

Active Role of Stakeholders in the Implementation of Comprehensive Rural Development Programme in South Africa

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Abstract

The Comprehensive Rural Development Programme (CRDP) is a national collective action to fight poverty, hunger, unemployment and lack of development in rural areas. This paper seeks to interrogate the programme by using literature on rural development. This is aimed at unpacking the conceptual framework as it is being implemented by the government. Our trajectory is to assess the extent to which stakeholder analysis has informed the conception of the programme. This will help to discover gaps if any, and to proffer possible solutions to the effective participation of all key stakeholders in the implementation of the programme. The programme is a targeted effort by the national government to transform the village into an urban town with major infrastructure and development programmes. It seeks to achieve this through a co-ordinated and integrated broad-based agrarian transformation as well as strategic investment in economic and social infrastructure that will benefit the entire rural communities.

Key words: Comprehensive rural development, food security, poverty alleviation, rural livelihood, stakeholder participation

1. Introduction

Rural development concepts have been addressed with different approaches by various developing countries to combat poverty and inequality. Unfortunately, much has not been achieved by all these efforts. In South Africa, the Comprehensive Rural Development Programme (CRDP) is a national strategy to fight poverty, hunger, unemployment and lack of development in rural areas (The Presidency, 2009). This will be used for agricultural infrastructure, training, advisory services, marketing and for upgrading agricultural colleges. One of the priorities is to ensure that land reform, through redistribution and restitution, is more coherently linked to the creation of livelihoods for the poor (DRDLR, 2009a).

For the development of the rural areas, during recent years, the concept of integrated rural development has been widely accepted (Kuhnen, 2010). Rural development in South Africa is characterized by three distinct phases (Olivier, Van Zyl, and Williams, 2010):

1. 1994-2000 - the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), 1994 and Growth, Employment and Redistribution Strategy (GEAR), 1996 documents and their implementation;
2. 2000-April 2009 - the Integrated Sustainable Rural Development Strategy (ISRDS), 2000; the Strategic Plan for South African Agriculture (SPSSA), 2001; the Integrated Food Security Strategy for South Africa (IFSS), 2002; and the Drought Management Plan (DMP), 2005; the National Spatial Development Perspective (NSDP), 2006; the Medium Term Strategic Framework (MTSF) 5-year rolling plan;

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the Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) 3-year budget cycle; the Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative of South Africa (ASGISA); the Provincial Growth and Development Strategies (PGDSs) and the Municipal Integrated Development Plans (IDPs).

3. April 2009+ - the Comprehensive Rural Development Programme (CRDP), 2009 and related documents.

People's right to be involved and be heard is the centre of participatory development, and this is achieved through empowerment (Melkote&Steeves, 2001). Many scholars have proposed that empowerment essentially has two dimensions: the personal level, whereby people gain self-confidence and improve their self-esteem to take on new tasks and become active participants in the project activities; and the group level, in which communities become empowered and people have access to information and a chance to participate as decision makers (Melkote&Steeves, 2001). Chitmis (2005) states that only when people are given an opportunity to take control of their lives and allowed to make their own decisions can conditions improve in families and the community. This paper looks into the different roles the stakeholder analysis can play towards improving the implementation of the comprehensive rural development programme in South Africa.

2. Trends in Rural Development

This section discusses literatures on various strategic interventions by both developed and developing countries. It also highlights the various paradigm shifts in the rural development concepts. Rural development generally denotes economic development and community development actions and initiatives taken to improve the standard of living in non-urban neighbourhood, remote villages and the countryside (USDA, 2007). Economic activities typically relate to the primary sector production and processing of food stuffs and raw materials. The new policy for rural development seeks to find a rationale and sustainable framework for the future of Europe's rural areas. It will complement the reforms introduced into the market sectors by promoting a competitive, multi-functional agricultural sector in the context of a comprehensive, integrated strategy for rural development (EC, 2010).

