered
Inspecting the CDF project site	Conducting systematic, meticulous documentation, comparing records to the reality on the ground
Holding public hearing	Sharing the results of the social audit done by residents with the community, local CDF officials, CDF committee members, the MP, district administrators, and the media; questioning of CDF officials by both activists and attendees, and

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	demanding accountability through an accountability charter
Follow up with officials	Documenting the community's findings and recommendations to members of the local CDF committee and checking on implementation

Source: (Researcher's compilation based on Khalid & Thompson; 2019; Centre for Enhancing Democracy & Good Governance; 2011; 6).

In providing a detailed description of the six steps present within the social audit process of the CDF, the CSO, MUHURI first identifies the audit scope and the stakeholders involved followed by gathering records from the office of the local Constituency Development Fund Committee (CDFC) who is responsible for managing CDF funds in the Constituency. The information that is collected includes contractor bid documents, bills of quantities, tender awards amongst other documents. In the training phase, community activists are divided into teams and provided with copies of the CDF project records. The community activists collate the information contained in the project files into simplified formats that enable them to identify problems in the management and execution of the project such as over–inflated costs, irregularities in billed costs, or the preferential selection of contractors. This process also allows the participants to identify incomplete project records. The participants are also encouraged to identify positive practices that other constituencies can follow. While the community activists are being trained, MUHURI communicates and generates interest in the social audit among local communities in the constituency by informing communities on the upcoming public hearing. Within the inspection of project sites and using project analysis forms and questionnaires, the community activists visit the project sites to assess whether each project was completed according to the specifications in the project documents. The residents living near CDF projects are also invited to review project records and provide residents with comments on project records and the quality of CDF-funded projects. When this is done, the activists prepare a summary of findings which becomes part of the report that MUHURI submits to CDF officials which is Kenyan government officials (International Budget Partnership; 2011)

The most important part of the social audit process is the public hearing which involves all communities, stakeholders and the government. The public hearing for the social audit process in the CDF involves a panel of moderators, CDF officials, Members of Parliament (MP's), members of the CDFC, district officials, trained activists who conducted the project monitoring, communities and residents. The community activists present their findings which was recorded during the inspection phase of CDF-funded projects and provides that communities ask questions to CDF officials. Thereafter, government officials must commit to addressing the issues identified and improve the operations of the CDF. The

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government officials are tasked to sign an accountability charter based on the commitments that were made. The process then follows a final report on the findings and recommendations to members of the local CDFC (International Budget Partnership; 2011).

(b) The social audit Constituency Development Fund project process in Nakuru Town and Rongai Constituency

The CDF social audit project was undertaken by the Centre for Enhancing Democracy and Good Governance (CEDGG), a CSO in Rongai and Nakuru Town, and provided platforms for local communities to engage with government and stakeholders. Through the social audit process, communities were provided with opportunities to assess the project performance and make recommendations in collaboration with various role-players. Some of the projects implemented in both towns included the construction of a classroom; construction of public toilets; drainage and storm water, and water projects. A total of fifty-six projects were audited, thirty-one (31) in Nakuru and twenty-five (25) in Rongai which covered a ranging period from 2003- 2010.

The social audit process in Rongai and Nakuru occurred from November 2009 – November 2010 and was a continuation of the social audit undertaken in 2008 in which most of the major social audit steps took place. The process commenced with a community mobilisations forum in which the previous results, weaknesses, and results were discussed. The process of social auditing within the above-mentioned period proceeded with the selection of projects identified by community members to be audited and proceeded with the data collection process conducted by social auditors who had used social audit questionnaires. The information on projects was collected from Project Management Committees (PMCs), project beneficiaries, and CDFC members. Once the information was collected, it was consolidated into a draft report and analysed by social auditors with assistance by CEDGG project staff. Thereafter communities validate the report during public meetings and comments obtained from communities during the public hearings are built into the draft reports. The report was further validated by the communities, government officials, stakeholders and CDFC officials. The further inputs received are included in the final and improved report. (Centre for Enhancing Democracy & Good Governance; 2011)

The achievements and challenges during the social audit process in Rongai and Nakuru can be outlined as follows in Table 6.

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Table 6: Achievements and Challenges of the Social audit process in CDF projects

Achievements and Challenges of the Social audit process in CDF projects	
Achievements	**Challenges**
Adoption of social audits: The local communities and government officials developed a strong interest in social auditing and the process to promote accountability. The social audit process has been undertaken by the local communities with minimal facilitation from CEDGG.	Difficulty in access to information: One of the challenges within the social audit process related to PMCs and CDFs who were reluctant to provide important information to social auditors as they believed the social auditors were interested in finding faults. At times, PMCs did not have records, or these were managed poorly
Demand for accountability: Local communities are confident with the social audit process, leading to the increasing demand for accountability. This was evident in the public meetings that were held	Lack of cooperation from PMCS: Some PMCs were hostile to the social audit process and misinterpreted the concept of social audits and at times refused to cooperate with social auditors
Increase in project completion: The CDFCs in Rongai and Nakuru, increase allocations and disbursements due to the advocacy process, hence the project completion was done quicker	Political interference: Some of the CDFC's opposed the social audit process and social auditors were involved in the social audit process was threatened
Replacement of non-performing PMC's: Nonperforming PMCs were replaced as a result of complaints and demands of the community and education through the social audit process enhanced the capacity for some PMCs which led to an improvement in their performances.	The intensive nature of the social audit process: The whole social audit process in dynamic requires commitment and expertise from social auditors. Because there is often no compensation involved, this impacts negatively on their commitment to the social audit process and makes sustainability difficult.

Source: (Researcher's compilation based at the Centre for Enhancing Democracy & Good Governance; 2011; 15-16)

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(c)The results of social auditing for projects under the Constituency Development Fund

The social audit process has many benefits as outlined in Chapter 2 of this study such as promoting accountability, transparency, and enables communities to be involved in planning and decision-making processes, among others. The social audit process in the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) in Kenya, revealed several irregularities. According to Khalid & Thompson (2019; 6) concerning the CDF's, "shortly after the program was rolled out, reports of corruption emerged including some MPs appointing relatives and friends to management positions on CDF committees. In other instances, MPs funded ghost projects, such as 2.9 million shillings slated for a market dispensary in Kisumu West and 1.8 million to renovate a nursery school in Westland, neither of which ever materialized. Experts and media outlets reported that billions of taxpayer shillings were lost each year to these CDF-funded ghost projects". In other examples, where the social audit process took place on a construction project in Changamwe constituency, community monitors identified that materials from an old market had been used in the construction of the new market, yet the records showed that all new materials were to be purchased. In Bahari constituency in 2008, physical verification of a road project revealed that there was no gravel on the road and the audit team learned that labourers who worked on the road had not been paid but had been given food instead (International Budget Partnership; 2011).

4.4.2. THE PRACTICE OF SOCIAL AUDITS IN INDIA

According to Aiyar (2012) social audits were introduced in the mid-1990s by the Mazdoor Kisan Sakti Sangathan (MKSS), an organisation for the Power of Labourers and Farmers who focused on issues of land distribution and minimum wage regulations in government-sponsored drought relief works in the state. The MKSS identified corruption in these programs where there were no rights to access government records and information. This led to MKSS demanding to have access to government records. With pressure on the government, the MKSS was successful in accessing copies of official government records. These records were analysed and verified with residents of relevant villages and shared with the general public. "In this regard, the MKSS experimented with the idea of a public hearing, at which the details of official records were read out loud to the assembled villagers. The residents at the receiving end of fraudulent practices were invited to give testimony, as were government officials and local politicians who were allowed to publicly defend their actions. The MKSS's vision of the social audit is framed in a larger discourse of participative, rights-based democratic action that governs its activism. For the MKSS, the social audit is not just an anticorruption tool; it is a platform on which citizens can be empowered to directly exercise their democratic rights". (Aiyar, 2012; 251)

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In the following years, motivated by a national-level coalition of activists, journalists, and other prominent citizens, the Indian Parliament passed the national Right to Information Act which enabled the social audit process to take place in India. Thereafter was the development of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA). "This act is a watershed in the evolution of the social audit process, as it gave social audits a legal sanction at the national level. Together, the two acts enabled access to government records, giving impetus to the conduct of social audits in MGNREGA Since the launch of MGNREGS in February 2006, social audits have been conducted in many parts of the country. In states including Rajasthan, audits have been conducted by civil society organizations independent of government. The Andhra Pradesh is the only state that has taken steps to institutionalize the process and to undertake regular social audits through the government machinery" (Aiyar; 2012; 252).

4.4.2.1 The case study of social audits in the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act

The social audit process was used in the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (hereafter referred to as NREGA). In April 2006, MKSS joined with other Indian non-governmental organizations to organize a social audit in the Dungarpur district of Rajasthan. The program to be audited focused on the funds spent on NREGA which provided that each rural household are entitled to 100 days of government employment at a minimum wage, with approximately 800 people that participated in the social audit process (Vivek; 2008)

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(a) The social audit model for the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act

Table 7 outlines the social audit model that MKSS follows in general which was also used in the NGREGA.

