

Sustainable Livelihood Options Adopted by Rural Communities in Response to Climate Change, South Africa

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Abstract : In recent times, rural communities have been most affected by climate change as a result of their over-reliance on environmental conditions. Extreme climatic conditions have since affected the livelihoods and resilience of societies, especially in agricultural activities. The current study was conducted with the goal of conducting a strategic analysis of the resilience of sustainable rural livelihoods against climate dynamics using qualitative and quantitative approaches. Both primary and secondary data were employed. Questionnaires and semi-structured interviews were administered to the rural communities' livelihood options adopted in response to climatic shocks at the local level using purposive sampling. The results of the study revealed that livestock production was the most dominant livelihood-resilient activity, with 30%, while vendor activity is common in Thohoyandou with 29%. The findings indicated the highest establishment of water tanks was in the Madimbo area, with 51% as a form of livelihood resilience, and further, 70% of respondents demonstrated livelihood sustainability activities such as agricultural forums, conferences, and the practice of indigenous activities. The proposed strategies can be used by policymakers in the field of rural development and sustainable livelihood, as well as national planning processes, to effectively consider the most vulnerable groups and articulate unique local vulnerabilities.

Keywords : climate change, sustainable livelihood, Vhembe district, agricultural forum, adaptation strategies

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