

The Socio-Economic Impact of Renewable Energy Projects in the Northern Cape Province of South Africa

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Paper Abstract

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HOW TO CITE THIS PAPER?

Abstract

Introduction
South Africa is a signatory to the United Nations, and it is mandated to report on climate change mitigation measures. The country has been battling with energy insecurity through a process of load-shedding since 2008 and launched Renewable Energy (REIPP) in 2011. The REIPP specifically focuses on socio-economic, climate change mitigation and energy security. It follows a competitive tender process that secures investment into grid-connected renewable energy (Akinbami et al., 2021; Mutombo & Numbi, 2019). Rural economies benefit from REIPP programmes in promoting social and economic development through Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) (Lombard & Ferreira, 2015).

Goals and Methods
This study examines the socio-economic impact undertaken by renewable energy projects under the REIPP programme. The goals for the research are as follows:
i. To identify the gaps in the socio-economic impact of renewable energy projects through the REIPP programme.
ii. To understand how the local people experience socio-economic impact programmes.

The research method is a qualitative approach. Qualitative research presents close collaboration between the participants and the researcher (Maree, 2016). The collected data focused on community members' perceptions, experiences, and expectations of renewable energy developments associated with their local benefit.

Results
The results from respondents from the Northern Cape province were analysed. These were responses from interviews and focus groups. Although the focus is on socio-economic impact, the analysis also includes broader community issues. Thematic analysis was used to analyse the data.

Conclusion
In conclusion, there are positive socio-economic impacts from renewable energy projects. The local negative impact of poverty and unemployment is mitigated. South Africa has a high unemployment rate of 34% and it remains a crucial challenge (INSPIRE, 2021). These REIPP projects form a socio-technical infrastructure and new material imaginaries at a local level (Davies et al., 2018). South Africa addressed the socio-economic aspect through REIPP.

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Institutions

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Keywords

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