Table 7: The Social audit model for the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act

The Social Audit Model for the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act by the MKSS	
Activity	Description
Identify the scope of the audit and gathering Information	Identify program to be audited and role-players involved. Citizen auditors gather documents from public agencies about development projects such as cash

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	books, payrolls, and expenditure voucher files with bills that record materials purchased for projects. The MKSS also gathers, records that a layperson seldom encounters such as project engineer measurement books and utilization certificates with complete details of the project's expenditures.
Collating Information	Data is put into matrices that detail the days that each worker received employment at a particular project site, materials used in public works projects, and funds spent on these materials. To make this information understandable to communities, volume measurements presented in 'metric tons' are translated into camel cartloads.
Information Sharing	Teams of volunteers go from house to house distributing copies of this information in the villages where public hearings will be held. Volunteers and members of the community scrutinize public works and compare them to government records. It provides an opportunity for MKSS members to build momentum within communities before the actual public hearing.
The Public Hearing	This is the most important part of a social audit, the public hearing; a forum to which people are invited to review government records and evaluate the implementation of programs under audit. This forum encourages public participation. Public hearings organized by the MKSS have a festive atmosphere and are held in an open field. The hearings are attended by public officials, local representatives, the media, and residents of the area. A panel of eminent area citizens is set up to the proceedings.
Follow-up to the Public Hearing	A formal report is prepared following each public hearing. Participants send copies of this report to senior state government officials, media, and other

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	groups engaged in anti-corruption campaigns. Since local community members are part of the social audit exercise, they also play an active role in follow-up activities and often demand corrective action

Source: (Researcher's compilation based on the International Budget Partnership; 2012; 4; Vivek; 2008; 23-28)

The process started with all participants receiving a two-day orientation, which provided them information on the NREGA's management, the government documents that record payments made under NREGA programs, and techniques of social auditing. The orientation and training were necessary so that participation can develop communication skills that could be used during the social audit process. The participants were then divided into 31 groups of approximately 20-25 people and were provided with a social audit kit. The days proceed with participants visiting villages and work sites where the NREGA programs were implemented, discussed the program and verified whether the program is being executed in line with NREGA standards. The NREGA also requires regular payment of minimum wages, provision of first aid kits and drinking water at the work site and the organization of day care services for working mothers. By law, the program records must be available at the work site to enable communities to conduct spot checks of a program while it is being implemented (Vivek; 2008)

While collating information the MKSS collated project information into matrices that summarized the different kinds of information obtained from project records. One matrix was based on information from labor rolls that identified cases of fraud in which workers were recorded as working on two different project sites on the same day. During, the distribution of information, the MKSS audits and copies of labor roll, the residents identified the names of dead or fictitious people. Similarly, bills from local companies for expenses incurred in a project has been identified as false by residents who state that no such firm exists in their community. During the public hearing, speakers described instances of corruption, inefficiency in the use of public funds, and poor planning within public agencies. The "discussions became especially animated when public officials tried to defend their projects and village residents quickly pointed out any inconsistencies in their statements. In some of the audits, public officials even admitted wrongdoing and handed over the funds they had stolen to the panel adjudicating the hearing" (Vivek; 2008; 26).

According to Vivek (2008), the MKSS achieved the following success and experienced the following challenges within NREGA as outlined in Table 8.

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Table 8: The Achievements and Challenges of the NREGA Program

The Achievements andChallenges of the NREGA Program	
Achievements	Challenges
MKSS organized numerous hearings to build momentum around a right to an information campaign in India. These hearings received a tremendous response, as thousands of demonstrators joined MKSS in demanding that Rajasthan enact a law giving citizens the right to information. The legislature passed such a law in 2000.	MKSS faces several challenges in implementing social audits. Despite the right to information law, access to information remains a challenge in India. Government officials who are guilty of financial mismanagement are reluctant to give information that may incriminate them and may refuse to respond to requests made under the right to information law.
MKSS and other civil society groups used the right to an information campaign to demand an employment entitlement program for the rural poor. The campaign succeeded when the government enacted the NREGA. A key feature of the NREGA is that state governments are encouraged to organize social audits, using the techniques adopted by MKSS.	When MKSS can obtain records, in some cases, they are badly maintained and difficult to decipher. Poor record keeping practices in government offices can delay the audit and reduce its impact.
Civil society organizations are using the right to information law to obtain government documents on NREGA implementation and organize social audits of NREGA-funded activities in their communities. These audits have been successful in uncovering the results as outlined in Dungarpur	Government officials often intimidate and threaten villagers to prevent them from testifying in public forums. Therefore, residents may hesitate to air their grievances about government programs.
The government of the state of Andhra Pradesh has recognized the importance of social audits in curbing corruption in the implementation of NREGA programs. It is therefore collaborating	The social audit process must be incorporated within the government budget process. To realise its full potential. This will enable residents and communities to have opportunities

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with several civil society groups to expand the use of the social audit methodology.	to hold the government accountable for its implementation of public programs.

Source: (Researcher's compilation based on Vivek; 2008; 30)

(b) The results of social auditing for the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act

The social audit in Dungarpur identified many transgressions, such as non-payment of minimum wages, late wage payments, and poor work-site facilities. The wage payments were of concern as laborers were paid below the statutory wage minimum. This practice violated the NREGA guidelines issued which state that laborers may not be paid less than the minimum wage rate fixed by the state government for agricultural labourers. All these issues were raised in a public forum with the district administration, which promised corrective action. "(Vivek; 2008; 23).

(c) The use of the Citizen Report Card in India

In another example, in India, the City of Bangalore who suffers from poor public services, the social audit tool, Citizen Report Card (CRC) was used. The agencies in charge of municipal services such as water, garbage collection, and road maintenance are plagued with corruption and unreliable services provided by service providers. A group of citizens from Bangalore formed Public Affairs Centre (PAC), a non-profit organisation and undertook a (CRC) exercise. The report card exercise raises awareness of service providers' poor performance and compels them to take corrective action. The CRC asked users questions such as: How satisfactory are the public services you receive? Which aspects of the services are satisfactory, and which are not? What are the direct and indirect costs (including bribes) of acquiring these services? (Vivek; 2008)

In 1993 the CRC exercise revealed low levels of public satisfaction with all service providers. One percent of the people surveyed expressed satisfaction with the Bangalore Development Authority. Corruption was widespread in almost all agencies responsible for public service delivery; one-third of the poor households surveyed had paid a bribe to public officials in the previous six months. Middle-income customers gave low marks regarding staff behaviour, problem resolution and the number of visits required while many reported ill-treatment by public officials. These results were shared with senior agency officials, were widely publicized and the findings were also disseminated through seminars and meetings across the city. A series of open house meetings brought together citizen groups that had not been involved in the survey. The report card exercise was repeated in 1999 and 2003 and the 1999 report card results showed a partial improvement for two agencies. However, overall citizen satisfaction remained low, and respondents seemed less satisfied with staff in all of the agencies than in

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1993. In contrast, the 2003 report card revealed a significant improvement in almost all agencies and the average user satisfaction increased by more than 40 percent between 1999 and 2003 (Vivek; 2008; 76-77).

4.4.3 THE PRACTICE OF SOCIAL AUDITS IN CANADA

According to Brown (2008), despite the shortage of practicing social auditing and reporting in Canada by social, economic organisations, there are organisations in Canada that supports and promotes social auditing and social goals. Although these organisations do not use the same terminology in terms of social auditing, they promote social bookkeeping and social reporting. "In 2006 and again in 2007 interested representatives of co-operatives and other social economy organizations across the country came together in a corporate social responsibility forum that was supported by key players in the co-operative sector. Since the year 2000, several co-operatives and smaller credit unions have completed social reports in part inspired by these forerunners and in part because of demands from members aware of the forerunners. Some non-profits have been inspired to do so too" (Brown; 2008; 4).

4.4.3.1 The case study of social audits in the Water Efficient Maize for Africa project

According to Ezezika et al (2009) the Sandra Rotman Centre in Canada has been applying the social audit concepts in the Water Efficient Maize for Africa (WEMA) project which is an agro-biotechnology, food security project. The WEMA project was created in 2008, in collaboration with several role-players. The partnership of the WEMA project is between the African Agricultural Technology Foundation (AATF), the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Centre (CIMMYT), Monsanto, and the National Agricultural Research Agencies (NARs). The WEMA project was implemented in South Africa, Kenya, Mozambique, Tanzania, and Uganda (African Centre for Biodiversity; 2017;).

