

Impacts of COVID-19 on Communal Based Natural Resources Management in Newtown, Bekezela Village, Eastern Cape, South Africa

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Abstract : Communal based natural resource management (CBNRM) is regarded as one of the most significant methods for sustainable natural resource conservation. This is due to the fact that it entails the engagement of local communities as well as the use of indigenous knowledge and customary conservation. The emergence of COVID-19 had a devastating impact on this sector since it has resulted in the disbandment of all collective activities, such as group gatherings, including those with a good cause. This is supported by research, which demonstrates that throughout the era of full lockdowns, the coordination of diverse activities and the sustainability of various working groups were severely harmed. This study was undertaken in the CBNRM niche to examine how COVID-19 affected this sector. Data were gathered through focus group discussions with youths, women, and the elderly active in CBNRM in Newtown, Bekezela Village, Eastern Cape. The study concluded that the sustainability of indigenous knowledge in natural resource management was endangered due to the restricted movements and community participation in developmental initiatives. The study also revealed a 'environment-community divide,' since COVID-19 hindered local communities from holding their regular conservation meetings. The research, on the other hand, discovered that there were 'secret' gatherings in which local communities attempted to adopt Afrocentric ways in which the available natural resources would provide a remedy for COVID-19.

Keywords : CBNRM, COVID-19, indigenous knowledge, South Africa

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