

Notice for the PhD Viva Voce Examination

Mr Chimhowa Herbert Kudzanai (Reg. No. 1148001), PhD scholar at CHRIST (Deemed to be University), will defend his PhD thesis at the public viva-voce examination on Tuesday, 6 April 2021 at 11.00 am on the Webex Meeting platform.

- Title of the Thesis** : **Rights-Based Approaches to Poverty Reduction and Development: Reality Versus Rhetoric**
- Discipline** : **Management**
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- External Examiner 2** : **Dr Bhavani M R**
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The faculty members of the Department and the School, interested experts and research scholars of all the branches of research are cordially invited to attend this open viva.

Place: Bengaluru
Date: 29 March 2021



Registrar

ABSTRACT

Over the past two decades erudite understanding of poverty has generated an overlapping consensus on what poverty entails. It is now almost universally accepted that poverty is multi-dimensional, and is a human rights violation that arises mainly from structural inequalities. The search for a holy grail of its reduction has seen widespread deployment of Rights-based approaches (RBAs), fronted by NGOs, since the turn of the century. In spite of this, coupled with a marked increase in development resources, poverty is proving to be robustly sustainable.

The study determined the appropriateness and effectiveness of RBAs as a guiding framework for sustainable poverty reduction and development. This entailed an assessment of the practical impact of RBAs and implementation of RBA strategies as well as identification of key variables necessary for successful rights-based development. As a descriptive survey, the study was underpinned by the pragmatism research philosophy, and employed a mixed methods approach with a concurrent embedded strategy that was largely qualitative but embedding a quantitative strand. Data were collected through interviews, observations and focus group discussions. In all 98 participants from 25 villages and 9 organisations were directly studied (excluding observations) and were selected using probability and non-probability sampling methods. Data were analysed using the thematic approach and SPSS.

The results of the study highlighted that poverty which had increased during the period covered by the study, is still largely defined from the basic needs and income perspectives, and attributed to individual deficiencies. Understanding of RBAs is weak and orientation on RBAs to staff and partners was inadequate. While the quality of development programs improved under RBAs, the quantity and distribution of development outputs and outcomes did not improve. The study revealed that mainly top-down approaches as well empowerment and capacity building strategies were used while substantive participation was not used in the development processes. In addition, priority given to empowerment and participation decreased with the advent of RBAs. RBAs are compatible with endogenous discourses, appropriate but have not been effective largely due to their weak implementation rather than their design. Most programs focussed on lobbying and advocacy and skirted service delivery and concrete outcomes. The study also revealed that NGOs were contributing to development processes while governments had limited contribution even in their oversight roles. NGOs however have not transformed themselves to function as equal development partners.

The implications of these findings on the development landscape are varied. There is need for adequate (re) orientation on RBAs and to implement RBA strategies appropriately and consistently, and consequently a proposed implementation model has been developed. Clear indicators for rights-based development must be developed. Development processes must focus on confronting inequalities guided by human rights and RBA principles. If NGOs are to be effective on the development terrain, they need to transform themselves in 'corporations of the poor'. Efforts should be made to transform relationships and institutions by maximising on mutually reinforcing values within rights and endogenous discourses. The government should be at the centre of the development enterprise providing service and oversight. The study can be extended to establish factors impacting on implementation of RBAs and also how RBAs have influenced internal organisational values and practices.

This thesis is divided into five main parts. The first part covers the introduction to the study while the second part details reviewed literature. The third part outlines research methodology, and the study results and their discussion are in the fourth part. The final part presents the study summary and conclusion.

Keywords: Poverty, Development, Rights, Participation, Empowerment, Inequality and Rights-based Approaches