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Although the WEMA project was not implemented in Canada, the Sandra Rotman Centre in Canada explored the social audit concept as applied the social audit concept in the WEMA project. The social audit model in the WEMA project was termed Ethical, Social, Cultural and Commercialization (ESC) auditing, and was developed based on feedback from several stakeholders. The social audit model lays the foundation for agro-biotechnology projects and proves how the model can be applied to such projects. The model also provides evidence on how ESC issues are perceived by various stakeholders, which enables project managers to effectively monitor and improve project performance. The WEMA project aims to ensure that the intended humanitarian outcomes are achieved while at the same time building trust among partners, including small-scale farmers, communities, and public. To realise this goal, a social audit model was developed to increase transparency, enhance project accountability with stakeholders and building trust with the public. The stakeholders include members of the community

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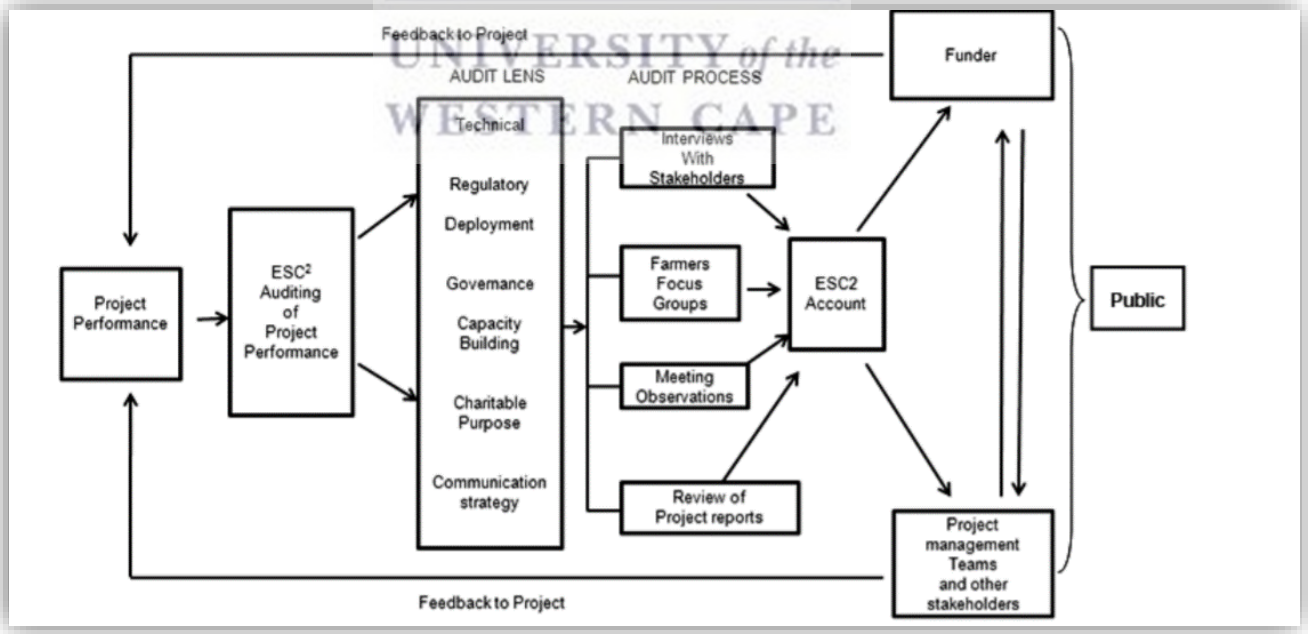
who have a stake or interest in the project and the intended beneficiaries or recipients of the project (Ezezika et al; 2009).

The following principles were important in performing the social audit of the WEMA project namely (1) Creation of a framework based on the intended goals of the project and the stakeholders involved, (2) Identification of stakeholder groups, and the application of the principles of inclusivity and materiality in stakeholder involvement., (3) Engagement of stakeholders in designing the questionnaires and pilot testing of tools that will be used in the social audit. (4) Development of a system to communicate the results to partners, funders and the public to ensure transparency and (5) the use of an accountability system in which management can be held accountable by the funders and governance in addressing the findings of the audit (Ezezika et al; 2009).

(a) The Social Audit model of the Water Efficient Maize for Africa project

Figure 1 outlines the social audit model applied by Canada in the WEMA project. The goals of the WEMA project are divided into seven components, namely: technical, regulatory, deployment, capacity building, charitable purpose, project management, and governance, and communication. These components are known as audits lenses and shape four processes namely, interview with stakeholders; focus groups with farmers, review of project reports and meeting observations (Ezezika et al; 2009).

Figure 1: The Social audit model for the WEMA Project



Source: (Ezezika et al; 2009;31)

The stakeholders involved in the WEMA project include, farmer groups, consumers, national authorities, project personnel, grantors, and the general public amongst others, and those affected by the WEMA

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project. In providing a detailed description of the model and above mentioned four processes, for the stakeholder interviews and focus groups, two questionnaires were developed, one with closed-ended questions and the other with open-ended questions, which reflected the seven audit lenses. These questions were stakeholder specific and were developed to identify ESC issue within the WEMA project. Some of the questions that were asked included the following (Ezezika et al; 2009).

- What is your level of knowledge of the Water Efficient Maize for Africa (WEMA) Project?
- How well have the interests and concerns of the general public have been considered in project planning and implementation?
- How effective is the communication strategy in listening, learning, and making changes based on feedback from the public?
- What ethical, social, and/or cultural issues have been encountered by the public?
- What potential commercialization issues do you foresee in the project and have preparations were made by the WEMA partners to effectively address these issues when they arise?

The questionnaires were first piloted with 17 internal interviewees within the WEMA teams, and the feedback received resulted in revised audit tools which were then piloted with 25 external stakeholders of the WEMA project through face-to-face interviews. Further interviews were conducted and resulted in a total of 101 interviews. Issues related to ESC became clear through the stakeholder views and focus groups, meetings, and project reports became important in the process. The final phase in the social audit model outlined above was the communication of the social audit results to funders, partners and the stakeholders through a report, which included details of how the social audit was conducted and key findings from the interviews. Furthermore, ESC issues that arose from the review of project reports were communicated including observation at meetings and recommendations to the grantors and project managers of WEMA on how the ESC issues raised by stakeholders can be addressed in the following year of the project. Once the social audit model is completed and concerns from stakeholders share with the project team managers, the project managers provide a management response. Both the report and the management response are shared with stakeholders to promote transparency and accountability (Ezezika et al; 2009)

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(b) The results of the social audit process in the Water Efficient Maize for Africa project

According to Ezezika et al (2012:2) the findings of the social audit in the WEMA project revealed that, despite examples of stacked trait crops being commercialized, it is not regularly considered in ag-biotech projects for humanitarian purposes. “The term trait stacking for genetically modified (GM) or biotech crops refers to the incorporation of multiple genetic modifications, or traits, in a single variety of a crop”

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(Ezezika et al; 2009; 1). Based on the findings from the social audit, it was proposed that agricultural development projects must foresee the concerns that could be raised over trait stacking and incorporate it into project plans to build trust with stakeholders.

- **Addressing trait stacking early builds trust:** As previously mentioned the need for a social audit process in the WEMA project was necessary to ensure project outcomes are achieved and to build trust with the public, communities, and those directly affected by the WEMA project. According to Ezezika et al, (2012), the "Public-private partnerships (PPPs) involved in ag-biotech projects face issues of public distrust due to concerns surrounding the use of transgenic technology and the complex nature of these partnerships, which comprise organizations with varied interests and priorities. As such, PPPs engaged in ag-biotech projects may sometimes face public scrutiny or experience a lack of trust due to diverse points of view, such as those contextualized by ethical, social, cultural or commercialization concerns. This lack of trust poses a significant risk to the humanitarian goals of such projects."

The recent results have emerged that indicated secrecy surrounding the WEMA project. According to the African Centre for Biodiversity (2017), the AATF, a NPO that coordinates the WEMA project, maintained control over information related to the WEMA project where stakeholders who were approached for interviews declined the interview request and referred interviewers to the AATF. When the AATF finally agreed to be interviewed, little information on the WEMA project was provided and researchers were referred to project information available online which was limited and out-of- date. Furthermore, it appears that the lack of information relating to the performance and quality control of the WEMA project is not available as pinpointed by the social audit that was conducted in the WEMA project. According to the African Centre for Biodiversity (2017;9), "it seems that the WEMA project has not monitored the social impact of the project since, or, if this information exists, it is not publicly available".

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(c) The use of community-based monitoring in Canada

Canada has also explored with community-based monitoring, a social audit tool, in its water affairs. According to Carlson et al (2017;4) "Community-based monitoring (CBM) is providing invaluable support to the monitoring of Canada's freshwater resources. The diminished capacity of governments to monitor the health of watersheds and the absence of freshwater data in many regions across Canada has prompted communities to take a formative role in the water monitoring of their respective watersheds." Moreover, the reason for the CBM programs in Canada is as a result of communities undertaking water monitoring to promote community engagement, education and to address public health concerns. To further understand this spectrum of CBM motivations, there was a need to identify whether CBM programs were addressing its initial goals by distributing surveys. The results indicated that the majority

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(64%) of the 123 groups, who responded to the survey, believed that the reasons for starting a CBM program were being addressed. Others (28%) stated that their initial concerns were partially addressed which was a result of the groups not having enough information to evaluate the success of the program or that it was too early to know (Carlson et al; 2017; 8).

