Chapter 8
Maximising the Use of Environmental and Cultural Resources for Community-Led Entrepreneurship Development in Rural South Africa

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ABSTRACT

Limpopo is one of the poorest provinces in South Africa. This state of poverty is despite the province’s potential to be self-supportive from its well-endowed natural and cultural heritage resources. This chapter argues that commercialisation of these resources could promote sustainable community-led entrepreneurship and local economic development. This chapter hypothesises that there is an economic linkage between the environment and local economic development as GebreMichael and Waters-Bayer found in Tigray Region, Ethiopia. A plethora of emerging literature on local economic and entrepreneurship development reveal that there was considerable linkage between commercialization of these resources and sustainable entrepreneurship and local economic development. This chapter locates itself in the context of “Rural Development” and would be anchored on Monaheng’s theorisation on development; the technocratic, the radical, and the reformist approaches.

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INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

This chapter builds its discourse on the words of one Indian theorist Dr Radhika Kapur in the work “Concept of Rural Development in India” who argued that “the development of the country is synonymous with the development of rural communities” Dr Kapur was referring to India which the author claimed was a country of villages (Kapur, 2019). Kapur argued that developing these villages would mean the development of the larger India. Limpopo Province, also largely a province of villages, and in which the study area is situated shares much in common with Dr Radhika Kapur’s theory of developing a country or region through rural development as this province is, like India predominantly rural villages. I combined Dr Kapur’s assertion with Monaheng’s (1995) view that local people had appropriate and relevant knowledge and skills which could contribute to local development, however with some assistance from outside help to anchor my argument that local development remained attainable if approached from the perspective of locals leading it. In this case, locals could use their local environment to attain development. The chapter furthermore serves to achieve a new construct upholding the emerging ‘decoloniality’ and ‘de-apartheidnization’ (Ndlovu, 2016; Mafukata et al., 2019) debate and discourse in post-apartheid South Africa. It removes the distorted notion that “Whiteness is the only referent of progress” in the context of facilitating a post-apartheid development target structured away from the “hierarchies of race and place” (Pailey, 2019). This chapter builds towards development “enforcing racelessness” (Pailey, 2019) in mainstream entrepreneurship and development in post-apartheid South Africa in order to “open up development” (Pailey, 2019) and the economy which has not been open for decades (Bell et al., 2018). Racelessness in the post-apartheid South African economy is imperative for the new state to attain “better life for all” in an “open economy” fostering for “inclusive development” (Bell et al., 2018) considering that this new state has just emerged from a created economically poor and dependent Black population (Manenzhe, 2015). In essence, the chapter challenges the apartheid fashioned development narrative which, successive apartheid regimes used as far back as 1948 to isolate, exclude and marginalize Blacks from active participation in mainstream economic discourse. This chapter constructs a view which postulates, like Bell et al. (2018) that post-apartheid South Africa needs to build “towards a smart, open economy for all” in order to attain “economic justice for the majority of the population” This approach is crucial and imperative because it enables interested parties in the (South) African development debate and practice to “open up development… openly talking about how it suffers from a ‘white gaze’ problem” (Pailey, 2019) for instance. This chapter has focus on the Vhembe District (figure 1) however with particular focus on Dzinzilinzi of Pfumembe Village, Makhado Municipality.
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