In spite of rapid urbanization in most parts of the world over the past two decades, rural development remains a major challenge for developing countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America (Soo-young, 2008). According to a recent World Bank report, "75 percent of the world's poor live in rural areas and most are involved in farming" (World Bank, 2009). There is also renewed urgency for addressing rural problems generated by population pressure on land, water and other resources, threats to the environment, climate change, and widening income disparity between rural and urban areas. National governments and international development agencies are once again placing increased emphasis on rural and agricultural development as critical for reducing poverty and achieving the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Sae Maul Undong (SMU) of Korea began as a rather conventional integrated community development program with the aim of improving the physical environment of villages, introducing new attitudes and skills, and increasing incomes through small-scale self-help projects introduced by government agents and implemented through village cooperation. SMU's success was built on the ironic combination of cooperation at the village level with mobilization and direction from an authoritarian government (Reed, 2010).

Rural development programs are not new in most developing countries. It is important to understand and, where possible, build on indigenous efforts. There is much that developing countries can learn by studying Korea's rural development experience. Perhaps the most important lesson is the importance of the larger context within which the SMU was implemented. Other countries and communities have different histories and face different constraints, and leaders must adapt the SMU approach to their own situations (Reed, 2010). Another lesson is that sustainable, widespread improvements depend on leadership, action and investments at both the national level and the community level (Reed, 2010).

In Africa, the rate of poverty in 2003 was 17 percentage points higher than in South Asia, the second poorest region of the world (Nkurunziza, 2006). This makes poverty the key development challenge in Africa and there is international consensus that eliminating poverty is the overriding objective of development efforts in the continent. As a result of this, the observed unemployment, underemployment and low returns to labour in Africa can be considered as immediate causes of poverty. Hence, policies encouraging growth and employment creation are expected to be "essential for any poverty reduction strategy" (World Bank, 2000, p. 99).

This view is supported by cross-country empirical evidence showing that expanding remunerative employment reduces the incidence of poverty (Islam, 2004).

3. Theoretical Underpinnings of Rural Development

This section discusses some of the theoretical underpinnings of rural development strategies. Research indicates that there is a constant shift of development paradigms, which also affect the methodologies for rural development. These paradigms often only get to gain momentum 10 years after they have emerged (Ellis & Biggs, 2001). Rural development is all encompassing and it highlights the improvement of economic and social infrastructure. This can be combined with an agrarian transformation which helps in increasing production, improve the sustainable use of natural resources, establishing and strengthening rural livelihood and food security. Rural development objectives can only be achieved if there is an improved land reform programmes which deal with issues around land redistribution, land tenure reform and land restitution claims.

3.1 Modernisation Theories

In the 1950s and early 1960s, development was viewed as a process consisting of stages of economic growth. It was expected that countries should go through these stages for modernisation to occur. These stages included the development of agriculture in rural areas with intense industrialisation in urban areas as well as expansion into the global markets (Smith, 2003). These theories argued that underdeveloped economies should transform the focus of their economies from a heavy emphasis on traditional subsistence agriculture to a modern, urbanised, more industrially diverse manufacturing and service economy (Smith, 2003). These theories were further actualised after the Second World War when the Bretton Woods Institutions were set up. These institutions offered financial assistance to developing countries through conditional grants and loan, for massive industrialisation and mechanisation to support the Green Revolution of that period (Smith, 2003).

3.2 Rural Development through Efficient Small-Scale Farming

A paradigm shift occurred wherein small-scale farming was seen as central to growth and development in the 1960s. According to this theory small-scale farming would improve rural development because of the relationship between farm size and economic development than large farms because they are labour intensive, and therefore increase jobs opportunities (Ellis & Biggs, 2001). This notion argues that with improved activity in small rural farming, growth in non-farm input to agricultural development is encouraged. This in turn improves overall economic activity, foreign exchange, and consumer markets (Ellis & Biggs, 2001). There have however been limitations pointed out about this theory; these include the fact that, without secure land tenure and access to credit and new technology, small farmers are unable to effectively facilitate economic development (Berry & Cline, 1979). Rural development was characterised by land tenure reform and an increased focus on the importance of agricultural extension to assist with technology transfer.

3.3 Process Approaches to Rural Development

With the state involvement limited in driving development, a new model arose wherein it was important for local populations to become the central agencies of their own development (Kole, 2005). The role of the state was primarily limited to facilitating interaction and stakeholder relationships, especially with the private sector. Contemporary development theories are based on the premise that development is best achieved through local planning and decision-making (Kole, 2005). Theories from this school of thinking include the participatory, sustainable, decentralised, as well as integrated rural development approaches.