Carlson et al (2017; 20) outlines that CBM in Canada's water affairs has many benefits such as being cost-effective compared to government programming and its diverse and place-based focus. Furthermore, communities are motivated to undertake CBM for reasons ranging from concerns about eutrophication and flooding and a desire to engage citizens in watershed stewardship and education. While there are benefits and strengths of CBM, it also has challenges which include inadequate or unpredictable funding, inconsistent monitoring protocol, and the difficulty of translating diverse and regionally specific data into actionable knowledge that could inform policy. Finally, the data collected through CBM follow different paths, some of which result in data not being analysed nor communicated, thereby limiting the potential to contribute to the collective knowledge of Canada's freshwater health.

4.5 EMERGING BEST PRACTICES ACROSS SELECTED CASES

The key lessons that can be drawn from the social audit practices in Canada, Kenya, and India, is that social audits are not only a powerful social accountability tool but is also an effective tool that detects corruption, promotes transparency, identifies financial irregularities in the delivery of public services and scrutinises the decisions and actions of public officials. Social audits and its tools also give effect to and enable the right to access information as not having access to public information, will lead to a poor social audit outcome. Furthermore, social audits promote community and public participation in the delivery of public services and provide communities with knowledge and insights on the activities of the public sector which enables communities to hold government accountable. Social auditing and its tools further enable the improvement of public service delivery whereby communities can raise their concerns on poor service delivery issues and demand accountability. Social audits and its tools cannot only identify poor service delivery performances by a public institution but also the poor performances of public officials. Social audits and its tools further build trust between communities and the government.

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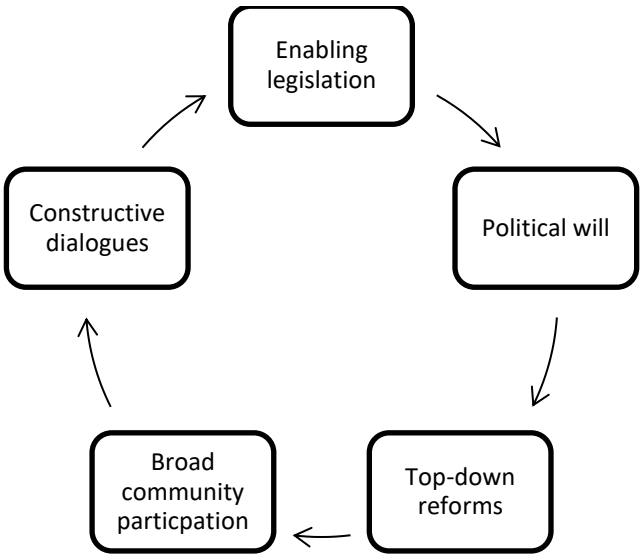
Figure 2: The key principles for social audits



Source: (Researcher's compilation; 2020)

Figure 2 outlines the key principles that the researcher has developed to consider for an effective social audit. Without these principles, the social audit process becomes unreliable and will not achieve its intended outcomes.

From the social audit practices in the selected countries, legislation exists that enables social audits to take place. Therefore, in general, enabling legislation is important as it provides an environment for social audits to operate within. Without legislation such as the right to information act, it becomes difficult to conduct a social audit if there is no access to public records. Furthermore, as mentioned previously in this Chapter, political will is a critical condition for social audits as social audits become successful if the government enables and allows civil societies to react, assess and comment on the government's activities. Moreover, since the social audit process requires access to public records, where there is the absence of access to information legislation, buy-in from local politicians becomes particularly important. A further key principle to consider for an effective social audit is top-down reforms to accommodate bottom-up approaches.

Community and public participation can never be victorious if the community or public's inputs do not take into consideration. With that said, a country's democracy is strengthened when it involves a bottom-up participation approach. The bottom-up participatory approach differs from the top-down participation approach. The top-down or bottom-up approach is either used in public projects and programs or the interaction between government and the public. The different approaches used, will ultimately be determined by the need to maintain dominance over society. This then often results in a clash between

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the government who tries to maintain the dominance and society who is striving to have their voices included in the government's planning and striving for an improvement in their lives.

According to Shah & Baporikar (2012; 113) with the "top-down approach to development, the entire process of formulating and implementing policies and projects are carried out under the direction of government and people were put in a passive position and were rarely consulted in development and usually have no active role in the development activities." With the top-down approach, governments formulate and implements projects and programs with little to no community input. The end-result of such as approach often results in the public having to follow what has been decided by government and an increased socio-economic disparity between social classes which fails to benefit the poor. Shah & Baporikar (2012) further argues that the failure of the top-down and non-participatory approach in many countries led to the development of a more inclusive participation approach namely community participation which has the characteristics of empowerment and equity. The need for a bottom-up approach in participation became essential for many governments. According to Isidiho, (2016), the bottom-up approach involves pressure from the public who is set out to exercise their right to participation; ensure their well-being and ensure their freedom from the ruling class ideology. Isidiho (2016) further argues that the top-down approach is linked to the capitalist and owners of means of production, also known as the bourgeoisie, and the workers, known as the proletariats. With the bottom-up approach, the public is empowered to make decisions regarding a project, formulate and implement the project in collaboration with the government.

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It is therefore not to say that the top-down approach should be abolished entirely, but the shortcomings thereof are addressed by adopting an approach towards a more inclusive participation process where communities and the public share in decision-making. With the bottom-up approach, the government can obtain the input of people at the grassroots level as the public usually has the first-hand experience of service delivery or any other challenges of which government may not be aware of. Furthermore, broad community participation and constructive dialogues with communities and all stakeholders is essential to ensure that social audits are effective. Those communities that are affected by a government initiative must be involved in decision-making and participation by these communities should be encouraged including educating communities to analyse government documents. The social audit process should be seen by communities and stakeholders as a constructive process that is not aimed at pointing fingers, but to improve accountability, transparency and public service delivery.

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4.6 RESEARCH FINDINGS, INTERPRETATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

4.6.1 THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

This section addresses the research findings and outlines the social audit application and process in the selected countries.

4.6.1.1 THE SOCIAL AUDIT APPLICATION IN SELECTED COUNTRIES

4.6.1.1.1 The process of social audits in selected countries

The social audit processes from Kenya, India, and Canada are presented in the table below, which the researcher has summarised and created.

Table 9: The social audit process in selected countries

Social Audit Process	Kenya	India	Canada
Step 1	Organising the social audit and gathering the information.	Identify the scope of the audit and gathering Information	Development of a framework for the project and it's goals
Step 2	Training local people	Collating information and making information understandable to communities	Identification of stakeholders
Step 3	Educating and mobilizing communities	Information sharing and inspection of public works	Engagement of stakeholders in designing questionnaires and testing of social audit tools for the social audit
Step 4	Inspecting project sites	Public hearing	Development of systems to communicate social audit findings to stakeholders
Step 5	Holding public hearing and following up with government officials	Follow up on public hearing	Using an accountability system to hold people accountable based on social audit findings

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Source: (Researcher's compilation based on Khalid & Thompson; 2019; Centre for Enhancing Democracy & Good Governance; 2011; p.6; International Budget Partnership; 2012; 4; Vivek 2008; 23-28; Ezezika et al; 2009;p.31)

Table 9 indicates that the selected countries follow similar processes for social auditing. As previously mentioned in this study, although there is no standard design to conduct social audits, many governments and countries follow a basic process for social audits. The social audit processes have been summarized for the selected countries as per Table 9 and indicate that the first step in conducting social audits, starts with the identification of the social audit scope, which includes the selection of the program or project to be audited, including the identification of its goals and objectives. Step one also includes the collection of data for the projects to be audited and any records about the project such as financial records amongst others. The next step, step two in the social audit processes in selected countries involves, the assembling of the data that was collected in step one to enable communities to understand it including the selection, training and educating of communities. The next step, step three, involves the engagement of communities and all stakeholders affected by the project and the sharing of information.

Within step four, generally, the hearings take place where the social audit results are shared. The selected countries may from time-to-time merge certain steps with other steps, wherein step three for example, India conducts step three as an information sharing and the inspection of public works simultaneously. Nevertheless, as reiterated previously, there are no standard designs and steps for social audits. The social audit processes undertaken by the selected countries may not be similarly in a particular order but in general, these steps are present within the social audit process in the selected countries. Within step five, there is a follow up on the public hearings, to demand corrective actions from government officials and the implementation of such corrective actions to hold government and officials accountable. It therefore appears that the selected countries follow similar social audit processes when conducting social audits. From time to time, certain steps may be carried out simultaneously depending on the context of the social audit. Nevertheless, the general social audit processes have been identified as being present in the execution of social audits in the selected countries.

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4.6.1.1.2 The use of social audit tools

As mentioned in this study, social audit tools or initiatives have also been used in the delivery of public services, project and programs in the selected countries. Based on the data as outlined in this study, Canada and India, two of the selected countries have used social audit initiatives such as Community-based Monitoring (CBM) and Citizen Report Card (CRC) aimed at improving the delivery of public services. What this indicates is that the usage of these tools shows a commitment from the selected

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countries to work towards improving public service delivery. Further, with the use of these tools, communities can provide feedback on the delivery of services and express their concerns which will ultimately be addressed. Moreover, the use of social audits and its tools, not only enables accountability but increases transparency.

4.6.2 THE RESEARCH INTERPRETATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

This section presents and interprets the findings from selected countries. In discussing the research interpretations and presentations, this section deals with themes and summarised social audit benefits and challenges in the selected countries.

