

Human capacity of Informal food producers towards local economic development

The triple challenges of poverty, unemployment, and inequality have been increasing in South Africa with, unemployment reaching a high level never recorded. Economic growth has not exceeded 2% in the last three years. The paper analyses the role of rural informal food producers' contribution towards local economic development and acknowledges their human development. The improvement of a country's human development brings a comparative advantage against other nations comparatively using the popular United Nations (UN) Human Development Index (HDI) scores. In rural communities, mostly in developing nations, skills development upliftment has been lagging behind compared to developed nations. The most unequal society in the world, South Africa's Gini-Coefficient has shown that there are disparities in the society.

In the food production value chain, different role players bring different capabilities competing for the same end-user customer buying power. The qualitative study approach has been adopted to apprehend a comprehensive perspective from the small-scale farmers in rural communities on how their capacity enhancement can add to their overall contribution to the National Development Plan (NDP) goals for agriculture as strategic sector in creating employment and rural development. The preliminary findings indicate that few small-scale food farmers have post-matric qualifications, including basic farming registered courses, using the pre-test participants' feedback while testing the research instruments. The expected results provide a better understanding of the sector using the thematic ideas generated that will be incorporated into the framework to be developed later in the study.

The development of informal farmers in rural communities has the potential to contribute further to sustainable livelihoods, empowerment, and development of inhabitants which adds towards the attainment of the National Development Goals (NDP). In the future, triple challenges of poverty, unemployment, and inequality will be minimised in South Africa. This will add to the human development improvement of rural communities. Furthermore, the outcome adds to the food production discourse for researchers, practitioners, and scholars. In conclusion, study learning will also be useful for practical implementation to improve small-scale food producers from the rural perspective in the Global South.

Keywords: agriculture, farmers, food systems, rural, small-scale

Author: MATSHO, Jim (Tshwane University of Technology (TUT))

Track Classification: Paper Development Workshop