3.4 Participatory/Community Development Approaches

In North-Eastern Brazil, Parker (1998) noted that although the resources allocated for rural development were substantial, rural poverty levels remained high. However, with the arrival of new development initiatives characterised by decentralisation and participation, there were signs of improvement in the reduction of rural poverty (Parker, 1998). The participatory and community development approaches were developed in the early 1970s (Ellis & Biggs, 2001). Its development was based on the view that development that does not involve local communities is unproductive and unsustainable. The participatory approach to development calls for development to be people-centred. Participation is seen as an on-going process, through which communities are enabled to influence development activities that affect their lives (Kotze, 1997).

In this approach, development could either occur from the top-down; with people being informed of decisions made by the powers that be, or could take place bottom-up with communities involved in the decision-making process.

- The importance of integrating community participation in rural development programmes;
- The importance of NGOs in assisting government with rural development; and
- Capacity building should be viewed as one of the first steps in ensuring that rural development succeeds.

3.5 Integrated Rural Development Approaches

The 1970s heralded the development of new approaches biased towards rural development. The Integrated Rural Development (IRD) approach was most widely promoted by donor agencies. Donors' position was that investments in rural areas were not having the desired impact as development was sectorially based (Uphoff, 2001).

The IRD approach was characterised by the following 'pillars':

- Demand-led development
- Resource mobilisation (money, human resources, and material – including local communities;
- Integration from below.

Uphoff (2001) further argues that real integration in rural development efforts needs to be implemented by the end-users and local entrepreneurs. To be successful, IRD needs to operate more in a programme mode, with periodic reviews and revisions, rather than in a project mode (Chambers, 1986).

The IRD failed in the 1970s because of various reasons (Kole, 2005). Its top-down approach led to its programmes becoming unpopular amongst its supposed beneficiaries. It also became too expensive to implement due to the many facets of rural development that one project had to address. There were, however other reasons not related to the approach as such (Eicher & Staaz, 1998). These included:

- An adverse policy environment
- Lack of government commitment
- Institutional development neglect
- Co-ordination problems

The development of the 1990s saw what could be argued as the modernisation of this approach. Integration was defined from a sustainable development perspective. It is seen as promotion of the integration of environmental and agricultural activities, diversification of economic activities as well as community development and social inclusion (Kole, 2005). The integration of central government strategic agendas and local influences are also central to this approach.

3.6 Sustainable Livelihoods Approach to Rural Development

As part of exploring the redesign of rural development, Johnston and Clark (1982) argued in favour of a three-pronged approach for successful rural development. This approach favoured the inclusion of production, consumption and organisational programmes in rural development strategies. From the late 1990s to the early 2000s, sustainable development became the catchphrase in development circles. Sustainable development moved from being an environmental issue to a socio-economic balancing concept (Kole, 2005). This led to the realisation of an increased role for local governance institutions (communities, civil society and local government itself).

3.7 Decentralisation and Local Governance Institutions

The sustainable livelihoods approach concentrated on the need to strengthen development institutions at especially the local level. Proponents of this theory (Johnson, 2001) argued for:

- The strengthening of government and private sector interaction to allow local development to be market-driven
- The need to improve NGOs' capacity to implement developmental programmes
- Strengthening decentralised government institutions as a way of enhancing development.

The elements of the various schools of thought are manifested in the CRDP in different formats.

As an example, the CRDP is based on the assumption that developing rural areas would improve the country's overall economic performance as emphasised by the modernisation theories, whilst it is also premised on the importance of community participation and local decision-making as argued for by the process and sustainable livelihoods approaches.

4. Rural Development in South Africa

South Africa's economic development, between 1948 and 1976, was influenced by the Group Areas Act of 1950, the Promotion of Bantu Homelands Citizens Act of 1970 and the general 'Grand Apartheid' Policy (Bannister, 2000). Due to the accelerating industrialisation and mechanisation at that time, the implementation of the "Bantustan" policy was facilitated (Aspirant, 2004).