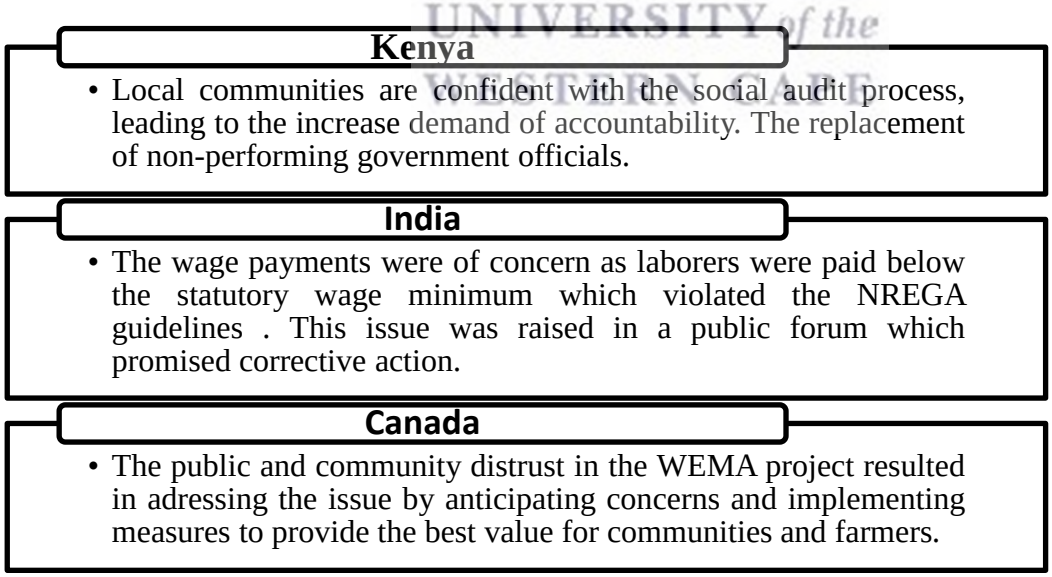
4.6.2.1 THE SOCIAL AUDIT BENEFITS IN SELECTED COUNTRIES

The following themes emerged from the data analyzed: accountability, transparency, improves service delivery, increased participation, and identifying corruption. This section therefore summarizes the benefits of social audits and its tools in selected countries.

4.6.2.1.1 Promote and increase accountability.

From the discussions on social audits of this study, it appears that social audits have promoted and increased accountability in the selected countries.

Figure 3: Promote and Increase Accountability



Source: (Researcher's compilation based on the Centre for Enhancing Democracy & Good Governance; 2011; 15-16; Vivek, 2008; 23; Ezezika et al, 2012;).

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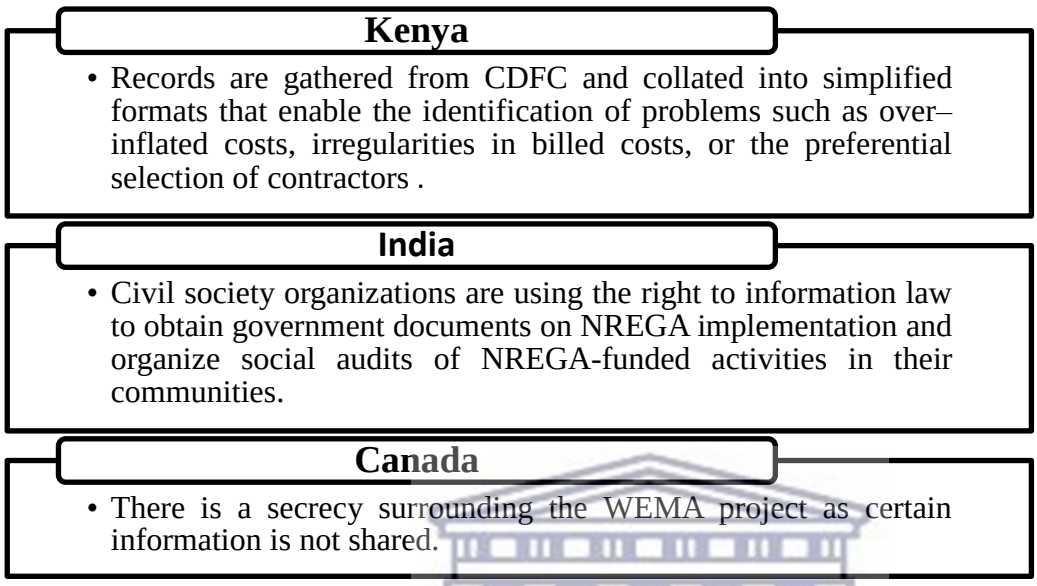
4.6.2.1.1 Increases transparency

From the discussions on social audits of this study, it appears that social audits have increased transparency in the selected countries except for Canada, where the social audit that was conducted in the WEMA project pinpointed the secrecy surrounding the project with information not being shared.

Figure 4: Increases transparency



Source: (Researcher's compilation based on the Centre for Enhancing Democracy & Good Governance; 2011; 15-16; Vivek, 2008; 30; the African Centre for Biodiversity; 2017)

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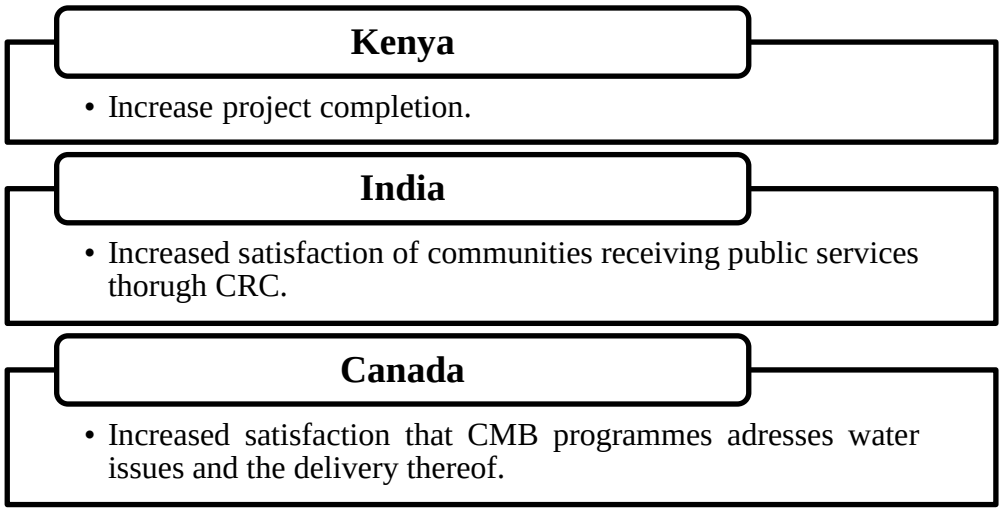
4.6.2.1.3 Improves service delivery.

From the discussions on social audits of this study, it appears that social audits have improved service delivery in the selected countries.

Figure 5: Improves service delivery.



Source: (Researcher's compilation based on the Centre for Enhancing Democracy & Good Governance; 2011; 15-16; Vivek, 2008;76-77; Carlson, 2017:20)

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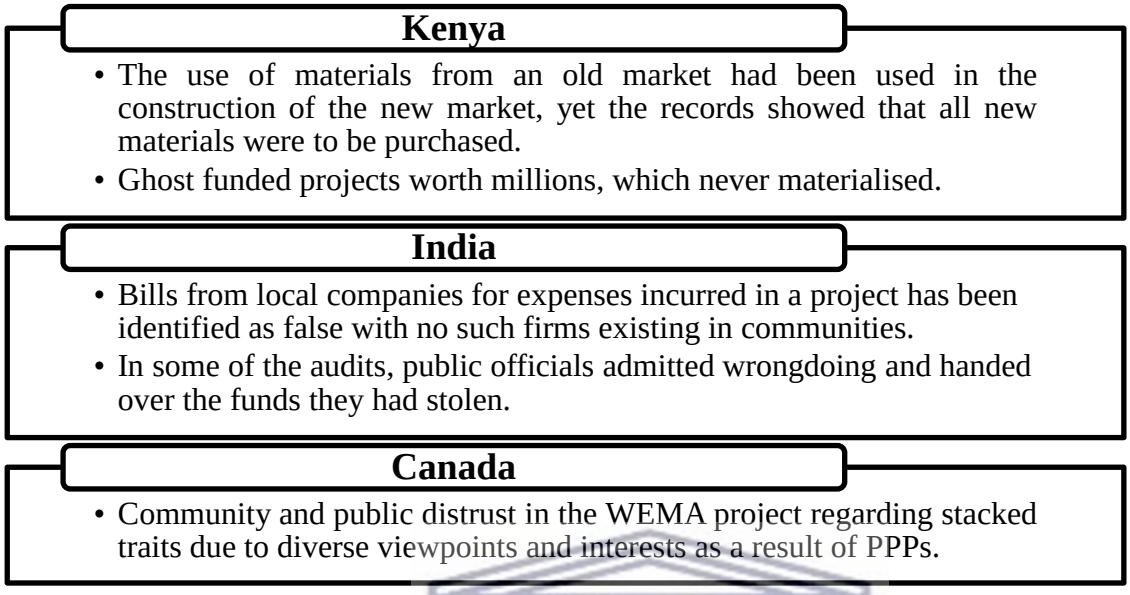
4.6.2.1.4 Identifies corruption and irregularities.

