

Local Knowledge Adaptation Measures in Responding to Climate Change, for Sustainable Development, in Southern Africa

Tshuma Doreen Taurai, Kaino Luckson and Jerie Steven

Abstract

The study sought to examine local knowledge adaptation measures in response to climate change in Southern Africa, with specific reference to Chivi District in Zimbabwe. A qualitative approach, informed by the interpretative paradigm was adopted. Data was collected using focus group discussions comprised of elderly community members. This was augmented by interviews that included Meteorological Officers and Environmental Management Agency Officer and observations made by the researcher. The results revealed that adaptation measures were adopted for crop farming, livestock agriculture and other livelihood adaptations. Crop farming adaptation included use of infiltration pits, crop diversification, staggering planting dates, mulching, rain-making ceremonies, collective farming and Zunde RaMambo. Livestock adaptations include livestock diversification, relocation, food preservation and alternative water sources. Other methods of adapting to climate change include food diversification, selling wild fruits and establishment of woodlots. Some of the adaptation measures were now losing relevance, for instance, rain making ceremonies as people shifted from the traditional regard of spiritual matters. This has adversely impacted on the adaptation measures to contribute towards the community's sustainable development. Poverty and hunger in the Chivi community continues to be a humanitarian issue worth of consideration by the government.