A 'superficial' rural development that occurred during this period was the industrial decentralisation process of the 1970s. Through the process, industries located in or near the zones reserved for Blacks were highly subsidised (Kole, 2005). These 'balancing growth poles' (Cobbett, Glaser, Hindson & Swilling, 1987) were used to draw investment away from established industrialised metropolitan centres to potential 'White' towns which were surrounded by rural homeland areas. Employment levels increased at the expense of sustainable economic development (Kole, 2005). Although people were employed, they spent most of their earnings on transport to their places of work, as the Group Areas Act determined that they were not allowed to live near these industries. With the repeal of most Apartheid legislation, rural development in South Africa occurred within a context of the need to generally improve the living standards of the majority of the previously disadvantaged, who mostly resided in these areas. Although the programmes of this period were not specifically targeted at rural areas, they had an impact on the level of development in these areas.

4.1 The Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP)

Following the election of South Africa's democratic government in 1994, rural development was mostly to address the main challenge the country faced at the time, namely addressing inequalities created during the Apartheid Era (Kole, 2005). This led to rural development becoming part of the general development programme, the RDP, which also dealt with general urban economic development. Ultimately, the RDP programme sought to overcome the overall service-delivery imbalances created by Apartheid (Kole, 2005). Also of significance is the fact that as these programmes were being developed and implemented, other spheres of government did not actively support the local governance system, as local government was still in a transitional phase (Kole, 2005). Therefore national sector departments made no concerted effort to build and improve local government institutions.

The engagement in various policy initiatives to improve on the momentum of service delivery in rural areas was initiated by the government. These were:

- The Rural Development Strategy, 1995
- The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, (Act 108 of 1996 and its impact on rural development)
- The Rural Development Framework, 1997
- The ISRDS, 1999

4.2 The Rural Development Strategy

In 1995, government introduced a rural development strategy led by the Department of Land Affairs (Bannister, 2000). The strategy aimed to "create greater equality in the (the use of resources) rural areas, especially land, through tenure security, restitution and reform programmes. It is argued that this strategy dealt mostly with infrastructure components of rural areas" (Bannister, 2000). In 1996, the South African Government adopted a constitution that outlines the role of the government and responsibilities with respect to people, human rights of citizens and government institutions.

In 1997, the RDP office developed a more comprehensive strategy, known as the Rural Development Framework (Kole, 2005). The Framework attempted to incorporate other departments' rural development programmes. Government saw it as more of a status quo report than a new strategy. After the closure of the RDP office, this document was passed to the Department of Land Affairs for finalisation (Kole, 2005). The document was passed as a framework document without any legal status.

In 2000, the Presidency instituted a new governance system, the Integrated Governance System (Kole, 2005). This process assisted with the development of the ISRDS as it brought all departments with an interest in rural development together. It can therefore be argued that the Integrated Governance System was used as the basis for the development, implementation and monitoring of the ISRDS.

4.3 Integrated Sustainable Rural Development Strategy (ISRDS)

In 1999, during his State of the Nation Address, the President of the Republic of South Africa, Mr Thabo Mbeki, announced the creation of a new strategy to supplement the RDP (Mbeki, 1999). The ISRDS was based on the following key elements (The Presidency, 2000):

- Integration: The co-ordination of efforts at local government level through Integrated Development Plans (IDPs);
- Rural development: Multi-dimensional, including an improvement in the provision of services and enhanced local economic growth;
- Sustainability: This contributes to local growth and features local participation and ownership;
- The existence of growth dynamics in rural areas; and
- The existence of rural safety nets as an integral part of the ISRDS.

5. Comprehensive Rural Development Programme at Muyexe

The programme was planned to achieve its goals through a co-ordinated and integrated broad-based agrarian transformation as well as strategic investment in economic and social infrastructure that will benefit the entire rural communities (DRDLR, 2009a). The rural development component looks into the improvement of economic and social infrastructure while the agrarian transformation looks see to the increased production, sustainable use of natural resources, establishing and strengthening rural livelihood and food security (DRDLR, 2009a). The improved land reform programmes deals with issues around land redistribution, land tenure reform and land restitution claims. The Technical team from the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform (DRDLR) were briefed on the expectation of CRDP implementation in Greater Giyani Municipality and other piloting sites. The technical team met and developed a framework for the document, review the availability of information and developed a status quo analysis of the greater Giyani municipality which was presented to the stakeholders. Three villages (Dingamanzi, Gonono and Muyexe) were presented based on the findings of the technical team. Muyexe village was chosen based on feedback after the site visits by the stakeholders (DRDLR, 2009b).