From the discussions on social audits of this study, it appears that social audits have identified corruption and irregularities in the selected countries.

Figure 6: Identifies corruption and irregularities.



Source: (Researcher's own compilation based on Khalid & Thompson; 2019; 6; Vivek, 2008; 26; Ezezika et al, 2012; 2)

4.6.2.1.5 Increased participation

From the discussions on social audits of this study, it appears that social audits have increased participation in the selected countries.

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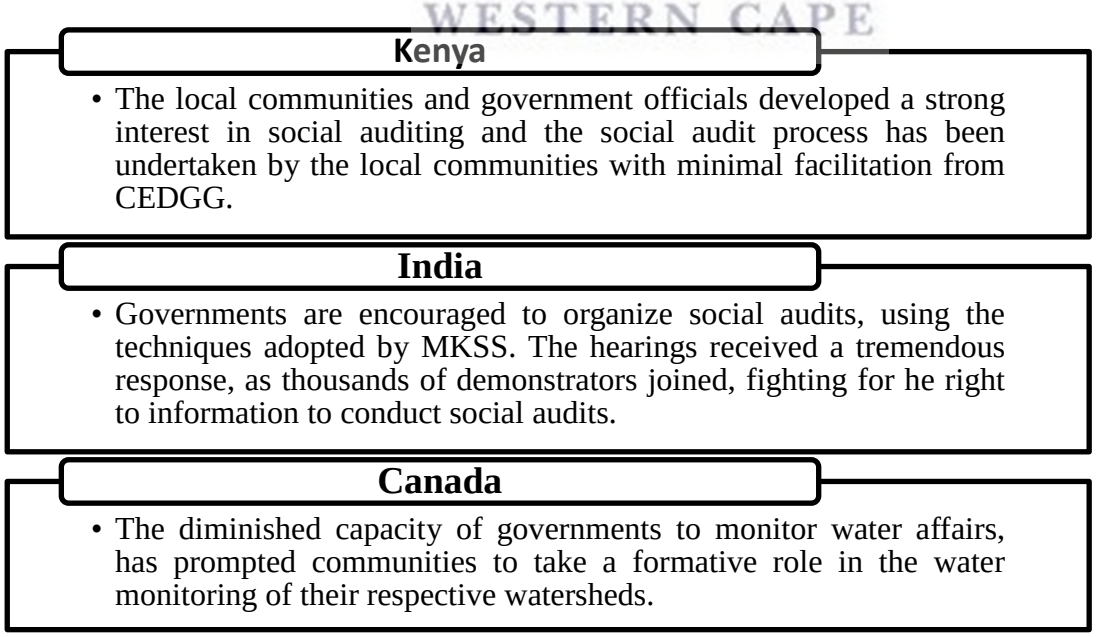
Figure 7: Increased participation



Source: (Researcher's compilation based on the Centre for Enhancing Democracy & Good Governance; 2011; 15-16; Vivek, 2008; 30; Carlson, 2017; 4)

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What the interpretations and presentations, above indicate is that there are many similarities in the benefits that social audits had for the selected countries. The use of social audits in selected countries, have promoted and increased accountability. The findings indicate that there was an increased demand for accountability by communities, the need for corrective actions and the development of mechanisms to ensure public trust and being accountable, across the selected countries. Besides, social audits have led to an increase in transparency in two of the selected countries and enabled the collection of government records across the two selected cases. In Canada, for example, there is much secrecy surrounding the WEMA project, which was revealed by the social audit. These government records and documents which were collected in Kenya and India were scrutinised and irregularities was identified. Moreover, social audits in the selected countries have led to the improvement of public service delivery and project completion across the selected cases. Social audits in the selected countries have led to the identification of corruption and irregularities where public money was stolen, ghost funded projects were identified and public distrust was identified due to the diverse interests of stakeholders as a result of public-private partnerships (PPPs). Lastly, social audits have increased participation of communities and government as there is a strong interest in social audits and its tools across cases.

4.6.2.2 THE SOCIAL AUDIT CHALLENGES IN SELECTED COUNTRIES

The following themes emerged from the data analyzed: the lack of access to reliable information, intensive process, the lack of cooperation and threats. This section shows the challenges of social audits and their tools in selected countries.

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4.6.2.2.1 The lack of access to reliable information

As discussed earlier, although the right to access information acts exists in the selected countries, the social audit process in the selected countries identified that governments are still reluctant to share reliable information. The right to access information and reliable information is critical for a social audit to be effective as this enables the accessing of government records to identify whether decisions and activities have been executed following prescribed policies and regulations.

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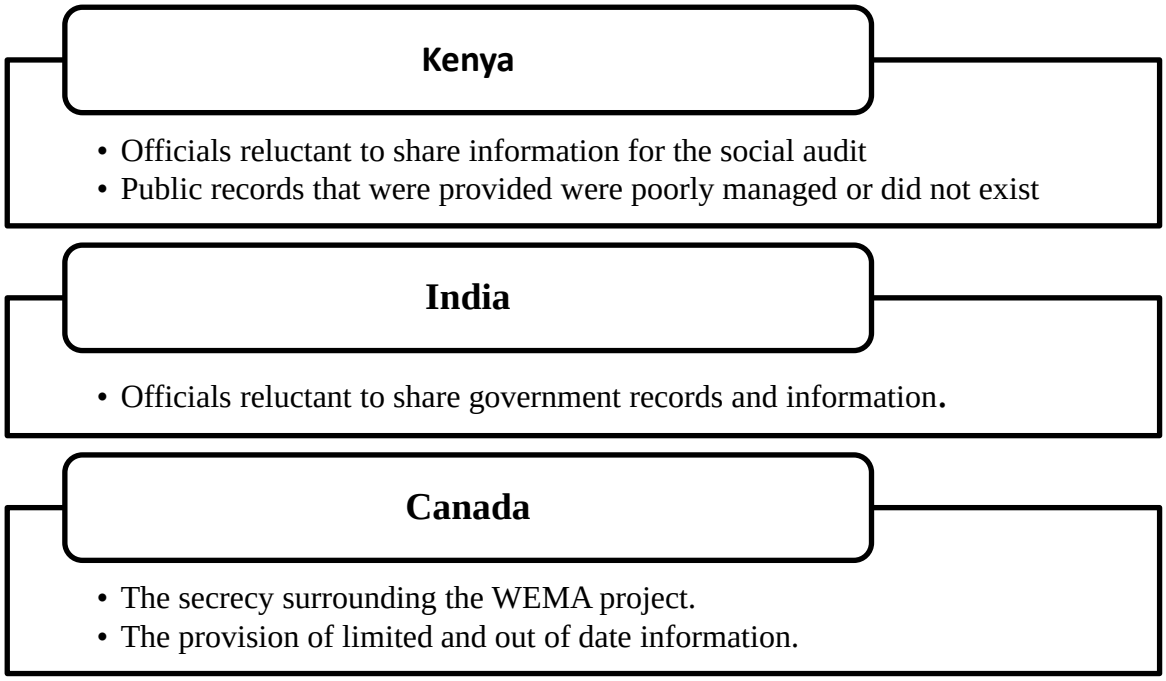
Figure 8: The lack of access to reliable information

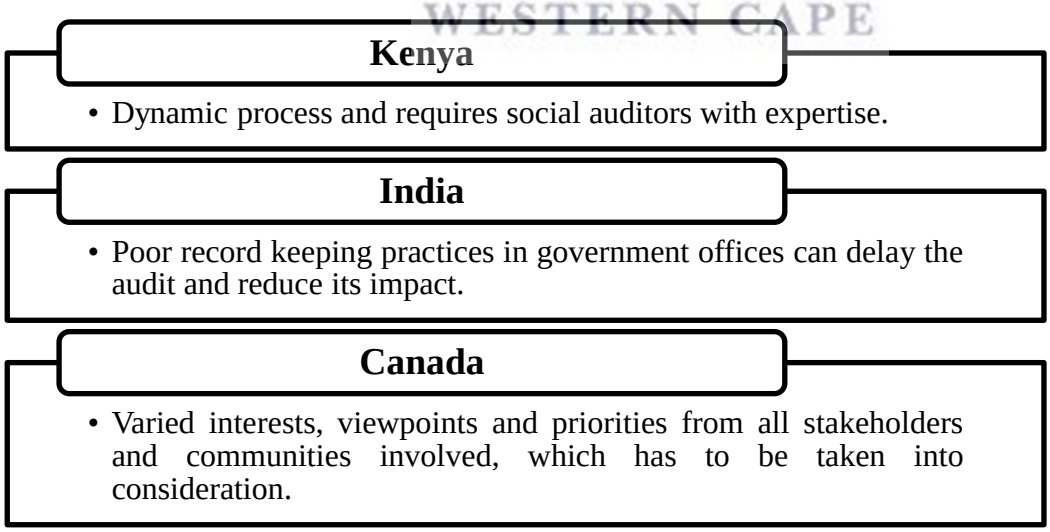


Source: (Researcher's compilation based on the Centre for Enhancing Democracy & Good Governance; 2011; 15-16; Vivek; 2008; 30; the African Centre for Biodiversity; 2017).

4.6.2.2.2 Intensive process

From the discussions on social audits in this study, it appears that social audits are an intensive process.

Figure 9: Intensive process



Source: (Researcher's compilation based on the Centre for Enhancing Democracy & Good Governance; 2011:15-16; Vivek: 2008;30; Ezezika et al; 2012)

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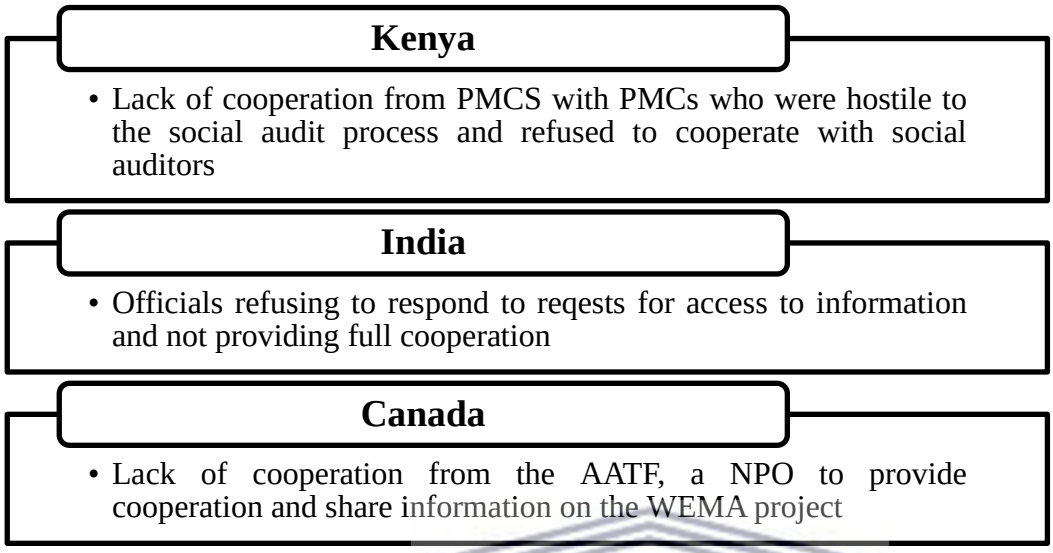
4.6.2.2.3 Lack of cooperation

From the discussions on social audits in this study, it appears that there is a lack of cooperation in the social audit process.

Figure 10: Lack of cooperation



Source: (Researcher's compilation based on the Centre for Enhancing Democracy & Good Governance; 2011; 15-16; Vivek; 2008; 30; the African Centre for Biodiversity; 2017)

4.6.2.2.4 The threatening of communities and social auditors.

From the discussions on social audits in this study, it appears that there is the threatening of communities and social auditors in the social audit process.

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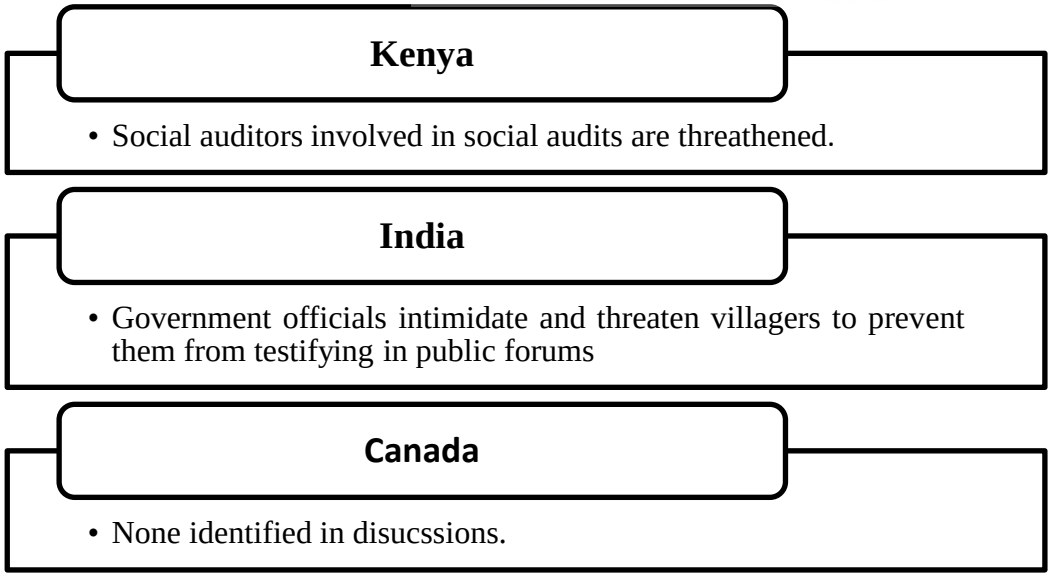
Figure 11: The threatening of communities and social auditors



Source: (Researcher's own compilation based on the Centre for Enhancing Democracy & Good Governance; 2011: 15-16; Vivek: 2008; 30).

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What the interpretations and presentations above indicate is that across the selected cases there are challenges with the accessing of information and reliable information when conducting social audits. Across the selected cases, there were issues about the collection of reliable information and the reluctance of government officials and NPO's to provide information. Furthermore, across the selected cases there appear to be challenges relating to the intense nature of the social audit process which is a dynamic process involving various viewpoints and diverse interests. Social audits across cases appear to experience challenges to cooperation and the lack thereof. The lack of cooperation within the social audit process relates to government officials and NPO's refusing to cooperate with the social audit processes and refusing to share information relating to the project being audited. Lastly, within the social audit process communities and social auditors are threatened for pointing out irregularities. This was evident in the data analysed from Kenya and India.

4.7 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter has explored the use of social audit practices and social audit tools in Kenya, Canada and India, including the research findings, interpretations and presentation. For social audits to be practiced, enabling conditions and an enabling environment must exist. Often no legislation in countries exists that particularly guides social audits; however, certain pieces of legislation and a country's Constitution give effect to social audits and enables social audits to be conducted. Furthermore, the use of social audits and the use of social audit initiatives are recognised and used by Canada, India, and Kenya to promote accountability, transparency and to improve the delivery of public services.

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Furthermore, regarding the main findings, interpretations and presentations of social audits in the selected countries, the data analysed revealed that social audit processes and practices across cases occurs in a similar manner. The use of social audit tools is also present in two of the selected countries. Furthermore, with the interpretations and presentations, the researcher identified themes and the results revealed that social audits across cases have increased accountability, transparency, have improved service delivery and have identified corruption and irregularities. In Canada, the social audit however, identified that there was a lack of transparency in the WEMA project when the social audit was conducted. Moreover, these challenges of social audits across the cases, the researcher identified themes such as the lack of access to reliable information, the intensive nature of the social audit process, the lack of cooperation and threats which was outlined. In essence, social audits across the selected cases follow similar social audit practices and processes and the benefits and the challenges experienced by the selected countries are similar in nature. The subsequent Chapter deals with conclusions and recommendations.

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5. CHAPTER FIVE: THE RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5 INTRODUCTION

The preceding chapter examined the practices of social audits in selected countries and the research findings, interpretations, and presentations. This chapter opens by looking backward or reverting into the study by examining what the entire study was all about. It then continues to look forward as it recommends what future policy can possibly improve and areas where future researchers can concentrate on improving. This chapter summarises the chapters discussed thus far and outlines the recommendations and the conclusion of this study.

5.1 SUMMARY OF CHAPTERS

This section looks back into the study as it summarises the Chapters that have been discussed in this research and provides the key points and main ideas.

Looking back into this master's thesis, chapter one outlines the research problem which is poor service delivery within local government and introduces the social audit concept to possibly improve service delivery within local government. The research objectives are outlined, and the general research objective is to discover knowledge on the best social audit practices of selected countries. This research is split into the following specific objectives, namely, to describe the best social audit practices and methods of selected countries; to outline the challenges of social audit practices of selected countries. To discuss the significance of social audit practices and methods of selected countries and to make recommendations to the South African local government sector on social audit practices. The central question of this research is to determine what social audits are and how is it being applied in selected countries? To answer the research question, the following secondary questions are asked; What are social practices and how are they applied in the selected countries; what are the challenges in implementing social audits in selected countries; What are the benefits of implementing social audits in selected countries and what lessons can the South African local government sector learn from the social audit practices in the selected countries?

This research was a descriptive study as it describes the social audit practices of Canada, Kenya and India as well as exploring social audit methods and approaches. Furthermore, Canada, India, and Kenya have been selected based on purposeful sampling. By choosing multiple countries, the researcher analysed the data within each situation, across different situation and enables the understanding of the similarities and differences between the cases. The data that is collected is secondary data and enables the researcher to collect data by means of journals, government records, published courses and websites.