Pilot sites were selected in all provinces with the exception of Gauteng, which has a particularly urban bias but will not necessarily be excluded (PMG, 2011). The initial approach followed in the pilot projects is the War-Room-on Poverty and Poverty Campaign approach (DRDLR, 2009b). The War room on poverty approach utilizes household and community profiling methods to create baseline information about the community's and household's interests/development needs which is then used towards planning, project and intervention development, and programme designs.

The first two pilot sites, Muyexe village in Giyani, Limpopo and Riemvasmaak in the Northern Cape Provinces used the above-mentioned methods (DRDLR, 2009b). In Muyexe, for example, a survey questionnaire was administered by local Community Development Workers (CDW) and unemployed youth to 900 households (PMG, 2011). Other qualitative rural appraisal tools such as community mapping and workshops were used to further enhance this survey questionnaire (PMG, 2011).

These combined methods produced 21 priorities for the Muyexe community (PMG, 2011). Based on these 21 priorities identified by the community, various state departments began assessing the projects for which they will be individually responsible, including detailed costing, assessments and eventual implementation (DRDLR, 2009b). A report in the Capricorn Voice newspaper dated 8-10 June 2011, stated that in spite of infrastructural development which includes a post office, a library, a police station, a sport centre and a clinic, the provision of sustainable jobs in the area and surrounds however remains a challenge (Chauke, 2011). According to the report, further development are either outstanding or under construction. The Department had a branch responsible for social facilitation and the focus was to create land holding institutions rather than community institutions. Then the Department aimed at finding a better way of dealing with land reform projects through the Recapitalisation and Development programme that was introduced.

The change in approach would lie especially in the fact that the government would gradually be phased out of the process and leave adequate skills in the communities (PMG, 2011). It is important to note that the introduction of the CRDP will be achieved through, amongst others, self-help initiatives and co-ordinated and integrated broad-based agrarian transformation; and strategic investment in economic and social infrastructure that benefits entire rural communities with increased stakeholders' participation.

6. Insight into the Stakeholder Analysis Approach

Globally, there is a new paradigm in the rural development strategy which adopts participatory approach. In this approach, development could either occur from the top-down; with people being informed of decisions made by the powers that be, or could take place bottom-up with communities involved in the decision-making process. The latter is the principle behind the establishment of the CRDP by the ruling ANC with the programme piloting at Muyexe village. The CRDP was planned to achieve its objectives through a co-ordinated and integrated broad-based agrarian transformation as well as strategic investment in economic and social infrastructure that will benefit the entire rural communities. Current experience with implementation of the rural development programmes, however, indicates that partnerships with the private sector, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and communities are not in line with the expected level (Kole, 2005). The roles and functions of the stakeholders are not clearly defined and this resulted in conflicts, misunderstanding and total collapse of most of the projects being undertaking at Muyexe. In some cases, partnerships are formed without the necessary support from the other spheres of government (DRDLR, 2009a).

A stakeholder analysis is a technique that can be used to identify and assess the importance of key people, groups of people, or institutions that may significantly influence the success of an activity or a project. It is frequently used during the preparation phase of a project to assess the attitudes of the stakeholders regarding the potential changes. Stakeholder analysis can be done once or on a regular basis to track changes in stakeholder attitudes over time. It is expected that this analysis would have been done at the start of this programme and if not, may put this programme at a serious risk. The CRDP indicates that stakeholder participation forms the cornerstone of its success, as the resources available for rural development are leveraged for a striking impact. This interaction can however only be successful in all spheres of government and the various stakeholders clearly understand their role and responsibilities.

7. Conclusion

The past development efforts were plagued with very unsatisfactory results which seems to lie in the basic approach by the government. The main characteristic of the approach was an attempt to promote development by applying economic principles derived from experiences in developed countries (Kuhnen, 2010). It was not fully realized that the conditions in developing countries were far more different, as regards for instance factors like the rate of population increase, the degree of international communication, the educational level, the availability of new technologies, the value system of the population, to mention only a few examples.

It has been observed that stakeholders' participation is very crucial to the success or failure of the CRDP programme and the implementation of the analysis of the stakeholder participation and effective management and monitoring procedures will go a long way in achieving these goals in South Africa.

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