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The analysis of data is based on qualitative data analysis and content analysis in order to make connections and answer the research question. Furthermore, key concepts are clarified to the research problem.

Chapter two outlines the theoretical framework and literature review of this study. Chapter two discusses the public participation theory, the key themes of public participation, namely legitimacy, diversity and inclusion and expertise and participation. Furthermore, to the literature review, Chapter two outlines the international and the South African legislation on public participation. The literature further includes key social audit information such as defining the social audit concept, the history of social audits, the application of social audits and provides a distinction between the concept of social audits and participatory monitoring and evaluation (M&E). The key themes of social audits are outlined and the benefits that it provides. The social audit critiques are also outlined.

Chapter three outlines the legislative framework and outlines information on the International Bill of Human Rights and the African Charter for participation and transformation. Furthermore, the South African legislative framework for participation is outlined and discussed such as the the Constitution of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996; The White Paper on Local Government 1998, The Local Government Finance Management act 56 of 2003; Local Government Municipal Structures Act 117 of 1998; Local Government: Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000; Promotion to Access to Information Act and the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation's Framework for strengthening citizens-government partnerships for monitoring frontline services.

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Further, chapter four outlines the practice of social audits in the selected countries, the research findings, interpretations, and presentation. It also outlines the critical conditions for social audits to operate within and the social audit initiatives and tools. Furthermore, it outlines the practical application of social audits in the selected countries and describes the social audit process used within projects in these countries including the results of the social audit process in the selected countries. The chapter also outlines the findings of the selected countries by outlining the use of the social audit process and its tools and initiatives. The interpretations and presentation outline the benefits and challenges of social audits within the selected countries. The next section looks forward as it presents recommendations for policy and for future researchers.

5.2 THE RECOMMENDATION

The following recommendations are made to the South African local government sector based on the information that has been collected and discussed on social audits in the selected countries.

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5.2.1 Recommendations based on enabling legislation for social audits.

Since enabling legislation exists for social audits to be conducted in South Africa (SA) such as various pieces of legislation on participation and the access to information acts, it is proposed that the South African local government sector explore the social audit concept and instead strengthen legislation for social audits to operate within. As discussed in Chapter 3 of this study, there appears to be a lack of alignment between the Constitution of SA and international norms and standards such as the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) which enables government to engage with communities and the people for the realisation of socioeconomic and cultural rights. The strengthening and alignment of local legislation with international standards will enable social audits to be carried out and SA and the spheres of government will be bounded by international regulations and norms and standards to act in accordance. Furthermore, by strengthening legislation and aligning legislation with international standards such as the ICESCR, it shows that SA as a country is committed to ensuring that it's people and communities right to socioeconomic development is fulfilled. One of the ways to fulfil the right to socioeconomic development and cultural rights is through regular and interactive engagements with communities to identify the challenges that they are faced with and to develop solutions to these problems.

Furthermore, locally it is proposed that there is an amendment to the Local Government Municipal Structures Act 117 of 1998. As discussed in Chapter 3 of this research, municipalities may establish ward committees, but it is not obliged by the Structures act. Ward committees are the important link between the municipality and the communities. Through ward committees, the municipality becomes aware of service delivery issues and the challenges that communities are faced with. If municipalities are obliged by the Structures act to establish ward committees, the social audit concept can be undertaken both by the municipality and ward committees where ward communities can engage with communities effectively on service delivery issues and challenges.

Furthermore, ward committees, communities, and municipal officials must be trained and equipped with the necessary skills to undertake social audits which are another critical condition for social audits. If ward committees are trained and equipped with the necessary skills to undertake social audits, ward committees will be able to carry over information effectively to communities and promote broad participation within the affairs of local government. Furthermore, communities must be trained and equipped with social auditing skills and must feel in control of the social auditing process.

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5.2.2 Recommendations based on the practice of social audits and its tools.

In alignment with the problem statement as discussed in Chapter one of this research, local government faces service delivery challenges. Therefore, based on the practical application of social audits in selected countries it is proposed that the SA local government sector, explore the social audit concept and conduct and execute social audit pilot testing in order to evaluate feasibility, the duration and improve on challenging aspects before implementing a full-scale social audit to address poor service delivery issues. Most importantly, the local government sector in SA must be committed to social auditing. It is proposed that the SA local government sector follow the general steps involved within the social audit process namely, identifying the social audit scope and gathering data; training local communities, inspection of sites and information sharing; public hearing and following up on the public hearings. Since the selected countries have achieved significant results with the implementation of social audits as discussed in Chapter 4 of this study, it appears that these general steps within the social audit process is effective and enables a social audit to achieve success.

Thus, the social audit process for the South African local government sector should start with the general social audit steps, where it can be amended and rectified based on what works and what does not work. Furthermore, the SA local government sector can align the social audit concept with its Integrated Development Planning (IDP) phases where there is the identification of community needs and service delivery challenges. Only this time, the identification of community needs, and community sessions will be more interactive and engaging sessions between the municipality and communities.

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5.2.3 Recommendations based on social audit benefits.

Based on the social audit benefits from selected countries, it is proposed that the South African local government sector explore the social audit concept to reap similar benefits such as those of the selected countries.

By exploring and implementing a social audit, local government may reap benefits such as those discussed for the selected namely the increase of accountability and transparency, improve service delivery, increase participation and the identification of corruption which are all challenges within the local government sector of SA including the National and Provincial sphere of government in SA. By applying and exploring social audits, these challenges can be addressed within local government with communities having more faith and trust in government. This will also enable the realisation of the rights of communities where municipalities strive to be accountable, transparent, eradicate corruption and improve the delivery of services to the communities. In essence, the social audit concept may improve the municipal performances of local government in SA.

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5.2.4 Recommendations based on social audit challenges.

Based on the social audit challenges as discussed in Chapter five such as the lack of access to reliable information, intensive process, lack of cooperation and the threatening of social auditors, it is proposed that the SA local government sector learns from these challenges and establish mechanisms to prevent these challenges from occurring should social audits be implemented in the SA local government sector**.**

The South African Constitution is one of the most progressive in the world and SA has numerous pieces of legislation that guides activities in the country. The Promotion of Access information Act enables the collection and access of government information and records. The Promotion to Access information act should be enforced and the local government sphere should be encouraged to provide reliable information and up to date information and maintain accurate and good records of the municipality's activities which should be open to public scrutiny.

Besides, the intensive nature of the social audit process as identified in the selected countries, it is proposed that those undertaking the social audit process are equipped and trained with the necessary skills and knowledge on social audits. The views and interests of all stakeholders must be taken into consideration which can become a timeous activity and therefore time should be managed properly, and time should be set aside and allocated to all the different stakeholders that should be involved in the social audit process. Furthermore, there may be several challenges experienced along the way and therefore the social audit process can be refined continuously to identify and resolve issues and challenges.

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Besides, to the lack of cooperation as identified in the selected countries, it is proposed that the SA local government sector, enforce principles of cooperation and those that refuses to cooperate and government officials refusing to respond to requests for access to information, must be held accountable. Furthermore, corrective actions must be taken against those that refuse or are reluctant to participate in the social audit process and provide information that is necessary for the social audit to be carried out. Those officials or individuals that are hindering the social audit process must therefore be held accountable for their action.

Concerning, to the threatening of social auditors, it is proposed that this challenge is dealt with accordingly as this poses a safety risk for those facilitating and undertaking the social audit. Furthermore, actions should be taken against individuals threatening social auditors which would act as a deterrent to others. Should it be necessary, the South African Police Service (SAPS) should be approached, and a case should be opened against those individuals that are threatening social auditors for them to be dealt with.

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5.3 THE CONCLUSION

This thesis has explored the social audit concept in selected countries namely, Kenya, India, and Canada. Local government in SA is the sphere closest to the people and continues to face issues relating to poor service delivery. The exploration of the social audit concept, therefore necessitated this study as to identify alternative methods and approaches to deal with service delivery issues and challenges in the local government sector. This research by no means aimed at providing a definite conclusion but merely informs the reader on the social audit practices, the social audit benefits, and significance, the social audit challenges and provides recommendations to the South African local government sector, as outlined in Chapter 1 of this study, the research objectives and research questions.

The research and social audit information obtained from the selected countries indicated that Kenya, India and Canada are practicing with social audits and the selected countries follow similar social audit processes and steps. Across the selected cases the researcher identified similar social audit practices, similar social audit benefits for the selected countries and similar social audit challenges.

It is therefore proposed that the South African local government sector learns from the social audit practices in the selected countries, explore the social audit concept, and share in the benefits that social audits have to offer and aim to prevent similar challenges from occurring such as those in the selected countries. Furthermore, by exploring the social audit concept, municipalities, provides opportunities to communities and the people to actively participate in the affairs of the municipality including planning and decision-making. The local government sector in SA still has several cardinal aspects to focus on and challenges to deal with, therefore local government in SA must constantly explore new methods and approaches to deal with challenges such as poor service delivery. The social audit concept could ensure good governance and aims to increase participation, creates empowerment, and ensures that communities are at the forefront of planning and development.

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